> Prussian head of state, particularly the appointment of all administrative officials who come into contact with the people in their everyday work, probably also at least the lower officer ranks in the army. A president of the Reich who had not been elected by the whole people would therefore play a pitiful role *vis-à-vis* the Prussian head of state, so that the predominance of Prussia in Berlin, and thus in the Reich, would again emerge in a highly dangerous, which is to say particularist, form.

It is quite understandable that members of parliament should be reluctant to practise self-denial by giving up their monopoly in electing the highest organ of the Reich. This must happen, however, and the movement in favour of it will not simply subside. Let democracy not place this weapon of anti-parliamentary agitation in the hands of its enemies. Rather, like those monarchs who acted not only with the greatest dignity but also most prudently when they limited their own power, at the right moment, in favour of parliamentary representative bodies, let parliament, of its own accord, recognise the Magna Charta of democracy, the right to the direct election of the leader. It will have no reason to regret this if ministers continue to be bound strictly by the confidence of parliament. The mighty current of democratic party life developing in relation to these popular elections will also benefit parliament. *Any president of the Reich elected by parliament under particular party constellations and coalitions will be politically dead as soon as there is a shift in that constellation.* A popularly elected president, as the head of the executive, of official patronage, and as the possessor of a delaying veto and the power to dissolve parliament and to consult the people, is the palladium of genuine democracy, which does not mean impotent self-abandonment to cliques but subordination to leaders one has chosen for oneself.

The Profession and Vocation of Politics[1]

The lecture which I am to give at your request will necessarily disappoint you in various ways. You are bound to expect a talk on the profession of politics to take a stand on the topical questions of the day. Yet that will only happen at the end of my lecture in a purely formal way and in response to particular questions concerning the significance of political action within our conduct of life as a whole. What must be completely excluded from today's lecture, on the other hand, are all questions concerning the *brand* of politics one *ought* to practise, which is to say the *content* one ought to give to one's political activity. For this has nothing to do with the general question of what the profession of politics is and what it can mean. Let us get straight down to things.

What do we understand by politics (*Politik*)? The term is an extraordinarily broad one, embracing every kind of independent *leadership* (*leitende*) activity. We talk about the banks' policies on foreign

[1] 'Politik als Beruf' appeared as a brochure in the series *Geistige Arbeit als Beruf. Vier Vorträge vor dem Freistudentischen Bund.* ('Intellectual work as a vocation. Four lectures to the Union of Free Students.') (Munich and Leipzig, 1919). Following the editorial change first made by Marianne Weber in the *Gesammelten politischen Schriften* and adopted by the editors of the new *Gesamtausgabe*, the tenth paragraph ('All organised rule . . . means of administration') has been shifted from its clearly erroneous position in the first edition, and certain misprints (e.g. *entlehnte* for *entlohnte*) corrected. Weber's essay is based on a lecture given in Munich in January 1919 but not published until October of that year. Here it appears after the 'President of the Reich' since this article actually appeared in print first; in conception, however, the lecture is clearly the earlier piece. In the title the term *Beruf* has been translated as 'profession and vocation' because the essay deals both with the business and organisation (*Betrieb*) of politics and also with the inner vocation of the dedicated politician.

exchange, the bank-rate policy of the *Reichsbank*, the policy of a union during a strike, one can speak of the educational policy of the community in a town or village, of the policies of the management committee leading a club, and finally we even talk about the policies of an astute wife in her efforts to guide her husband. Naturally, our reflections this evening are not based on a concept as broad as this. Today we shall use the term only to mean the leadership, or the exercise of influence on the leadership, of a *political* association (*Verband*), which today means a *state*.

Yet what is a 'political' association, considered from a sociological point of view? What is a 'state'? This too cannot be defined sociologically in terms of the content of its activities. There is hardly a task which has not been undertaken by some political association at some time or other, but equally there is no task of which it could be said that it is always, far less *exclusively*, the preserve of those associations which are defined as political (in today's language: states) or which were the historical predecessors of the modern state. In the last analysis the modern state can only be defined sociologically in terms of a specific *means* (*Mittel*) which is peculiar to the state, as it is to all other political associations, namely physical violence (*Gewaltsamkeit*). 'Every state is founded on force (*Gewalt*)', as Trotsky once said at Brest–Litovsk. That is indeed correct. If there existed only social formations in which violence was unknown as a means, *then* the concept of the 'state' would have disappeared; *then* that condition would have arisen which one would define, in this particular sense of the word, as 'anarchy'. Violence is, of course, not the normal or sole means used by the state. There is no question of that. But it is the means *specific* to the state. At the present moment[2] the relation between the state and violence is a particularly intimate one. In the past the most diverse kinds of association – beginning with the clan – have regarded physical violence as a quite normal instrument. Nowadays, by contrast, we have to say that a state is that human community which (successfully) lays claim to the *monopoly of legitimate physical*

[2] As Weber was speaking, Germany was in the throes of the so-called 'German Revolution' which broke out in November 1918 and had reached a new peak of intensity in January 1919. In Munich, where Weber was addressing these remarks to students, the 'Soviet Republic of Bavaria' had been proclaimed. Intellectuals, such as Kurt Eisner and Ernst Toller, were prominently involved, prompting Weber to return yet again to the recurrent theme of the role played by 'littérateurs' in politics.

violence within a certain territory, this 'territory' being another of the defining characteristics of the state. For the specific feature of the present is that the right to use physical violence is attributed to any and all other associations or individuals only to the extent that the *state* for its part permits this to happen. The state is held to be the sole source of the 'right' to use violence.

In our terms, then, 'politics' would mean striving 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.

Essentially, this corresponds to ordinary usage. If one says that a question is a 'political' question, or that a minister or official is a 'political' official, or that a decision is determined 'politically', what is meant in each case is that interests in the distribution, preservation or transfer of power play a decisive role in answering that question, determining this decision or defining the sphere of activity of the official in question. Anyone engaged in politics is striving for power, either power as a means to attain other goals (which may be ideal or selfish), or power 'for its own sake', which is to say, in order to enjoy the feeling of prestige given by power.

Just like the political associations which preceded it historically, the state is a relationship of *rule* (*Herrschaft*) by human beings over human beings, and one that rests on the legimitate use of violence (that is, violence that is held to be legitimate). For the state to remain in existence, those who are ruled must *submit* to the authority claimed by whoever rules at any given time. When do people do this, and why? What inner justifications and what external means support this rule?

To begin with the inner justifications: there are in principle three grounds *legitimating* any rule.[3] Firstly, there is the authority of 'the eternal past', of *custom*, hallowed by the fact that it has held sway from time immemorial and by a habitual predisposition to preserve it. This is 'traditional' rule, as exercised by the patriarch and the patrimonial prince of the old type. Then there is the authority of the exceptional, personal '*gift of grace*', or charisma, the entirely personal devotion to, and personal trust in, revelations, heroism, or other qual-

[3] Weber discusses his classification of the forms of legitimate rule in *Economy and Society*; see, ch. 3 in particular.

ities of leadership in an individual. This is 'charismatic' rule, as exercised by the prophet or, in the field of politics, by the chosen war-lord or the plebiscitarian ruler, the great demagogue and leader of a political party. Finally, there is rule by virtue of 'legality', by virtue of belief in the validity of legal *statute* and the appropriate (*sachlich*) juridical 'competence' founded on rationally devised rules. This type of rule rests on a predisposition to fulfil one's statutory obligations obediently. It is rule of the kind exercised by the modern 'servant of the state' and all those bearers of power who resemble him in this respect. It goes without saying that the submission of the ruled is in reality determined to a very great extent not only by motives of fear and hope (fear of revenge from magical powers or from the holder of power, hope of reward in this life or in the hereafter), but also by interests of the most diverse kinds. We shall return to this point shortly. But when one asks what are the reasons 'legitimating' their submission, one does indeed encounter these three 'pure' types. These notions of legitimacy and their inner justification are of very considerable importance for the structure of rule. Admittedly, the pure types are rarely found in reality, but it is not possible today to go into the extremely intricate variants, transitional forms and combinations of these pure types in detail. That is a problem for a 'general science of the state'.[4]

Here we are interested above all in the second of the three types: rule by virtue of devotion to the purely personal 'charisma' of the 'leader' on the part of those who obey him. For this is where the idea of *vocation* (*Beruf*) in its highest form has its roots. Devotion to the charisma of the prophet or the war-lord or the exceptional demagogue in the *ekklesia*[5] or in parliament means that the leader is personally regarded as someone who is inwardly 'called' to the task of leading men, and that the led submit to him, not because of custom or statute, but because they believe in him. Of course, he himself, provided he is something more than an ephemeral, narrow and vain upstart, lives for his cause (*Sache*), 'aspires after his work',[6] whereas

[4] Weber was much influenced by the work of his colleague G. Jellinek, particularly by his *Allgemeine Staatslehre* ('General theory or science of the state') (Berlin, 1900).
[5] The 'ekklesia' was the assembly of all free citizens in the city-states of Ancient Greece.
[6] The phrase 'trachtet nach seinem Werke' probably alludes to words spoken by Nietzsche's Zarathustra at the beginning of 'The Honey Offering': 'For long I have not aspired after happiness, I aspire after my work', *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, translated R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, 1961), p. 251.

the devotion of his adherents, be they disciples or liegemen (*Gefolgschaft*) or his quite personal, partisan supporters, is focused on his person and his qualities. Leadership has emerged throughout the world and in all historical periods, the most important embodiments of it in the past being the magician and prophet on the one hand, and the chosen war-lord, gang-leader or *condottiere* on the other. In the Western world, however, we find something quite specific which concerns us more directly, namely *political* leadership, firstly in the figure of the free 'demagogue', who grew from the soil of the city-state, a unique creation of the West and of Mediterranean culture in particular, and then in the figure of the parliamentary 'party leader' who also sprang from the soil of the constitutional state, another institution indigenous only to the West.

Of course, nowhere is it the case that these politicians by virtue of a 'vocation', in the truest sense of the word, are the only figures who carry weight in the machinery of the political power struggle. Of quite decisive importance is the kind of resources they have at their disposal. How do the powers who rule politically set about the task of asserting themselves as rulers? The question applies to every kind of rule, and thus also to all forms of political rule, to the traditional type as much as to the legal and charismatic types.

All organised rule which demands continuous administration requires on the one hand that human action should rest on a disposition to obey those rulers (*Herren*) who claim to be the bearers of legitimate force, and on the other that, thanks to this obedience, the latter should have at their command the material resources necessary to exercise physical force if circumstances should demand it. In other words, it requires an administrative staff and the material means of administration.

As in any other organisation, the administrative staff, which is the outward organisational form taken by political rule, is of course not bound in obedience to the holder of power solely by that notion of legitimacy which we have just been discussing. It is also bound by two means which appeal to self-interest: material reward and social honour. The fiefs of vassals, the prebends of patrimonial officials, the salary of the modern civil servant, or chivalric honour, the privileges of a particular social estate, the official's honour – these are the rewards, and it is the fear of losing them which forms the ultimate, decisive basis for the solidarity of the administrative staff with the

holder of power. The same applies to rule by the charismatic leader, for the military following expects booty and war-honours, while the following of the demagogue expects 'spoils'[7] – the exploitation of the ruled through the monopoly of public offices, profits tied to political power, and prizes to satisfy their vanity.

In exactly the same way as in an economic organisation (*Betrieb*), certain outward, material goods are needed to uphold any rule by force. All forms of state order can be divided into two main categories based on different principles. In the first, the staff of men, be they officials or whatever, on whose obedience the holder of power must be able to rely, *own* the means of administration *in their own right*, whether these consist of money, buildings, war material, carriage parks, horses or whatever. In the other case the administrative staff is 'separated' from the means of administration, in just the same way as the office-worker or proletarian of today is 'separated' from the material means of production within a capitalist enterprise. Thus it is a question of whether the holder of power *controls* the administration *personally* and directly, having the actual administrative work done by personal servants or by paid officials or by personal favourites and confidants, none of whom are proprietors, owners in their own right, of the material means of operation (*Betriebsmittel*) but who work, rather, under the direction of the ruler; or whether the opposite is the case. This difference runs through all the administrative organisations of the past.

We shall apply the term 'association structured by *estates*' (*ständisch gegliedert*) to political associations in which the dependent administrative staff have complete or partial control, in their own right, over the material means of administration. The vassal in a feudal association, for example, paid out of his own purse the costs of administration and jurisdiction in the district for which he held the fief. He also paid for his own equipment and provisioning in war-time; the vassals subject to him did the same in their turn. Naturally this had consequences for the lord's position of power, which rested only on a bond of personal loyalty and on the fact that feudal tenure and the social honour of the vassal derived their 'legitimacy' from the lord.

Yet everywhere, stretching back to the earliest political formations, we also find the lord in direct control of the means of administration.

[7] 'Spoils' is in English.

Through people who are personally dependent on the lord – slaves, domestic officials, servants, personal 'favourites' and prebendaries rewarded in money or in kind from his own stores – he seeks to gain direct control of the administration, to pay for the means from his own purse, out of the revenues from his patrimonial estates, and to create an army dependent solely on his person, equipped and provisioned from his granaries, stores and armouries. Whereas the lord in an association of 'estates' rules with the help of an autonomous 'aristocracy', and thus *shares* rule with the aristocracy, here his rule rests either on members of his household or on plebeians, strata of society who lack possessions or social honour of their own and who are entirely chained to him in material terms, having no power of their own to compete with his. All forms of patriarchal and patrimonial rule, sultanic despotism and the bureaucratic state order belong to this type. This is especially true of the bureaucratic state order, that is to say, the order which, in its most rational form, is specifically characteristic of the modern state.

The development of the modern state is set in motion everywhere by a decision of the prince to dispossess the independent, 'private' bearers of administrative power who exist alongside him, that is all those in personal possession of the means of administration and the conduct of war, the organisation of finance and politically deployable goods of all kinds. The whole process is a complete parallel to the development of the capitalist enterprise (*Betrieb*) through the gradual expropriation of independent producers. In the end we see that in the modern state the power to command the entire means of political organisation is in fact concentrated in a single pinnacle of power, so that there is no longer even a single official left who personally owns the money he expends or the buildings, supplies, tools, or machines of war over which he has control. Thus in today's 'state' (and this is fundamental to the concept), the 'separation' of the material means of administration from the administrative staff, the officials and employees of the administration, has been rigorously implemented. At this point the most modern development of all begins, for we are now witnessing the attempt to bring about the expropriation of this expropriator of the means of politics, and hence of political power itself. This much the revolution has achieved, at least to the extent that leaders have taken the place of the legally established authorities and, through usurpation or election, have gained the power of com-

mand over the political staff and the material apparatus, deriving their legitimacy – with what justification is irrelevant – from the will of the ruled. It is quite another question whether, on the basis of this at least apparent success, they may justifiably hope to carry out the process of expropriation within capitalist businesses, the management of which, at its innermost core, obeys laws which (despite extensive analogies) are quite different from those obtaining in the sphere of political administration. I shall not take a position on this question today. For the purpose of our deliberations I wish only to establish the purely *conceptual* ground as follows: the modern state is an institutional association of rule (*Herrschaftsverband*) which has successfully established the monopoly of physical violence as a means of rule within a territory, for which purpose it unites in the hands of its leaders the material means of operation, having expropriated all those functionaries of 'estates' who previously had command over these things in their own right, and has put itself, in the person of its highest embodiment, in their place.

Now, in the course of this process of political expropriation, which has taken place in all countries of the world with varying degrees of success, there emerged, in the service of the princes in the first instance, the earliest categories of 'professional politicians' (*Berufspolitiker*) in a *second* sense. These were people who did not want to be lords themselves, as charismatic leaders did; rather, they *entered the service* of political lords. They placed themselves at the disposal of the princes in this political struggle, and made the procurement of the princes' policies into a way of earning their material living on the one hand and, on the other, into an ideal (*ideell*) content for their own lives. Again it is *only* in the West that *this* type of professional politician is also to be found in the service of powers other than the princes alone. In the past they were their most important instrument of power and political expropriation.

Before examining the matter more closely, we need to be absolutely clear about what the existence of such 'professional politicians' entails. One can engage in 'politics' – which means striving to influence the distribution of power between and within political formations – both as an 'occasional' politician and as a full- or part-time professional politician, in exactly the same way as one earns a living in the economic sphere. We are all 'occasional' politicians when we post our ballot slips or express our will in some similar way, such as

voicing approval or protest at a 'political' meeting, making a 'political' speech and so on, and for many people this is the entire extent of their involvement in politics. Today the 'part-time' politicians are, for example, all those local political agents (*Vertrauensmänner*) and committee members of party-political associations who, as a rule, only carry out this activity if circumstances require it, and who do not *chiefly* 'live from' this activity, either in a material or in an ideal sense. The same applies to those members of councils of state and similar advisory bodies who only carry out this function when summoned to do so. It is true also of quite broad sections of our members of parliament who only engage in politics during the parliamentary session. In the past such strata were to be found particularly amongst the estates. By 'estates' we mean the owners in their own right of military resources or of important material means of administration or of personal powers of rule and jurisdiction (*Herrengewalten*). Many of these people certainly did not devote their lives completely or predominantly, or indeed more than occasionally, to the service of politics. Rather they used their lordly power for the purpose of extracting rents or even profit, and they only became politically active, in the service of the political association, when this was particularly demanded of them by their lord or the members of their estate. The same applies to some of those assistants whom the prince called on to help him in the struggle to create a political organisation of his own, one that would be exclusively at his disposal. The 'domestic counsellors' (*Räte von Haus aus*)[8] and, going still further back in time, a considerable section of the counsellors who assembled in the *curia* [9] and in the prince's other advisory bodies were of this kind. But such occasional or part-time assistance was of course insufficient to meet the prince's needs. He had to try to create a staff of assistants devoted wholly and exclusively to his service as their *principal* occupation. The structure of the emergent dynastic political formation, and indeed the entire character of the culture in question, very largely depended on the sources from which he drew such assistance. The need to do this was felt above all in those political associations which constituted themselves politically as (so-called) 'free' commonwealths through the complete abolition, or extensive restriction, of princely

[8] The reference is to councillors who did not live at court and who only took part in meetings of the prince's council when it met in their own area.

[9] The *curia regis* was an assembly which met wherever the king was in residence.

power – 'free', not in the sense of freedom from rule by force, but in the sense of the absence, as the exclusive source of all authority, of princely power legitimated by tradition (and mostly consecrated by religion). Such formations certainly had their historical origins in the West, and the germ from which they developed was the city as a political association. The city first emerged in this role in the cultural sphere of the Mediterranean. What did the '*full*-time' politicians look like in all of these cases?

There are two ways of making a vocation or profession out of politics. Either one lives 'for' politics or one lives 'from' politics. The antithesis is by no means an exclusive one. Generally one does both, at least spiritually and usually also in material terms. Anyone who lives 'for' politics 'makes this his life' in an *inward* (*innerlich*) sense, either enjoying the naked possession of the power he exercises or feeding his inner balance and self-esteem from the sense that he is giving his life *meaning and purpose* (*Sinn*) by devoting it to a 'cause' (*Sache*). In this inward sense probably every serious-minded person who lives for a cause also lives from this cause. The distinction thus applies to a much more weighty aspect of the matter, namely the economic aspect. The person who lives 'from' politics is one who strives to make it into an enduring source of *income*, whereas this does not apply to the person who lives 'for' politics. For anyone to be able to live 'for' politics in this economic sense, certain, if you like, very trivial conditions must obtain wherever the order of private property prevails. Under normal circumstances such a person must be economically independent of the income politics can give him. This means quite simply that he must be wealthy or have private means which yield an income from which he can live. At least this is the case under normal circumstances. Admittedly, the following of the war-lord is as little concerned with the conditions of normal economic life as is the following of the revolutionary hero on the streets. Both live from booty, robbery, confiscations, levies, the imposition of worthless compulsory forms of currency, all of which essentially amount to the same thing. Necessarily, however, such conditions are outside the everyday run of things; in normal economic life only private means can fulfil this function. Yet this alone is not sufficient. In addition, the politician must be economically 'dispensable' or 'available' (*abkömmlich*), which means that his income must not depend on the fact that he personally and constantly devotes all

or most of his productive energy and thought to the task of earning a living. The person who is most unconditionally 'dispensable' in this sense is the *rentier*, that is, someone whose income is entirely unearned, whether, as in the case of a lord of the manor in the past or of large landowners and the higher aristocracy in the present, this income is derived from ground rents – in the ancient world and during the Middle Ages there were also rents for slaves and serfs – or whether it comes from securities or similar modern sources of investment income. Neither the worker, *nor* – a fact of great importance – the entrepreneur, and *particularly* the modern large-scale entrepreneur, is able to make himself available in this sense. The entrepreneur in particular is tied to his business and is *not* dispensable; this applies very much more to the industrial or commercial entrepreneur than to the agricultural entrepreneur, given the seasonal nature of agricultural work. It is usually very difficult for the entrepreneur to allow anyone to deputise for him, even temporarily. The same applies to doctors, for example, and the more eminent and busier a doctor is, the less easy is it for him to absent himself from work. Things are easier for the advocate, for technical reasons connected with the organisation of his work, who for this very reason has played an incomparably greater role as a professional politician, indeed often a dominant one. Rather than pursue this casuistry'[10] any further, let us consider some of the consequences of this state of affairs.

If a state or party is led by people who (in the economic sense of the word) live exclusively for politics and not from politics, this necessarily means that the leading political strata are recruited on a 'plutocratic' basis. Admittedly, this does not also entail the converse, namely that plutocratic leadership meant that the leading political strata did not also strive to live 'from' politics by exploiting their political rule to the benefit of their private economic interests. There is of course no question of that. There has never been a social stratum which did not do this in one way or another. It means simply that such professional politicians are not obliged to seek recompense directly *for* their political work, as anyone without means is bound to do. Nor does it mean that politicians without a private fortune are merely or

[10] Weber often refers to his clarification of conceptual distinctions as 'casuistry'; ch. 1 of *Economy and Society* is an example.

chiefly concerned with providing for themselves by means of politics, and that they are not, or not chiefly, concerned with the 'cause'. Nothing could be less correct. We know from experience that a man of property makes provision for his economic 'security' a cardinal point in his whole conduct of life, whether consciously or unconsciously. Unconstrained and unconditional political idealism is to be found, if not exclusively then at least to an unusual degree, precisely in those strata whose lack of means places them outside the circles of those who have an interest in preserving the economic order of a particular society. This is particularly the case during out-of-the-ordinary, which is to say revolutionary, periods. Rather, it means simply this: that any *non*-plutocratic recruitment of those with interests in politics – the leadership and its following – is tied to the self-evident condition that the business (*Betrieb*) of politics must produce a regular and reliable income for such people. Politics can either be conducted on an 'honorary' basis, which means by so-called 'independent', that is wealthy people, above all those with unearned income. Or access to political leadership can be given to people without private means, in which case it has to be remunerated. The professional politician living *from* politics can be a pure 'prebendary' or a salaried 'official'. Either he draws an income from charges and fees for particular services – gratuities and bribes are only an irregular and formally illegal variant of this category of income – or he draws a fixed remuneration in kind or a salary in money, or a combination of both. He can assume the character of an 'entrepreneur', like the *condottiere* or the holder of a leased or purchased office in the past, or like the American 'boss'[11] who regards his expenses as a capital investment from which he will derive a yield by exploiting his influence. Or he can draw a fixed wage, as does an editor or party secretary or a modern minister or political official. In the past fiefs, grants of land, benefices of all kinds, but above all, once a money economy had developed, fee-yielding prebends – these were the typical forms of recompense paid to their following by princes, victorious conquerors or successful party leaders. Nowadays the rewards bestowed by party leaders for faithful services are offices of all kinds in parties, newspapers, cooperatives, medical insurance schemes, municipalities and states. *All* clashes between parties are not only conflicts about

[11] Weber uses the word 'boss' here and in the rest of the essay in its American sense.

substantive (*sachlich*) goals; they are also and above all struggles for the patronage of office. All the conflicts between particularist and centralist ambitions in Germany also revolve around the question of which powers are to control the patronage of office: whether it is to be the powers in Berlin or in Munich, in Karlsruhe or in Dresden. Any diminution of their share of the offices available for distribution is felt by the parties to be a graver loss than actions directed against their substantive goals. In France a large-scale change in the party-political prefecture was always considered to be a greater upheaval, and generated more hubbub, than a modification in the government's programme, since this meant little more than a change of wording. Some parties, and notably those in America since the disappearance of the old conflicts about the interpretation of the constitution, have become simply parties of position-seekers which change their substantive programme according to the chances of winning votes. Until very recently in Spain, where 'elections' were manufactured from above, the two major parties simply had an agreement to govern by turns so as to provide offices for their following. In the Spanish colonies all so-called 'elections' and all so-called 'revolutions' are always concerned with the state trough at which the winners wish to be fed. In Switzerland the parties divide the offices peacefully amongst themselves according to the principle of proportionality, and a number of 'revolutionary' draft constitutions here in Germany (for example the first one proposed for Baden) sought to extend this system to ministerial offices, thus treating the state and its offices simply as an institution for the provisioning of prebendaries. The Centre Party in particular was enthusiastic about this proposal, even making it an item in its manifesto that in Baden offices should be distributed proportionally according to religious confession, which is to say, regardless of achievement. This tendency is growing amongst all parties, and in the eyes of their following the parties are increasingly regarded as a means to the end of being provided for in this way. The growth of this tendency is connected with the growth in the number of offices as a consequence of general bureaucratisation and with the growing appetite for such offices as a form of specifically *assured* provision.

There is however a countervailing tendency to all this in the development of modern officialdom into a body of intellectual workers highly qualified in their speciality by long years of preparatory training

and with a highly developed sense of professional (*ständisch*) *honour* which puts a premium on integrity. Without this sense of professional honour it would be our fate to have hovering over us the permanent threat of terrible corruption and base philistinism. This would also threaten the purely technical performance of the state apparatus which has grown steadily in its importance for the economy, and will continue to grow, especially with increasing socialisation. In the United States, where professional officials with lifelong tenure were once unknown, amateur administration by booty politicians meant that hundreds of thousands of officials, right down to the postman, changed office as a result of the outcome of the presidential election; this system has long since been punctured by the Civil Service Reform. Purely technical, compelling exigencies of administration have determined this development. In Europe the division of official labour into specialist areas of competence is a development which has taken place gradually over a period of five hundred years. It began in the Italian cities and *signorie*,[12] while the first monarchies to take this course were the states of the Norman conquerors. The decisive step was taken in the area of the princes' *finances*. One can see from the administrative reforms of the Emperor Max[13] how difficult it was, even under the pressure of direst necessity and Turkish rule, for officials to dispossess the prince in this area, although this was the sphere which could least tolerate the amateurism of a ruler who at that time was still, first and foremost, a knight. The development of the techniques of warfare gave rise to the specialist officer, the refinement of legal processes did the same for the trained lawyer. In all three areas specialised officialdom was finally victorious in the more advanced states in the sixteenth century. Thereby two simultaneous processes were initiated: the rise of princely absolutism *vis-à-vis* the estates, and the prince's gradual abdication of personal rule to the specialist officials to whom he owed this victory over the estates in the first place.

Simultaneously with the rise of professionally trained *officialdom* there came about the development of the 'leading *politicians*', albeit by much more gradual stages. Of course, throughout the world there

[12] Weber discusses the *signorie* in *Economy and Society*, vol. II, pp. 1317–22. They were, in Weber's view, the 'first political power in Western Europe to introduce rational administration by officials who were (increasingly) *appointed*.'

[13] Maximilian I.

had always existed advisers to the princes whose word was in fact decisive. In the Orient the typical figure of the 'Grand Vizier' was created out of a need to exonerate the Sultan as far as possible from personal responsibility for the success of government. In the West diplomacy first became a *consciously* cultivated art during the reign of Charles V (the age of Machiavelli), particularly under the influence of the reports from the Venetian legates which were read with passionate interest in specialist diplomatic circles. The adepts of this art, most of them with a humanist training, treated one another as a specially educated stratum of initiates, much like the Chinese statesmen with humanist training during the last period of Warring States.[14] The necessity for a leading statesman to give formally unified leadership to the *entire* policy of a government, including domestic policy, only came about finally and compellingly as a result of constitutional developments. Until then there had of course always been individuals who advised or – in fact – actually led the princes. But the organisation of the administrative authorities had initially followed other paths, even in the most advanced states. The highest administrative authorities had been founded on the *collegial*[15] principle. In theory, and to a gradually diminishing degree in practice, their meetings were presided over personally by the prince who gave the decision. The prince, finding himself increasingly in the position of an amateur, attempted to free himself from the inevitably growing weight of the officials' specialist training and to keep supreme leadership in his own hands by means of this collegial system, which led to expert opinions, counter-opinions and reasoned votes of the majority and minority, but also by surrounding himself with purely personal confidants – the 'cabinet' – alongside the official highest authorities; he would then let his decisions be known, via these confidants, in response to the resolutions of the council of state (or whatever else the highest state authority was called). This latent struggle between professional officialdom and autocratic rule existed everywhere. The situation only changed with the advent of parliaments and the aspirations of their

[14] The period of the Warring States was 475–221 BC Weber's account of the nature of the Chinese state can be found in the essays translated under the title *The Religion of China. Confucianism and Taoism* (New York, 1951).

[15] The concept of 'collegiality' is discussed in *Economy and Society*, ch. 3, section 8. A contemporary example cited by Weber is the power of the German revolutionary 'councils of workers and and soldiers' to countersign official decrees.

party leaders to power. Yet the same outward result was produced by very varied sets of underlying conditions. Admittedly, there were certain differences. Wherever dynasties kept a hold on real power – as was the case in Germany in particular – the interests of the prince were now joined in solidarity with those of the officials *against* parliament and its claims on power. It was in the interest of the officials that the leading, which is to say, ministerial posts should be filled from their ranks, or in other words that such posts should be goals to which officials could aspire by the process of promotion. The monarch for his part had an interest in being able to nominate ministers as he thought fit from the ranks of the officials dedicated to his service. But both monarch and officials were interested in ensuring that the political leadership presented a united, closed front to parliament, which means that they both had an interest in the replacement of the collegial system by a unitary chief of cabinet. Furthermore, simply in order to remain above party struggles and party attacks in a purely formal sense, the monarch needed a responsible individual to give him cover, which meant someone who would confront and be answerable to parliament and who would deal with the parties. With all these interests pulling in the same direction, there came into being an official minister (*Beamtenminister*)[16] who provided unified leadership. The development of parliamentary power generated an even stronger impulse towards unitary leadership in places where, as in England, parliamentary power gained the upper hand over the monarch. Here the 'cabinet', headed by the single parliamentary chief or 'leader',[17] developed as a committee of that power which, although ignored by official laws, was in fact the sole decisive political power, namely the *party* currently in possession of a majority. The official collegial bodies were not, as such, organs of the power which really exercised rule (that is the party), therefore they could not be the bearers of real government. What a ruling party needed in order to assert its power in domestic politics and to conduct high politics in relation to other countries, was an effective organ, meeting in confidence and composed exclusively of the men who truly led the party, in other words, a cabinet. But it also needed a leader responsible for all decisions to the public, and especially to the public in parliament,

[16] The term *Beamtenminister* is an unusual one. Presumably it means the minister responsible for the civil service.
[17] 'Leader' is in English.

namely a head of cabinet. This English system was then adopted on the continent in the form of the parliamentary ministries. Only in America and in the democracies influenced by America was a quite different system developed in direct contrast to the English one. Here the chosen leader of the victorious party elected by direct popular vote was placed at the head of an apparatus of officials whom he nominated; he was tied to parliamentary approval only in budgetary and legislative matters.

The development of politics into an organisation (*Betrieb*) which demanded training in the struggle for power and its methods, as it has been developed by the modern party system, resulted in the division of public functionaries into two clearly, although not absolutely, distinct categories: specialist, professional officials (*Fachbeamte*) on the one hand, and 'political officials' on the other. The 'political' officials in the true sense of the word are usually outwardly recognisable by the fact that they can be transferred or dismissed at will at any time, or at any rate 'sent into temporary retirement', as in the case of the French prefects and officials of the same type in other countries, in sharp contradistinction to the 'independence' of officials whose function is a judicial one. In England this category includes officials who, in accordance with established convention, leave office whenever there is a change of parliamentary majority and thus of the cabinet. In particular, the officials who tend to belong to this category are those whose area of responsibility includes the general administration of 'home affairs'; the 'political' component of this responsibility consists above all in the task of maintaining 'law and order' in the country, which is to say, upholding the existing relations of rule. As prescribed by Puttkamer's edict,[18] these officials had the duty in Prussia, on pain of being disciplined, to 'represent the policy of the government', and were used, like the prefects in France, as an official apparatus to influence elections. Under the German system, admittedly, and in contrast to other countries, most 'political' officials shared the same quality as all other officials, in that these political offices, too, could only be attained on the basis of academic study, professional examinations and a defined period of preparatory service. In Germany only ministers, the heads of the political apparatus, lack

[18] When Minister of the Interior for Prussia, Puttkamer initiated a reform of the civil service. In January 1882 a royal edict announced that officials were bound by their oath of office to support government policy.

this specific characteristic of the modern professional official. Under the old regime it was possible to become Prussian Minister of Culture without ever having attended an institution of higher learning, whereas it was only possible for a candidate to become *Vortragender Rat* [19] on the strict condition that he had taken the prescribed examinations. The *Dezernent* [20] and *Vortragender Rat* with his professional training was of course infinitely better informed about the real technical problems in his specialist area than his chief (as, for example. when Althoff headed the Prussian Ministry of Education).[21] The situation was no different in England. Consequently the official was also the more powerful figure as regards all day-to-day needs. There was nothing inherently nonsensical about this arrangement. The minister was, after all, the representative of the *political* power constellation, and his task was to represent its political criteria and to test the proposals of the specialist officials under him against those criteria, or to give them appropriate directives of a political kind.

Things are very similar in a private economic organisation. The true 'sovereign', the shareholders' meeting, has as little influence on the management of the business as a 'people' governed by professional officials, and those who have the decisive say in the policy of the firm, the 'board of trustees' dominated by the banks, only give economic directives and select the men who are to carry out the administration, without having the technical expertise themselves to manage the business (*Betrieb*). In this respect there is nothing fundamentally new about the present structure of the revolutionary state which is putting power over the administration into the hands of complete amateurs simply because they have the machine-guns at their disposal, men who would like to use the trained, specialist officials merely as executive heads and hands. The difficulties in the present system lie elsewhere, but these are questions which shall not concern us today.

[19] The head of an administrative section in the Foreign Office who reported to a higher level.

[20] The head of a division in a ministry.

[21] F. Althoff (1839–1908), an academic turned civil servant who was responsible for higher education policy in Prussia from 1882 to 1907. This period was marked by both expansion and ministerial interference. Weber's attitude to, and dealings with, the 'Althoff system' are available in *Max Weber: On Universities. The Power of the State and the Dignity of The Academic Calling in Imperial Germany*, ed. E. Shils (Chicago, 1974).

Rather, we want now to ask what are the typical, distinguishing characteristics of professional politicians, both those of the 'leaders' and those of their following. These characteristics have changed over time, and even today they are very varied.

As we have seen, 'professional politicians' developed in the past as servants of the princes in their struggle with the aristocratic estates. Let us consider the main types briefly.

The prince drew support in his struggle with the estates from the politically usable strata who did not belong to the estates. To these strata belonged, firstly, the clergy; this applies as much to Western or Eastern India, to Buddhist China and Japan, and to Mongolia with its Lamas, as it does to Christian territories in the Middle Ages. The technical reason for this was the fact that the clergy were literate. Wherever Brahmins, Buddhist priests or Lamas were imported, or bishops and priests employed as political advisers, the reason was the need for literate administrators who could be used by the emperor or prince or *khan* in his struggle with the aristocracy. The cleric, especially the celibate cleric, stood outside the machinations of normal political and economic interests and was not exposed, as vassals were, to the temptation to compete with his lord for political power of his own, so as to benefit his descendants. By virtue of the peculiar characteristics of his own estate, the cleric was 'separated' from the means necessary to conduct the prince's administration.

A second stratum of this type was formed by men of letters with a humanist education. There was a time when one learned how to make speeches in Latin and verses in Greek in order to become the political adviser and above all the writer of political memoranda for a prince. That was the time when the first flowering of humanist schools and princely foundations of chairs of 'poetics' took place. In the case of Germany this epoch passed quickly, yet it had a lasting influence on our system of education, although it was without any more profound political consequences. Things were different in Eastern Asia. The Chinese Mandarin is, or rather was in his origins, approximately the same thing as the humanist during the Renaissance period here – a man of letters trained and examined along humanist lines in the linguistic monuments of the distant past. If you read the diaries of Li Hung Chang you will find that he was most proud of the fact that he wrote poems and was a good calligrapher. This stratum, with the conventions it developed on the model of the

ancient Chinese past, has determined the entire fate of China. Our own fate would perhaps have been similar if, at the time, the humanists had had the slightest chance of establishing their influence with the same degree of success.

The third stratum was the court nobility. Once the princes had succeeded in taking political power away from the nobility as an estate, they drew them to court and used them in their political and diplomatic service. The major change in our educational system in the seventeenth century was conditioned, amongst other things, by the fact that professional politicians from the court aristocracy entered the service of princes, replacing the humanist men of letters.

The fourth category was a specifically English phenomenon, a patrician group embracing the petty nobility and the urban *rentiers*, known technically as the 'gentry'[22] a stratum of people whom the prince originally recruited as his allies against the barons and whom he made proprietors of the offices of 'self-government',[23] only to find himself becoming increasingly dependent on them later. This stratum retained possession of all the offices of local government by taking them over free of charge for the sake of its own social power. These people preserved England from the bureaucratisation that was the fate of all states on the continent.

A fifth stratum, that of jurists with a university training, was peculiar to the West, particularly the mainland of Europe, and was of decisive importance for its entire political structure. There is no clearer evidence of the powerful long-term effects of Roman law, as transformed by the late Roman bureaucratic state, than the fact that trained jurists were the main bearers everywhere of the revolutionary transformation of the conduct and organisation (*Betrieb*) of politics, in the sense of developing it in the direction of the rational state. This is also true of England, although the great national guilds of lawyers hindered the reception of Roman law there. One can find no analogy of any kind for this in any other part of the world: the beginnings of rational legal thought in the Mimamsa[24] school in India, and all the elaboration of ancient legal thinking in the Islamic world could

[22] Weber uses the English word.
[23] Weber uses the English word.
[24] Weber mentions the Mimamsa school in particular because it is an example of a rational method for achieving holiness. It 'acknowledged ceremonial good work per se as the holy path', Weber, *The Religion of India* (New York, 1958), p. 52.

not prevent rational legal thought being overgrown with theological forms of thinking. Above all, trial procedure was not fully rationalised. That was only achieved thanks to the adoption by Italian jurists of ancient Roman jurisprudence (the quite unique product of a political formation which rose from being a city-state to ruler of the world), the *usus modernus* of the late medieval pandect jurists and canon jurists,[25] and the, subsequently secularised, theories of natural law born from legal and Christian thinking. This legal rationalism had its great representatives in the Italian *podestat*,[26] in the French crown-jurists who created the formal means whereby the power of the king could undermine the rule of the *seigneurs*, in the canon lawyers and conciliar theologians who thought in terms of natural law, in the court jurists and learned judges of the continental princes, in the teachers of natural law in the Netherlands and in the monarchomachs,[27] in the lawyers of the English crown and parliament, in the *noblesse de robe* of the French parliaments and, finally, in the advocates at the time of the Revolution. Without this legal rationalism the emergence of the absolute state is as unthinkable as the Revolution. If you look at the remonstrances of the French parliaments or the *cahiers* of the French *états généraux* from the sixteenth century up till 1789, you will find the same thing everywhere: the mind of the jurist. If you survey the professions to which the members of the French Assembly belonged, you will find – although they were elected on the basis of equal suffrage – just one proletarian and very few bourgeois entrepreneurs, but masses of jurists of all kinds, without whose presence the specific spirit inspiring these radical intellectuals and their proposals would be quite unthinkable. Since then the modern advocate and modern democracy absolutely belong together – and advocates in our sense, as an independent estate, actually only exist in the West, having developed since the Middle Ages out of the spokesman

[25] For a comment on the 'pandects' see footnote 25 to 'The Nation State and Economic Policy' (p. 18 above).
[26] In Weber's view the institution of the *podestat* played an extremely important role in the development of law in medieval Italy. The term refers to 'an aristocratic professional officialdom' which was elected from another community and given judicial power. See *Economy and Society*, especially pp. 1273–6.
[27] The term 'monarchomach' ('fighter against the king', sometimes translated as 'king-killer') was given by William Barclay, in his *De Regno et regali potestate* (Paris, 1600), to a diverse group of political thinkers in France who had argued for the right of resistance to the monarch.

(*Fürsprech*) of the formalistic Germanic trial procedure as trials became subject to rationalisation.

It is no accident that advocates have played a significant part in western politics since the rise of the parties. Party politics means quite simply politics run by interested parties; we shall shortly see what that entails. The effective conduct of a case on behalf of interested parties is the craft of the trained advocate. In this he is superior to any 'official' (a lesson we have been taught by the superiority of enemy propaganda). Certainly, a case (*Sache*) which is supported by logically weak arguments (a 'bad' case in this sense) can, in his hands, be brought to a successful conclusion, that is be conducted 'well' in the technical sense. But he is also the only person capable of conducting a case that can be supported by logically 'strong' arguments (a 'good' case in this sense) 'well', in the sense of successfully. When an official acts as a politician, his technically inept conduct of the case all too frequently makes a 'bad' case out of one that is 'good' in every sense – as we have had to learn from painful experience. The reason for this is that politics nowadays is predominantly conducted in public and by means of the written or spoken word. Weighing up the effects of words is pre-eminently the domain of the advocate, and certainly not that of the specialist official who neither is, nor is intended to function as, a demagogue, and who usually becomes a very bad demagogue when, despite this fact, he attempts to be one.

In terms of what he is really called upon to do (*Beruf*), the true official – and this is crucial for any judgement of the previous regime here in Germany – should not engage in politics but should 'administer', and above all he should do so *impartially*. This also applies, officially at least, to so-called 'political' officials (*Verwaltungsbeamte*), always provided there is no question of a threat to the *reason of state*, that is the vital interests of the prevailing order. The official should carry out the duties of his office *sine ira et studio*, 'without anger and prejudice'. Thus, he should not do the very thing which politicians, both the leaders and their following, always and necessarily must do, which is to *fight*. Partisanship, fighting, passion – *ira et studium* – all this is the very element in which the politician, and above all the political *leader*, thrives. *His* actions are subject to a quite different principle of *responsibility*, one diametrically opposed to that of the official. When, despite the arguments advanced by an official, his superior insists on the execution of an instruction which the official

regards as mistaken, the official's honour consists in being able to carry out that instruction, on the *responsibility* of the man issuing it, conscientiously and precisely in the same way as if it corresponded to his own convictions. Without this supremely ethical discipline and self-denial the whole apparatus would disintegrate. By contrast, the honour of the political leader, that is, of the leading statesman, consists precisely in taking exclusive, *personal* responsibility for what he does, responsibility which he cannot and may not refuse or unload onto others. Precisely those who are officials by nature and who, in this regard, are of high moral stature, are bad and, particularly in the political meaning of the word, irresponsible politicians, and thus of low moral stature in this sense – men of the kind we Germans, to our cost, have had in positions of leadership time after time. This is what we call 'rule by officials'. Let me make it clear that I imply no stain on the honour of our officials by exposing the political deficiency of this system, when evaluated from the standpoint of success. But let us return once more to the types of political figures.

Ever since the advent of the constitutional state, and even more so since the advent of democracy, the typical political leader in the West is the 'demagogue'. The unpleasant overtones of the word should not make us forget that it was Pericles, not Cleon, who first bore this title. Lacking an office, or rather being charged with the office of leading strategist (the only office to be filled by election, in contrast to the others which, in ancient democracy, were filled by casting lots), Pericles led the sovereign *ekklesia* of the *demos* of Athens. Actually, modern demagogy, too, employs the spoken word, and does so to an enormous extent, if one considers the electoral speeches a modern candidate has to make. But it makes even more sustained use of the printed word. The political writer and above all the *journalist* is the most important representative of the species today.

Even to sketch the sociology of modern political journalism would be quite impossible within the framework of this lecture, for it is in every respect a topic in its own right. But there are a few things which must be mentioned. On the continent at any rate, in contrast to conditions in England (and, incidentally, also in Prussia in former times), the journalist shares with the demagogue, the advocate and the artist the fate of lacking any firm social classification. He belongs to a kind of pariah-caste which, in the eyes of 'society', is always gauged socially by those of its representatives who are of the lowest

moral quality. Thus the strangest ideas about journalists and their work are widespread. Few people are aware that a really *good* piece of journalistic work demands at least as good a mind as that of any scholar, above all because of the need to produce the work immediately, to order, and because it has to be immediately *effective*, although produced under quite different conditions from those of the scholar. There is hardly ever any proper appreciation of the fact that the responsibility and the *feeling* of responsibility in every honourable journalist is usually not a whit lower than that of any scholar; indeed on average it is higher, as the war has taught us. This is because it is, of course, the *ir*responsible pieces of journalism which stick in our memory because of the dreadful effects they often have. And of course nobody believes that the discretion of reliable journalists is on average higher than that of other people. Yet this is indeed the case. The incomparably greater temptations inherent in this profession, as well as the other conditions of working as a journalist at present, produce those effects which have accustomed the public to regard the press with a mixture of contempt – and craven cowardice. This is not the occasion to talk about what should be done about this. What interests us here is the *political* fate to which journalists are exposed by their profession, their chances of attaining positions of political leadership. Until now the chances were favourable only in the Social Democratic Party. But within this party editorial posts predominantly had the character of posts for officials, and have not formed the basis for a position as *leader*.

In the bourgeois parties, taken as a whole, the chances of rising to political power by this path had got worse rather than better, compared with the previous generation. Of course, all important politicians needed press influence, and hence press connections. Contrary to what one might have expected, however, it was certainly exceptional for party *leaders* to emerge from the ranks of the press. The reason for this lies in the much diminished ability of the journalist to absent himself from his duties, particularly the journalist without private means who is tied to his profession. This is because journalism has become a much more intensive and up-to-the-minute kind of business. The need to earn money by writing articles daily or at least weekly is like a ball-and-chain round a politician's ankle, and I know of cases where this has been an outward and, above all, an inward impediment to natural leaders in their rise to power. The fact

that relations between the press and the ruling powers in the state and in the parties under the old regime were as detrimental as they possibly could be to the quality of journalism is a separate problem. In the countries of our enemies these relations were different, but it appears that there too, as in all modern states, the same principle applied, namely that the political influence of the working journalist is steadily diminishing, while that of capitalist press magnates, like 'Lord' Northcliffe, for instance, is growing ever greater.

In Germany, admittedly, the big capitalist newspaper concerns which took control of the papers carrying 'small ads' in particular – the various 'General Advertisers' – have, typically, bred political indifference in most cases. For there was no profit to be made from an independent political line, and especially not the commercially useful goodwill of the ruling political powers. During the war, too, the business to be had from advertising was used as a means of exerting massive political pressure on the press, a practice which looks set to continue. Even if we may expect that the major newspapers will resist this kind of influence, the situation for small papers is much more difficult. In this country, at any rate, a career in journalism is not at present a normal path to political leadership, attractive as this career may be in other respects, and despite the possibilities for influencing and affecting politics and above all the degree of political responsibility it entails. Whether this is no longer, or whether it is not yet the case, we shall perhaps have to wait and see. Whether abandoning the principle of anonymity, as advocated by some but not all journalists, would alter the situation in any way is hard to say. The 'leadership' (*Leitung*) of newspapers by specially recruited personalities with a gift for writing, whose pieces always and expressly appeared under their own name, which was something we experienced in the German press during the war, unfortunately demonstrated in a number of the better known cases that it is *not* as reliable a means of breeding a heightened sense of responsibility as one might have believed. It was the worst sections of the popular press which, regardless of party alignment, both aimed for and achieved increased circulation by such means. The gentlemen concerned, publishers and sensationalist journalists alike, earned a fortune – but certainly no honour. This is no argument against the principle itself; the question is very complicated and that phenomenon is not generally the case. *Up till now*, however, this has not been the path to genuine leadership

or the *responsible* conduct of politics. How the situation will develop in the future remains to be seen. Whatever happens, however, a journalistic career remains one of the most important paths to professional political activity. It is not a path for everyone. It is certainly not one for weak characters, particularly not for people who can only maintain their inner balance in a situation of social and professional (*ständisch*) security. Although the life of a young scholar involves taking a gamble, he is surrounded by the firm conventions of his social position which keep him from going off the rails. A journalist's life, however, is essentially a gamble in every respect, and, what is more, one that is made under conditions which put a person's inner security to the test as few other situations in life do. Bitter professional experiences are perhaps not even the worst thing about it. It is in fact the successful journalists who have to cope with particularly difficult inner demands. It is no small thing to frequent the salons of the mighty of this earth, apparently on an equal footing, often being flattered on all sides because one is feared, and, at the same time, to know that one will have hardly left the room before the host is perhaps having to make excuses to his guests about the need to consort with 'those rogues from the press' – just as it is no small thing to have to deliver prompt and convincing pronouncements, at the immediate behest of the 'market', on anything and everything, on every conceivable problem in life, and to do so without falling prey, not only to utter banality, but, above all, to indignity and self-exposure with all their merciless consequences. It is not surprising that there are so many journalists who have lost their way or their value as human beings. What is surprising, rather, is the fact that, despite everything, this section of society in particular contains such a large number of valuable and quite genuine people, many more, indeed, than outsiders tend to imagine.

If the journalist, as a type of professional politician, can already look back on a considerable past, the figure of the *party official* is one who has emerged from the developments of the last few decades or, in some cases, years. We must turn our attention to the party system and party organisation if we are to understand the position of this figure within historical developments.

The organisation of politics is necessarily an *organisation run by interested parties* in all political associations of any magnitude where the holders of political power are elected periodically, which is to say

in all associations with a territory and range of responsibilities extending beyond those of small, rural cantons. This means that a relatively small number of persons with a primary interest in political life (meaning participation in political power) create a following by free recruitment, present themselves or those under their tutelage as candidates for election, raise funds and set about collecting votes. One cannot imagine how elections could be arranged properly in larger political associations without this organisation. In practical terms it means the division of all citizens entitled to vote into politically active and politically passive elements. As this difference is a voluntary one it cannot be abolished by special measures such as the obligation to vote, or representation according to 'occupational group', or other proposals of this kind which are aimed expressly or in fact against this state of affairs, which is to say, against rule by professional politicians. The leadership, active in recruiting the following, and the following who freely canvass the body of passive voters who will elect the leader, are necessary elements in the life of any party. The structure of parties varies, however. The 'parties' of medieval cities, say, like the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, were purely personal followings. If one examines the *Statuto della parte Guelfa*,[28] the confiscation of the estates of the *nobili* (which originally meant all those families living in the knightly manner and qualified for fief), their exclusion from offices and denial of their right to vote, or the inter-locality party committees and the strictly military organisations with their rewards for denunciations, one feels reminded of Bolshevism with its Soviets, its strictly sifted military and informant organisations (above all in Russia), its confiscations, the disarming and political disentitlement of the 'bourgeois', that is the entrepreneurs, traders, *rentiers*, clerics, descendants of the dynasty and police agents. The analogy becomes even more striking when one sees on the one hand that the military organisation of the Guelph party was a purely knightly army, formed on the basis of matricular lists, and that nobles occupied almost all the leading positions, while the Soviets for their part have retained the highly remunerated entrepreneurs, piece-work wages, the Taylor system, discipline at the workplace and in the army; or rather they are re-introducing these things and looking around for foreign capital – in other words, they have had to accept once more

[28] The *Statuto della parte Guelfa* was first published in 1335.

absolutely *all* the things they fought against as institutions of the bourgeois class, in order to keep the state and the economy going at all. In addition to all this, they have re-employed the agents of the old *okhrana*[29] as their principal instrument of state power. What concerns us here are not such organisations based on violence, but professional politicians whose aim is to achieve power by means of sober, 'peaceful' canvassing by the party in the electoral market-place.

Parties in our usual sense of the word also began, in England for example, as pure followings of the aristocracy. Whenever a peer changed his party allegiance, for whatever reason, all those who were dependent on him also changed to the opposing party. Until the Reform Bill the great aristocratic families, and the king not least of them, had the patronage of an immense number of electoral districts. The parties of local notables, which developed everywhere with the rise of the bourgeoisie (*Bürgertum*), closely resembled these aristocratic parties. Under the spiritual leadership of the intellectual strata typical of the West, those circles of 'education and property' split into parties which they led, dividing partly along the lines of class-interests, partly on the basis of family tradition, partly for purely ideological reasons. Clergymen, teachers, professors, advocates, doctors, apothecaries, well-to-do farmers, manufacturers – in England that whole stratum that considers itself 'gentlemen' – formed occasional associations in the first instance, or, at the most, local political clubs. In times of agitation the petty bourgeoisie would make its voice heard, and occasionally the proletariat, too, when men arose to lead it (although such leaders did not usually come from its own ranks). In the country parties simply do not yet exist at this stage in the form of permanent associations organised across local boundaries. Cohesion is provided solely by the members of parliament. Local notables have the decisive say in the nomination of candidates. Programmes are formed partly on the basis of the electoral appeals of the candidates, partly in accordance with assemblies of notables or decisions of the parliamentary party. The clubs are led on a part-time, honorary basis. Where no clubs exist (as was usually the case) the completely formless organisation of politics is led by the few men with a permanent interest in politics under normal conditions. Only

[29] The political police force of Tsarist Russia. It operated a network of secret agents whose task was to investigate the revolutionary movement.

the journalist is a paid professional politician, only the organisation of the press functions as a continuous form of political organisation. Apart from this there is only the parliamentary session. Admittedly, the members of parliament and the leaders of the parties in parliament know which local notables to turn to when some political action seems desirable. But only in the great cities do permanent party associations exist with modest membership subscriptions and periodic assemblies and public meetings to hear the member of parliament give an account of himself. Things only come to life during the period of an election.

The driving force behind the progressive tightening of party ties was the interest which the members of parliament had in possible electoral compromises between localities, and in the effectiveness of unified electioneering in the country and of unified programmes accepted by broad sections of the country. In principle, however, the character of the party apparatus as an association of notables remains unchanged, although a network of local clubs (now in middle-sized towns as well) and, additionally, of trusted local agents (*Vertrauensmänner*) extends over the whole country. A member of the parliamentary party acting as the leader of the central party office is in permanent correspondence with these bodies and individuals. Outside the central office there are still no paid officials. The local associations are still led everywhere by 'respected' people who take on this responsibility for the sake of the esteem they enjoy in other areas. These are the extra-parliamentary 'notables' who exert influence alongside that of the stratum of political notables who actually sit as members of parliament. The press and local associations are, however, increasingly provided with intellectual nourishment by the party correspondence which the party publishes. Regular subscriptions from members become indispensable, and a proportion of this money has to go to meet the costs of the central office. Until relatively recently most party organisations in Germany were still at this stage of development. In France, indeed, some places were still at the first stage, with a quite unstable coalition of the members of parliament, a small number of local notables out in the country, with programmes being drawn up by the candidates themselves or on their behalf by their patrons, in some cases at the point of recruitment, although those working in the localities did refer, to a greater or lesser extent, to the resolutions and programmes of the members of parliament. At

first the erosion of this system was only partial, The numbers of those whose main occupation was politics were small and composed mainly of the elected representatives, the few employees at central office, the journalists and – in France – those position-seekers who were already in a 'political office' or who were currently seeking one. Formally, politics was a part-time profession in the vast majority of cases. The number of parliamentary deputies appointable to ministerial posts was strictly limited, but so too was that of the possible electoral candidates, given the character of a system dominated by notables. However, the number of people with an indirect interest, particularly of a material kind, in the conduct and organisation of politics was very great. For all measures taken by a ministry, and particularly decisions relating to personnel, were taken with an eye to the effect they would have on the chances of electoral success, and people sought to achieve all manner of wishes through the good offices of the local member of parliament. Whether he liked it or not, a minister was obliged to listen to the member of parliament, particularly if he belonged to his majority, which was therefore the goal pursued by everybody. The individual deputy had control over the patronage of office and indeed every kind of patronage in all matters concerning his constituency, and he in turn maintained relations with the local notables in order to secure his own re-election.

The most modern forms of party organisation contrast sharply with these idyllic conditions of rule by circles of notables and, above all, by the members of parliament. These new forms are the offspring of democracy, of mass suffrage, of the need for mass canvassing and mass organisation, the development of the strictest discipline and of the highest degree of unity in the leadership. Rule by notables and direction by the members of parliament comes to an end. 'Full-time' politicians *outside* the parliaments take the business (*Betrieb*) in hand – either as 'entrepreneurs' – which is in effect what the American 'boss' and the English 'election agent' were – or as officials with a fixed salary. Formally, a far-reaching process of democratisation takes place. It is no longer the parliamentary party which creates the authoritative manifestos, no longer the local notables who have control over the nomination of candidates. Instead, general meetings of the organised members of the party select the candidates and delegate members to the higher assemblies, of which there may be several, right up to the general party conference. But in fact, of course, power

lies in the hands of those who do the work *continuously* within the organisation, or with those persons on whom the running of the organisation depends, either financially or in terms of personnel (for example wealthy patrons or the leaders of powerful clubs of vested political interests, such as Tammany Hall). The decisive fact is that this whole human apparatus – the 'machine', as it is revealingly called in English-speaking countries – or rather the people who control it are able to keep the members of parliament in check, and can even impose their will on them to a considerable extent. This is of particular importance for the selection of the *leadership* of the party. The person who now becomes leader is the one whom the machine follows, even over the heads of parliament. In other words, the creation of such machines means the advent of *plebiscitarian* democracy.

The party following, and above all the party official and party entrepreneur, naturally expect personal recompense to flow from the victory of the leader, either in the form of offices or other benefits. The decisive point is that they expect these things from him, and not, or not only, from individual members of parliament. Above all, they expect that the demagogic effect of the leader's *personality* during the election will win votes and mandates, and thus power, for the party, and will therefore maximise the chances of the party's supporters finding the rewards they are hoping for. On the level of ideas, one of the driving forces is the satisfaction to be gained from working for an individual, out of conviction and devotion to him, rather than for the abstract programme of a party composed of mediocrities; this is the 'charismatic' element in all leadership.

To very varying degrees, and in constant latent struggle with members of parliament and with local dignitaries fighting to preserve their influence, this form succeeded in establishing itself, first in the United States, amongst the bourgeois parties, and then in the Social Democratic Party, above all in Germany. Reverses constantly occur whenever there is no generally acknowledged leader. Even when such a leader does exist, all kinds of concessions have to be made to the vanity and vested interests of party notables. Above all, however, the machine can also fall into the hands of the party *officials* who do the day-to-day work. Some Social Democratic circles take the view that their party succumbed to this 'bureaucratisation'. Yet 'officials' submit fairly readily to a leader with a strong, demagogically effective personality, for their material and ideal interests are, after

all, intimately connected with what they hope the power of the party will achieve under his leadership, and there is inherently more inner satisfaction to be had from working for a leader. The rise of leaders is far more difficult in cases where (as is usual in bourgeois parties) the 'notables', in addition to the officials, influence the party. For they 'make a life' for themselves in an *ideal* sense out of whatever minor position they hold as members of the executive committee or one of its sub-committees. Their actions are dictated by resentment of the demagogue as a *homo novus*, by their strong belief in the superiority of party-political 'experience' (which is indeed of considerable importance) and by ideological worries about the breakdown of the old traditions of the party. They also have all the traditionalist elements in the party behind them. The rural voter above all, but also the petit-bourgeois voter, respects the name of the notable who has been long familiar to him and mistrusts the man he does not know. Admittedly, should the new man be successful, the allegiance of these groups to him is all the more unshakeable. Let us look at a few of the main examples of the struggle between these two forms of political structure and at the rise of the plebiscitary form as described by Ostrogorski.[30]

Let us begin with England. Party organisation there was almost exclusively an organisation of notables until 1868. The Tories relied in the countryside on, for example, the Anglican vicar, as well as on the teacher (in most cases) and above all on the large landowners of the county, while the Whigs relied mostly on such people as the nonconformist preacher (where one existed), the postmaster, blacksmith, tailor, rope-maker, in other words on those tradesmen who could spread political influence because they were the ones with whom one could have a conversation most frequently. In the towns parties divided according to party opinions which were either economic or religious or simply traditional in one's family. But in every case the organisation of politics was borne by notables. At a higher level there was parliament and the parties, with the cabinet and the 'leader' who chaired the council of ministers or led the opposition. At his side the leader had the most important professional political figure in the party organisation, the 'Whip',[31] in whose hands lay the

[30] M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* (London, 1902).
[31] 'Whip' is in English.

patronage of office. The place-seekers had therefore to turn to him, and he consulted the members from the individual constituencies on such matters. Amongst these people a stratum of professional politicians slowly began to evolve, as local agents were recruited who were unpaid in the first instance and whose position was roughly equivalent to our *Vertrauensmänner*. Additionally, however, there developed in the constituencies a type of capitalist entrepreneur, the 'election agent'[32] whose existence was inevitable under the modern legislation introduced in England to ensure the fairness of elections. This legislation sought to limit electoral expenses and to counter the power of money by obliging candidates to declare what the election had cost them. For in England, much more than was once the case here, the candidate, as well as straining his voice, had the pleasure of taking out his purse. The election agent received from him a sum of money to cover all expenses, from which the agent usually made a tidy profit. In the distribution of power between leader[33] and party notables, both in the country and in parliament, the leader had always had a very important position in England, for compelling reasons which had to do with the facilitation of large-scale and at the same time stable policy-making. Nevertheless, the influence of members of parliament and party notables still remained considerable.

This is roughly what the old party organisation looked like, something half run by notables and half by an enterprise in which paid employees and entrepreneurs were already playing a role. From 1868 onwards, however, there developed the 'caucus' system, firstly for local elections in Birmingham and then throughout the whole country. A nonconformist preacher and Joseph Chamberlain combined to inaugurate this system. It was prompted by the democratisation of suffrage. To win over the masses it was necessary to call into being an enormous apparatus of associations which were democratic in appearance, so as to create a voting association in each district of the town, to keep the organisation in constant operation, and to subject everything to tight bureaucratic control. Increasingly, paid officials were employed, while the formal bearers of party policy were chief negotiators with a right of co-option, elected by local electoral committees in which perhaps about 10 per cent of the voters, all in all, were soon organised. The driving force came from local people,

[32] 'Election agent' is in English here and subsequently.
[33] 'Leader' is in English.

particularly from those with an interest in municipal politics (the source of the richest material pickings everywhere), who were also primarily responsible for raising the necessary funds. This newly emerging machine, no longer directed from parliament, very soon came into conflict with the previous holders of power, above all with the Whip. Drawing its support from local interests, however, it was so successful in this struggle that the Whip had to submit to its power and seek compromises with it. The result was the centralisation of all power in the hands of a few people and ultimately of one person at the head of the party. In the Liberal Party the rise of this whole system had to do with Gladstone's rise to power. The fascinating thing about Gladstone's 'grand' demagogy, the firm belief of the masses in the ethical content of his policies and above all in the ethical character of his personality, was what led this machine so quickly to victory over the notables. A Caesarist plebiscitary element, the dictator of the electoral battlefield, entered the political arena. This very soon made itself felt. The caucus became active for the first time in national elections in 1877, and did so with brilliant success, for the result was Disraeli's fall from power at the height of his great successes. By 1886, when the issue of Home Rule was opened up, the machine was already so completely oriented on the charismatic appeal of the leader's personality that the entire apparatus, from top to bottom, did not ask, 'Do we share Gladstone's position in this matter?', but rather simply wheeled at his command, saying, 'Whatever he does, we will follow him.' In so doing, the apparatus simply left Chamberlain, the man who had created it, high and dry.

This machinery necessitates a considerable human apparatus. In England there are probably no less than 2,000 individuals who make their living directly from party politics. Admittedly, the number of those who play a part in politics merely in order to obtain an office or pursue some personal interest is much greater still, particularly in local politics. As well as economic opportunities, the useful caucus politician has opportunities to satisfy his vanity. By the nature of things, it is the height of (normal) ambition to aspire to the title of J.P. or even M.P., and this goal is attained by people of good upbringing, that is 'gentlemen'.[34] The highest prize of all, one particularly

[34] 'Gentlemen' is in English here and subsequently.

striven after by wealthy patrons (in a country where approximately 50 per cent of party finances took the form of contributions from anonymous donors), was a peerage.

What has been the effect, then, of this whole system? It has been to turn most English members of parliament into nothing better than well-disciplined lobby-fodder, the only exceptions being a few members of the cabinet and some mavericks. In our Reichstag it was customary at least to deal with one's private correspondence while sitting at one's desk in the house in order to give the impression that one was working for the weal of the nation. Such gestures are not required in England. There the member of parliament merely has to vote and to refrain from betraying his party. He has to appear when the Whips summon him, and to do whatever is decreed either by the cabinet or the leader of the opposition. When the leader is strong, the caucus-machine out in the country is almost wholly unprincipled and entirely in his hands. This means that above parliament there stands a man who is in fact a plebiscitary dictator, who rallies the masses behind him by means of the party 'machine', and who regards members of parliament simply as political prebendaries who belong to his following.

How, then, is this leadership selected? Firstly, on the basis of what ability is the selection made? Here what matters most – apart from the qualities of will which are decisive everywhere in the world – is of course the power of demagogic speech. Its nature has changed since Cobden's time, when the appeal was to reason, via Gladstone, a master of the technique of seeming soberly to 'let the facts speak for themselves', down to the present where purely emotive means, like those of the Salvation Army, are often deployed in order to stir the masses. The existing state of things well deserves the name of a 'dictatorship which rests on the exploitation of the emotionality of the masses'.[35] But the highly developed committee system in the English parliament makes it possible and indeed forces any politician who hopes to gain a share in the leadership to join in the *work* of committees. All ministers of note during the last few decades have undergone a very real and effective training in this form of work, while the practice of reporting and publicly criticising these delibera-

[35] Weber is presumably referring again to Ostrogorski's work but these particular words cannot be found there.

that this school involves a genuine process of selection excludes anyone who is a mere demagogue.

This is how things are in England. The caucus system there, however, existed only in attenuated form in comparison with party organisation in America, where the plebiscitary principle was developed unusually early and in a particularly pure form. As he conceived it, Washington's America was to be a commonwealth governed by 'gentlemen'. In America, too, a gentleman was in those days a landed proprietor or a man with a college education, and this is how things were indeed run at first. When parties were formed it was initially members of the House of Representatives who claimed the leadership, as was the case in England during the period of rule by notables. Party organisation was quite loose. This state of affairs lasted until 1824. The party machine was already coming into existence before the 1820s in some municipalities (which were the birthplace of the modern development here too). But it was the election of Andrew Jackson as president, the candidate of the farmers in the West, which first overturned the old traditions. The formal end to the leadership of the parties by leading parliamentary representatives happened soon after 1840 when the great parliamentarians – Calhoun, Webster – withdrew from political life because parliament had lost virtually all its power *vis-à-vis* the party machine out in the country. The reason for the early development of the plebiscitary 'machine' in America was that there, and only there, the head of the executive and – most importantly – the chief of official patronage was a president elected on the plebiscitary principle who, as a result of the 'separation of powers' was almost independent of parliament in the exercise of his office. Thus the reward of success in the presidential election in particular was the prospect of being able to distribute booty in the form of official prebends. The consequence of this was the 'spoils system'[36] which Andrew Jackson now elevated, systematically, to the status of a principle.

What does this spoils system – the allocation of all federal offices to the victorious candidate's following – mean for the formation of parties nowadays? It means that the contending parties are utterly unprincipled. They are purely and simply organisations for position-seekers, which draw up their changing programmes for each election

[36] 'Spoils system' is in English here and subsequently.

campaign according to the chances of winning votes. It also means that these programmes are changeable to a degree not found anywhere else, despite any other analogies which may exist. The parties are entirely tailored towards winning the most important campaign for the patronage of offices, namely the election of the President of the Union and the governorships of individual states. The programmes and the candidates are decided at the parties' 'national conventions'[37] without the intervention of the parliamentary representatives. These are party congresses to which people are sent, in a formally very democratic way, by assemblies of delegates, which in turn derive their mandate from the 'primaries',[38] the fundamental voting assemblies of the parties. Even at the primaries the delegates are chosen in relation to the name of the candidate for the headship of state; *within* the individual parties the fiercest struggle rages around the question of the 'nomination'.[39] The president has in his hands the power to name the holders of no less than 300,000 to 400,000 offices, and he alone carries out this task, consulting only the senators of the individual states. The senators are therefore powerful politicians. The House of Representatives, by contrast, has relatively little political power because the patronage of office is not in its hands, and because ministers, who are purely aides to a president whom the people have legitimated *vis-à-vis* everyone (parliament included), are able to exercise their office regardless of its confidence or lack of confidence. This is a consequence of the 'separation of powers'.

The spoils system based on these arrangements was technically *possible* in America because a purely amateur way of conducting business could be tolerated in such a young civilisation (*Kultur*). A state of affairs where there were 300,000 or 400,000 of these party men whose only demonstrable qualification for office was the fact that they had served their party well could not of course exist without enormous evils – unparalleled waste and corruption – which could only be sustained by a country with, as yet, unlimited economic opportunities.

The figure who now appears on the scene along with this system of the plebiscitary party machine is the party 'boss'. What is the boss?

[37] 'National conventions' is in English.
[38] 'Primaries' is in English.
[39] 'Nomination' is in English.

A political capitalist entrepreneur who supplies votes on his own account and at his own risk. He may have forged his first connections as an advocate or a pub-landlord or the proprietor of some such business, or perhaps as a creditor. From there he spins his threads until he is able to 'control' a certain number of votes. Once he has got this far he forges links with the neighbouring bosses, and, by his zeal, skill and above all his discretion, catches the eye of those who have already progressed further in their careers, and so he begins to rise. The boss is indispensable to the organisation of the party. This is centralised in his hands. Very largely it is he who procures the means. How does he come by them? Well, partly by subscriptions from party members; above all by taxing the salaries of those officials who came to office through him and his party. Then through gratuities and bribes. Anyone who wishes to break one of the many laws with impunity needs the connivance of the bosses and has to pay for it – otherwise things will inevitably be made unpleasant for him. But this alone does not suffice to procure all the operating capital. The boss is indispensable as the direct recipient of money from the great financial magnates who would not entrust money for electoral purposes to any paid party official or indeed to anyone presenting accounts in public. With his astute discretion in financial matters, the boss is of course just the man for the capitalist circles who fund the election. The typical boss is an absolutely sober man. He has no ambition for social honour; the 'professional'[40] is despised in 'polite society'. His sole aim is power, power as a source of money, but also for its own sake. He works behind the scenes, which is where he differs from the English 'leader'. One does not hear him speak in public; he suggests to the speakers what they ought to say to achieve their goals, but he himself remains silent. As a rule he accepts no office apart from that of a federal senator. For, as senators have a constitutional role in the patronage of office, the leading bosses often sit in this body in person. The allocation of offices is determined first and foremost by what an individual has done for the party. Frequently, however, they were also allocated in return for payments of money, and some offices have particular rates attached to them – a system of selling offices familiar from many monarchies, including the Papal States, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

[40] 'Professional' is in English here and subsequently.

The boss has no firm political 'principles'. He is entirely unprincipled and is only interested in the question of what will win votes. Not infrequently he is a man with a fairly poor upbringing. His private life, however, is usually correct and beyond reproach. Only in his political ethics does he adapt himself, naturally enough, to the average ethical standards of political conduct which are a fact of life, just as many of us Germans probably did in the sphere of economic ethics during the period of hoarding. The fact that he is socially despised for being a 'professional' politician does not trouble him. There is an advantage in the fact that he himself neither can nor wants to enter the great offices of the Union, namely the possibility that good minds from outside the party may be adopted as candidates, men of reputation rather than just the same old party notables as in our system, provided the bosses think they will win votes. The structure of this unprincipled party with its socially despised wielders of power has thus made it possible for able men to attain the office of president who would never have succeeded under our system. Admittedly, the bosses resist any outsider whom they perceive as a possible threat to their own sources of money and power. But in the competition for the favour of the voters they have been obliged not infrequently to condescend to accept precisely those candidates who were reputed to be opponents of corruption.

Thus in America parties are run on markedly capitalistic lines. They are tightly organised from top to bottom, and supported by extremely stable political clubs such as Tammany Hall which are organised almost like religious orders but which aim exclusively at making profits by exercising political control, above all over municipal governments (these being the most important object of exploitation here too). It was possible for party life to develop this kind of structure in the United States because of the high degree of democracy in this 'young country'. The connection between these things means, however, that this system is slowly dying out. America can no longer be governed on a purely amateur basis. If you asked American workers fifteen years ago why they let themselves be governed by politicians whom they themselves claimed to despise, you got the answer: 'We would rather our officials were people we can spit on, than be like you and have a caste of officials who spit on us'. That was the old standpoint of American 'democracy'. Yet the socialists already thought quite differently even then, and this state of affairs

is no longer tolerated. Administration by amateurs is no longer adequate and the Civil Service Reform[41] is creating tenured, pensionable posts in steadily growing numbers. As a result, university-trained officials, who are just as incorruptible and able as our own, are entering these offices. Approximately 100,000 offices are no longer objects for booty when the election comes round, but are pensionable and tied to the candidate's ability to demonstrate his qualifications. This will cause the spoils system to lose ground slowly; the leadership of the parties will then transform itself accordingly. It is just that we do not yet know, how.

Up till now the decisive factors affecting the operation of politics in *Germany* have been essentially as follows: firstly, there is the impotence of our parliaments. The result of this was that no one with leadership qualities went into parliament for any length of time. Supposing one wanted to enter parliament – what could one do there? If a chancellery post fell vacant, one could say to the appropriate administrative head, 'I have a very able man in my constituency who would be suitable, why don't you take him?' This was granted readily. But that was more or less all a German member of parliament could achieve by way of satisfying his instincts for power – if he had any. Then there was the fact that trained professional officialdom in Germany was so enormously important (this second factor being a reason for the first). We had the best officials in the world. A consequence of this was that trained officials sought not only posts in the civil service but also ministerial posts. Last year, when 'parliamentarisation' was being discussed in the Bavarian Diet, it was argued that gifted people would no longer want to become officials if ministerial posts were given to members of parliament. Apart from this, the administration carried out by officials systematically escaped the kind of control that is exercised through the discussions in committee under the English system. This made the German parliaments (with few exceptions) incapable of training genuinely useful heads of the administration from within their own ranks.

The third factor was the existence of parties in Germany (in contrast to America) which were parties of political principle (*gesinnungspolitische Parteien*) which claimed, in what they at least felt was good faith, that their membership supported particular *Weltanschauungen*. The two most important of these parties (the Catholic

[41] 'Civil Service Reform' is in English.

Centre Party on the one hand and the Social Democrats on the other) were, however, born minority parties, as indeed they were deliberately designed to be. The leading circles of the Centre Party in the Reich never made any secret of the fact that they opposed parliamentary rule because they feared being in the minority, for the reason that this would make it much more difficult for them to accommodate position-seekers who, hitherto, could be found posts by putting pressure on the government. The Social Democrats were a minority party and an obstacle to the growth of parliamentary power as a matter of principle, because they did not want to be besmirched by contact with the established bourgeois political order. The fact that these two parties excluded themselves from the parliamentary system made that system impossible.

Given this situation, what became of the professional politicians in Germany? They had no power, no responsibility, and could only play a fairly subaltern role as notables, with the result that they were animated yet again by the instincts which are typically to be found in all 'guilds'. It was impossible for anybody not cast in the same mould to rise within the circle of these notables who made their life out of whatever little position they held. I could cite numerous names from each of the parties (and the Social Democrats are, of course, no exception), which represent tragic political careers because the persons concerned had leadership qualities and, for that very reason, were not tolerated by the notables. By taking this path, all our parties have turned into guilds of notables. Bebel, for example, was still a leader by virtue of his temperament and the purity of his character, however modest his intellectual gifts. The fact that he was a martyr, that he never betrayed the trust of the masses (in their eyes), meant that he had the masses absolutely behind him, so that no power within the party was capable of seriously challenging him. After his death this situation came to an end, and rule by officials began. Union officials, party secretaries and journalists were in the ascendant, the instincts of officials dominated the party, a most honourable body of officials (indeed exceptionally honourable, one may say, if one considers conditions in other countries, particularly the often corrupt union officials in America), but the consequences of rule by officials discussed above also affected the party.

From the 1880s onwards the bourgeois parties became purely and simply guilds of notables. From time to time, admittedly, the parties had to recruit minds from outside the party for advertising purposes,

in order to be able to say, 'These famous names are on our side.' As far as possible, they tried to prevent such people standing in elections. This only occurred where it was unavoidable, because the person concerned insisted on it.

The same spirit was to be found in parliament. Our parliamentary parties were and still are guilds. Every speech delivered before a full session of the Reichstag is thoroughly censored in advance by the party. This is plain from the fact that they are unspeakably boring. An individual may only speak if he is a nominated speaker. A greater contrast to the English system – or to what (for quite opposite reasons) is the custom in France – is hardly conceivable.

At present a change may be taking place as a result of the mighty collapse that is customarily referred to as the revolution. Perhaps this is so – but it is not certain. The beginnings of new kinds of party apparatus began to emerge at first. Amateur apparatuses in the first place, very often manned by students from the various universities, who say to a man to whom they attribute leadership qualities, 'We will do what needs to be done if you tell us what it is.' Secondly, commercial apparatuses. There have been cases of certain people approaching a man they thought had leadership qualities and offering to take care of the canvassing of voters in return for a fixed sum for each vote. If you were to ask me which of these two apparatuses I honestly thought the more reliable from a purely technical-political point of view, I think I would choose the latter. But both types of apparatus were bubbles which rose quickly and disappeared just as quickly. The existing apparatuses restructured themselves, but continued operating. Those phenomena were only a symptom of the fact that new apparatuses would perhaps come into being if only the leaders were to be found. But the technical peculiarities of proportional representation were enough to preclude their rise. Just a handful of street dictators arose, who then disappeared again. And it is only the following of a street dictator which has a firmly disciplined organisation, which explains the power of these tiny minorities.

Assuming all this were to change, it has to be clearly stated in the light of the above that, when plebiscitary leaders are in charge of parties, this means a 'loss of soul' (*Entseelung*)[42] for the following,

[42] The problem of how to overcome soul-destroying 'dehumanisation' and 'capitalist mechanisation' was a central topic in contemporary political debate. It was discussed

what one might call their spiritual proletarianisation. In order to be a useful apparatus in the leader's hands, the following has to obey blindly, be a machine in the American sense, it must not be disturbed by the vanity of notables or by pretensions to individual opinions. Lincoln's election was only made possible by this kind of party organisation, and in Gladstone's case, as we have said, the same thing occurred in the caucus. That is simply the price to be paid for having a leader in charge of the party. But the only choice lies between a leadership democracy with a 'machine' and democracy without a leader, which means rule by the 'professional politician' who has no vocation, the type of man who lacks precisely those inner, charismatic qualities which make a leader. Usually this means what the rebels within any given party call rule by the 'clique'. For the time being only the latter exists here in Germany. The future continuance of this arrangement, in the Reich at any rate, is favoured by the likelihood that the *Bundesrat* will come into being again, which will necessarily limit the power of the Reichstag and hence the importance of the Reichstag as a place where leaders are selected. A further factor is proportional representation in its present form, a typical feature of a leaderless democracy, not only because it favours horse-trading amongst notables for the allocation of places on the lists, but also because it will in future make it possible for pressure groups to force the parties to include their officials in the lists, thereby creating an unpolitical parliament in which there is no place for genuine leadership. The only remaining outlet for the desire for leadership might be the office of *Reichspräsident* if the president were to be elected by plebiscitary rather than parliamentary means. Leadership based on proven ability for work could emerge and be selected if, in the large municipalities, plebiscitary city dictators were to come on the scene with the right to assemble their own administrative bureaus independently, as happened throughout the United States wherever a serious effort was made to stamp out corruption. The precondition for this would be a party organisation tailored to the needs of such elections. But the thoroughly petty bourgeois hostility shown towards leadership by all our parties, (including the Social Democrats in particular), means that there is no way of knowing what shape parties

at the cultural conferences held at Burg Lauenstein in May and October 1917 which Weber attended.

will take in the future, and therefore what the chances are of any of these things coming about.

Thus there is no way of foreseeing today what outward shape the business of politics as a 'profession' will take, and consequently, even less possibility of knowing how opportunities might arise for politically gifted people to be presented with satisfying political tasks. Anyone whose financial situation requires him to live 'from' politics will probably always have to choose between journalism or a post as a party official, these being the two typical direct routes, or to join one of the organisations representing special interests, such as a trade union, chamber of commerce, agricultural chamber, chamber of crafts, trades council, employers' association, or to seek a suitable position in local government. One can say no more about the outward aspect of things other than that the party official shares with the journalist the odium of being 'declassed'. Unfortunately, the former will always hear the name 'hired hack' and the latter 'hired orator' ringing in his ears, even if these words are never actually spoken aloud. Anyone who is without inner defences against such slights and is unable, in his own mind, to give his own, correct reply to them, should steer clear of this career because, quite apart from the severe temptations to which it exposes a man, it can be a source of continual disappointment.

What kinds of inner joy does politics have to offer, and what kinds of personal qualifications does it presuppose in anyone turning to this career?

Well, first of all, it confers a feeling of power. The professional politician can have a sense of rising above everyday existence, even in what is formally a modest position, through knowing that he exercises influence on people, shares power over them, but above all from the knowledge that he holds in his hands some vital strand of historically important events. But the question facing such a person is which qualities will enable him to do justice to this power (however narrowly circumscribed it may actually be in any particular case), and thus to the reponsibility it imposes on him. This takes us into the area of ethical questions, for to ask what kind of a human being one must be in order to have the right to seize the spokes of the wheel of history is to pose an ethical question.

One can say that three qualities are pre-eminently decisive for a politician: passion, a sense of responsibility, judgement. Passion in

the sense of *concern for the thing itself* (*Sachlichkeit*), the passionate commitment to a 'cause' (*Sache*), to the god or demon[43] who commands that cause. Not in the sense of that inner attitude which my late friend Georg Simmel was wont to describe as 'sterile excitement'.[44] This is characteristic of a particular type of intellectual (especially Russian intellectuals, but of course not all of them!), and also plays such a large part amongst our own intellectuals at this carnival which is being graced with the proud name of a 'revolution'; it is the 'romanticism of the intellectually interesting', directed into the void and lacking all objective (*sachlich*) sense of responsibility. Simply to feel passion, however genuinely, is not sufficient to make a politician unless, in the form of service to a 'cause', *responsibility* for that cause becomes the decisive lode-star of all action. This requires (and this is the decisive psychological quality of the politician) *judgement*, the ability to maintain one's inner composure and calm while being receptive to realities, in other words *distance* from things and people. A 'lack of distance', in and of itself, is one of the deadly sins for any politician and it is one of those qualities which will condemn our future intellectuals to political incompetence if they cultivate it. For the problem is precisely this: how are hot passion and cool judgement to be forced together in a single soul? Politics is an activity conducted with the head, not with other parts of the body or soul. Yet if politics is to be genuinely human action, rather than some frivolous intellectual game, dedication to it can only be generated and sustained by passion. Only if one accustoms oneself to distance, in every sense of the word, can one achieve that powerful control over the soul which distinguishes the passionate politician from the mere 'sterile excitement' of the political amateur. The 'strength' of a political 'personality' means, first and foremost, the possession of these qualities.

Every day and every hour, therefore, the politician has to overcome a quite trivial, all-too-human enemy which threatens him from within: common *vanity*, the mortal enemy of all dedication to a cause and of all distance – in this case, of distance to oneself.

[43] In this instance Weber is using *Dämon* in the same sense as the English 'demon'; elsewhere he uses it without the sense of moral evil.

[44] This use of *Aufgeregtheit* as a derogatory term for revolutionary fervour was prefigured in Goethe's fragmentary satire on the consequences of the French Revolution, *Die Aufgeregten*.

Vanity is a very widespread quality, and perhaps no one is completely free of it. In academic and scholarly circles it is a kind of occupational disease. In the case of the scholar, however, unattractive though this quality may be, it is relatively harmless in the sense that it does not, as a rule, interfere with the pursuit of knowledge. Things are quite different in the case of the politician. The ambition for *power* is an inevitable means (*Mittel*) with which he works. 'The instinct for power', as it is commonly called, is thus indeed one of his normal qualities. The sin against the holy spirit of his profession begins where this striving for power becomes detached from the task in hand (*unsachlich*) and becomes a matter of purely personal self-intoxication instead of being placed entirely at the service of the 'cause'. For there are ultimately just two deadly sins in the area of politics: a lack of objectivity and – often, although not always, identical with it – a lack of responsibility. Vanity, the need to thrust one's person as far as possible into the foreground, is what leads the politician most strongly into the temptation of committing one or other (or both) of these sins, particularly as the demagogue is forced to count on making an 'impact', and for this reason is always in danger both of becoming a play-actor and of taking the responsibility for his actions too lightly and being concerned only with the 'impression' he is making. His lack of objectivity tempts him to strive for the glittering appearance of power rather than its reality, while his irresponsibility tempts him to enjoy power for its own sake, without any substantive purpose. For although, or rather precisely *because*, power is the inevitable means of all politics, and the ambition for power therefore one of its driving forces, there is no more pernicious distortion of political energy than when the parvenu boasts of his power and vainly mirrors himself in the feeling of power – or indeed any and every worship of power for its own sake. The mere 'power politician', a type whom an energetically promoted cult is seeking to glorify here in Germany as elsewhere, may give the impression of strength, but in fact his actions merely lead into emptiness and absurdity. On this point the critics of 'power politics' are quite correct. The sudden inner collapse of typical representatives of this outlook (*Gesinnung*) has shown us just how much inner weakness and ineffectuality are concealed behind this grandiose but empty pose. It stems from a most wretched and superficial lack of concern for the *meaning* of human action, a blasé attitude that knows nothing of the tragedy in

which all action, but quite particularly political action, is in truth enmeshed.

It is certainly true, and it is a fundamental fact of history (for which no more detailed explanation can be offered here), that the eventual outcome of political action frequently, indeed regularly, stands in a quite inadequate, even paradoxical relation to its original, intended meaning and purpose (*Sinn*). That does not mean, however, that this meaning and purpose, service to a *cause*, can be dispensed with if action is to have any firm inner support. The *nature* of the cause the politician seeks to serve by striving for and using power is a question of faith. He can serve a national goal or the whole of humanity, or social and ethical goals, or goals which are cultural, inner-worldly or religious; he may be sustained by a strong faith in 'progress' (however this is understood), or he may coolly reject this kind of faith; he can claim to be the servant of an 'idea' or, rejecting on principle any such aspirations, he may claim to serve external goals of everyday life – but some kind of belief must always be *present*. Otherwise (and there can be no denying this) even political achievements which, outwardly, are supremely successful will be cursed with the nullity of all mortal undertakings.

Having said this, we have already broached the last problem which concerns us this evening, the problem of the ethos of politics as a 'cause' (*Sache*). What vocation can politics *per se*, quite independently of its goals, fulfil within the overall moral economy of our conduct of life? Where is what one might call the ethical home of politics? At this point, admittedly, ultimate *Weltanschauungen* collide, and one has eventually to *choose* between them. The problem has recently been re-opened for discussion (in a quite wrong-headed fashion in my view), so let us approach it resolutely.

Let us begin by freeing the problem from a quite trivial falsification. In the first place, ethics can appear in a morally quite calamitous role. Let us look at some examples. You will rarely find a man whose love has turned from one woman to another who does not feel the need to legitimate this fact to himself by saying, 'She did not deserve my love', or, 'She disappointed me', or by offering some other such 'reasons'. This is a profoundly unchivalrous attitude, for, in addition to the simple fate of his ceasing to love her, which the woman must endure, it invents for itself a 'legitimacy' that allows the man to lay claim to a 'right'

while attempting to burden her not only with misfortune but also with being in the wrong. The successful rival in love behaves in exactly the same way: the other man must be of lesser worth, otherwise he would not have been defeated. The same thing happens after any victorious war, when the victor will of course assert, with ignoble self-righteousness, 'I won because I was in the right.' Or when the horrors of war cause a man to suffer a psychological breakdown, instead of simply saying, 'It was all just too much for me', he now feels the need to justify his war-weariness by substituting the feeling, 'I couldn't bear the experience because I was obliged to fight for a morally bad cause.' The same applies to those defeated in war. Instead of searching, like an old woman, for the 'guilty party' after the war (when it was in fact the structure of society that produced the war), anyone with a manly, unsentimental bearing would say to the enemy, 'We lost the war – you won it. The matter is now settled. Now let us discuss what conclusions are to be drawn in the light of the *substantive* (*sachlichen*) interests involved and – this is the main thing – in the light of the responsibility for the *future* which the victor in particular must bear.' Anything else lacks dignity and will have dire consequences. A nation will forgive damage to its interests, but not injury to its honour, and certainly not when this is done in a spirit of priggish self-righteousness. Every new document which may emerge decades afterwards will stir up the undignified squabble, all the hatred and anger, once again, whereas the war ought at least to be buried *morally* when it comes to an end. That is only possible through a sober, matter-of-fact approach (*Sachlichkeit*) and chivalry, and, above all, it is only possible where there is *dignity*. But it can never be made possible by an 'ethic' which in fact entails indignity for both sides. Instead of dealing with what concerns the politician (the future and our responsibility for it), such an 'ethical' approach concerns itself with politically sterile (because unresolvable) questions of past guilt. *This*, if anything, is what constitutes political guilt. What is more, in this process people lose sight of the inevitable falsification of the whole problem by very material interests – the interests of the victor in maximising the gain (whether moral or material), and the hopes of the defeated that they will negotiate advantages by confessing

their guilt. If anything is '*common*' (*gemein*)[45] it is this, and it is the consequence of using 'ethics' as a means of 'being in the right'.

What, then, is the real relationship between *ethics* and *politics*? Have they nothing at all to do with one another, as has sometimes been said? Or is the opposite true, namely that political action is subject to 'the same' ethic as every other form of activity? At times people have believed that these two possibilities were mutually exclusive alternatives, and that either the one or the other was correct. But is it in fact true that any ethic in the world could establish substantially *identical* commandments applicable to all relationships, whether erotic, business, family or official, to one's relations with one's wife, greengrocer, son, competitor, with a friend or an accused man? Can the fact that politics operates with a quite specific means, namely power, backed up by the use of *violence*, really be a matter of such indifference as far as the ethical demands placed on politics are concerned? Have we not seen that the Bolshevik and Spartacist[46] ideologues, precisely because they use this political instrument, bring about exactly the *same* results as any militarist dictator? What, apart from the identity of the holders of power (and their amateurism) distinguishes the rule of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils from the rule of any wielder of power under the old regime? What distinguishes the polemics directed by most exponents of the supposedly new ethics at the opponents they criticise from the polemics of any other demagogues? Their noble intentions, some will say. Very well. But the question under discussion here is the means, and their enemies lay just as much claim to noble ultimate aims, and do so with complete subjective sincerity. 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword',[47] and fighting is fighting everywhere. What about the ethics of the *Sermon on the Mount* then? The Sermon on the Mount, by which we mean the absolute ethics of the Gospel, is something

[45] For Nietzsche, as for Weber, *gemein* ('common', 'base', 'contemptible') was the antithesis of *vornehm* ('distinguished', 'noble'). Weber's objection to the (mis-)use of 'ethics' to prove one is 'in the right' echoes Nietzschean scepticism about the 'moral interpretation of phenomena'.

[46] The Spartakus League, led by Karl Liebknecht, was formed in 1916–17. A left socialist group opposed to war, it adopted the name of the Communist Party of Germany in December 1918.

[47] Matthew 26, 52.

far more serious than those who are so fond of citing its commandments today believe. It is not to be taken frivolously. What has been said about causality in science also applies to this ethic, namely that it is not a hired cab which one may stop at will and climb into or out of as one sees fit. Rather, the meaning of the sermon (if it is not to be reduced to banality) is precisely this: we must accept it in its entirety *or* leave it entirely alone. Hence the case of the rich young man: 'he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.'[48] The commandment of the Gospel is unconditional and unambiguous – 'give all that thou hast' – *everything*, absolutely. The politician will say that this is an excessive and socially meaningless demand if it is not made to apply to *everybody*, which means taxation, expropriation by taxation, confiscation, in other words, coercion and order applied to *all*. The ethical commandment disregards such questions *completely* – that is its essence. The same applies to the injunction to 'turn the other cheek!' – unconditionally, without asking by what right the other person has struck you. An ethic of indignity, except for a saint. This is the heart of the matter: it is necessary to be a saint in *all* things, or at least one must want to be one, one must live like Jesus, the Apostles, Saint Francis and men of that kind; *then* this type of ethic becomes meaningful and expresses a kind of dignity. *But not otherwise*. For while it is a consequence of the unworldly ethic of love to say, 'resist not evil with force',[49] the politician is governed by the contrary maxim, namely, ' You *shall* resist evil with force, for if you do not, you are *responsible* for the spread of evil.' Anyone seeking to act in accordance with the ethic of the Gospel should not go on strike, since strikes are a form of coercion; instead he should join an unaffiliated trade union. Above all, he should not talk of 'revolution', for that ethic surely does not teach that civil war of all things is the only legitimate form of war. The pacifist whose actions are guided by the Gospel will refuse weapons or throw them away, as we Germans were recommended to do, so that we might fulfil our ethical duty to end the war, and thus to end all war. The politician will say that the only sure means of discrediting war for the *foreseeable* future would have been peace on the basis of the *status quo*. Then the people of all nations would have asked what the point of the war

[48] Matthew 19, 22.

[49] Matthew 5, 39: 'That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.'

was. It would have been reduced to absurdity, which is not now possible. For the war will have proved to be politically profitable for the victors, or at least for some of them. The responsibility for this outcome lies with the behaviour which made it quite impossible for us to resist. What will now happen – once the phase of exhaustion has passed – is, that *peace, not war, will have been discredited* – and this will be the result of absolute ethics.

Finally, there is the duty to be truthful. For the ethic of absolute principles this is an unconditional duty.[50] Hence it was concluded that all documents should be published, especially those which placed a burden of guilt on our country, and that a confession of guilt should be made on the basis of these documents – unilaterally, unconditionally, regardless of the consequences. The politician will take the view that the upshot of this will not serve the cause of truth, but rather that truth will certainly be obscured by the misuse of the documents and by the passions they unleash. He will take the view that the only productive approach would be a systematic, comprehensive investigation, conducted by disinterested parties; any other way of proceeding could have consequences for the nation which could not be repaired in decades. 'Consequences', however, are no *concern* of absolutist ethics.

That is the crucial point. We have to understand that ethically oriented activity can follow two fundamentally different, irreconcilably opposed maxims. It can follow the 'ethic of principled conviction' (*Gesinnung*) or the 'ethic of responsibility'. It is not that the ethic of conviction is identical with irresponsibility, nor that the ethic of responsibility means the absence of principled conviction – there is of course no question of that. But there is a profound opposition between acting by the maxim of the ethic of conviction (putting it in religious terms: 'The Christian does what is right and places the outcome in God's hands'),[51] and acting by the maxim of the ethic of

[50] Kant's attempt to found ethics on the 'categorical imperative' led him to argue that there was an absolute obligation to tell the truth, even where to do so might lead to the loss of human life. See, for example, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. M. Gregor (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 225–7. Kant's was one of the most influential voices arguing for 'anti-consequentialism' in ethics in Germany.

[51] Although an exact source for these words (used on several occasions by Weber) has not been traced, the editors of the new *Gesamtausgabe* believe they allude to a passage in Luther's lectures on *Genesis*, 'Fac tuum officium, et eventum Deo permitte', *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. XLIV (Weimar, 1915), p. 78.

responsibility, which means that one must answer for the (foreseeable) *consequences* of one's actions. A syndicalist who is committed to the ethics of conviction might be fully aware that the likely consequences of his actions will be, say, increased chances for the forces of reaction, increased oppression of his own class, a brake on the rise of his class. But none of this will make the slightest impression on him. If evil consequences flow from an action done out of pure conviction, this type of person holds the world, not the doer, responsible, or the stupidity of others, or the will of God who made them thus. A man who subscribes to the ethic of responsibility, by contrast, will make allowances for precisely these everyday shortcomings in people. He has no right, as Fichte correctly observed,[52] to presuppose goodness and perfection in human beings. He does not feel that he can shuffle off the consequences of his own actions, as far as he could foresee them, and place the burden on the shoulders of others. He will say, 'These consequences are to be attributed to my actions.' The person who subscribes to the ethic of conviction feels 'responsible' only for ensuring that the flame of pure conviction (for example, the flame of protest against the injustice of the social order) is never extinguished. To kindle that flame again and again is the purpose of his actions, actions which, judged from the point of view of their possible success, are utterly irrational, and which can and are only intended to have exemplary value.

Yet we have still not reached the end of the problem. No ethics in the world can get round the fact that the achievement of 'good' ends is in many cases tied to the necessity of employing morally suspect or at least morally dangerous means, and that one must reckon with the possibility or even likelihood of evil side-effects. Nor can any ethic in the world determine when and to what extent the ethically good end 'sanctifies' the ethically dangerous means and side-effects.

The decisive means of politics is the use of violence. Just how great are the ramifications of the ethical tension between ends and means in politics can be seen in the case of the revolutionary socialists

[52] Fichte quotes such sentiments from Machiavelli's *Discourses* in 'Über Macchiavelli (sic!) als Schriftsteller', *Johann Gottlieb Fichtes nachgelassene Werke*, vol. III (Bonn, 1856), p. 420.

(the Zimmerwald faction).[53] Even during the war, as is generally known, they espoused a principle which one might characterise thus: 'If the choice lies between a few more years of war, followed by a revolution, and peace now but no revolution, we choose a few more years of war.' If then asked what this revolution might achieve, any scientifically trained socialist would have replied that there could be no question of a transition to an economy deserving the name 'socialist' as *he* understood the term. Rather, a bourgeois economy would arise again which would have shed only its feudal elements and the remnants of dynasticism. For this modest result they would accept 'a few more years of war'! In this instance it could well be said that even a person of very firm socialist convictions might reject the end if these are the means it demands. But this is precisely how things stand with Bolshevism and Spartacism and indeed every type of revolutionary socialism. Hence it is of course utterly ridiculous for such people to condemn *morally* the 'politicians of violence' of the old regime for using precisely the same means as they are prepared to use (no matter how justified they may be in rejecting the *aims* of the other side).

It seems that the ethics of conviction is bound to founder hopelessly on this problem of how the end is to sanctify the means. Indeed the only position it can logically take is to *reject any* action which employs morally dangerous means. Logically. In the real world, admittedly, we repeatedly see the proponent of the 'ethics of conviction' suddenly turning into a chiliastic prophet. Those who have been preaching 'love against force' one minute, for example, issue a call to force the next; they call for one *last* act of force to create the situation in which *all* violence will have been destroyed for ever – just like our military leaders who said to the soldiers before every attack that this would be the last, that it would bring victory and then peace. The man who espouses an ethic of conviction cannot bear the ethical irrationality of the world. He is a cosmic-ethical 'rationalist'. Those of you who know their Dostoyevsky will recall the scene with the Grand Inquisitor, where the problem is dissected very acutely.[54]

[53] In September 1915 a group of radical socialists held a conference in Zimmerwald (near Berne) with the aim of founding a new (Third) International. Despite further conferences in 1916 and 1917, they could not achieve unity.

[54] F. Dostoyevsky *The Brothers Karamazov*, Book 5, ch. 5.

It is not possible to unite the ethic of conviction with the ethic of responsibility, nor can one issue an ethical decree determining which end shall sanctify *which* means, if indeed any concession at all is to be made to this principle.

My colleague, F. W. Foerster,[55] a man I hold in the highest personal esteem because of the undoubted integrity of his convictions (although I reject him unreservedly as a politician), thinks that he can get round the difficulty in his book with the simple thesis that only good can flow from good, only evil from evil. Were this so, the whole, complex problem would admittedly not exist. Yet it is astonishing that such a thesis could still see the light of day 2,500 years after the Upanishads were composed. Not just the entire course of world history, but any unbiased examination of daily experience, proclaims the opposite. The development of all the religions in the world rests, after all, on the fact that the opposite is true. The age-old problem of theodicy is, after all, the question of how a power which is said to be both all-powerful and benevolent can possibly have created such an irrational world of undeserved suffering, unpunished injustice and incorrigible stupidity. Either that power is not all-powerful or it is not benevolent – or quite other principles of compensation and retribution govern life, principles which we may be able to interpret metaphysically or which will for ever elude our interpretation. This problem, the experience of the irrationality of the world, was, after all, the driving force behind all religious development. The Indian doctrine of *karma*, Persian dualism, original sin, predestination and the concept of the *deus absconditus*, all these notions have grown out of precisely this experience. The early Christians too knew very well that the world was governed by demons, that anyone who gets involved with politics, which is to say with the means of power and violence, is making a pact with diabolical powers, and that it does *not* hold true of his actions that only good can come of good and only evil from evil, but rather that the opposite is often the case. Anyone who fails to see this is indeed a child in political matters.

Religious ethics have adopted various strategies to come to terms with the fact that we are placed in various orders of life, each of

[55] F. W. Foerster (1869–1966) was a leading spokesman of the Society for Ethical Culture. His *Staatsbürgerliche Erziehung* (1910) ('Education for Citizenship', reprinted under the title *Politische Ethik und politische Pädagogik*) was a popular expression of the ideas of this movement for social reform.

which is subject to different laws. Hellenic polytheism sacrificed to Aphrodite and also to Hera, to Dionysos as well as to Apollo, knowing that these gods were often in conflict with one another. The Hindu order of life made each of the various occupations subject to a particular ethical law, a *dharma*, and forever divided them one from another into castes, setting them in a rigid hierarchy of rank from which there was no escape for the individual born into a particular caste, except through reincarnation in the next life; the different occupations were thereby placed at varying distances from the highest religious goods of salvation. Hinduism was therefore able to elaborate the *dharma* for each caste, from the ascetics and Brahmins down to the rogues and whores, according to the immanent and particular laws governing each occupation, including war and politics. How war is fitted into the totality of the orders of life can be found in the *Bhagavad Gita*, in the discussion between Krishna and Arduna. 'Do what is necessary', which means whatever 'work' is imposed as a duty by the *dharma* of the warrior caste and its rules, whatever is objectively necessary in relation to the purpose of war. According to this belief, acting thus is not injurious to religious salvation; indeed it serves this end. Admission to Indra's heaven had always been assured to the Indian warrior who died a hero's death just as certainly as Valhalla was to the Germanic warrior. But the former would have scorned Nirvana just as surely as the latter would have scorned the paradise of Christianity with its choirs of angels. This specialisation of ethics made it possible for Indian ethics to treat the regal art of politics quite without reservation or scruple, following the peculiar laws of politics alone, indeed intensifying them radically. Truly radical 'Machiavellianism', in the popular sense of the word, finds its classic expression in Indian literature in the *Kautaliya Artha-Sastra* (composed long before Christianity, allegedly in the time of Chandragupta), in comparison with which Machiavelli's *Principe* is harmless. In Catholic ethics, to which Professor Foerster is otherwise sympathetic, the *consilia evangelica* are, as is generally known, a special ethic for those gifted with the charisma of holy life. Here, alongside the monk, who may spill no blood nor seek material gain, there stand the pious knight and the burgher, the first of whom may do the former, while the second may do the latter. The gradations in this ethic and its integration within an organic doctrine of salvation are less consistent than in India, as was bound to be the case, given the

assumptions of the Christian faith. Because the world was corrupted by original sin, it was possible to build violence relatively easily into ethics as a means of chastising sin and heretics who endangered the soul. But the unworldly demands of the Sermon on the Mount, which represent a pure ethics of conviction, and the absolute demand for religious natural justice founded on the Sermon, have retained their revolutionary force and come to the fore with elemental power in almost every period of social upheaval. In particular they created the radical pacifist sects, one of which experimented in Pennsylvania with a state that abjured force in its relations with other states. The outcome of the experiment was tragic, however, inasmuch as the Quakers could not take up arms on behalf of their own ideals at the outbreak of the War of Independence, although this was fought on behalf of those very ideals. Normal Protestantism, by contrast, legitimated the state absolutely (and thus its means, violence) as a divine institution, and gave its blessing to the legitimate authoritarian state in particular. Luther relieved the individual of ethical responsibility for war and placed it on the shoulders of authority, asserting that no guilt could ever be involved in obeying authority in matters other than faith. Calvinism in its turn recognised as a matter of principle the use of force as a means to defend the faith, in other words religious war, which, in Islam, was a vital element in religion from the very beginning. Plainly, the problem of political ethics is *not* just one that has been thrown up by the modern lack of faith engendered by the cult of the hero during the Renaissance. All religions have grappled with it, and with very varying degrees of success; in view of what has been said above, things could not have been otherwise. The specific means of *legitimate violence per se* in the hands of human associations is what gives all the ethical problems of politics their particular character.

Anyone who makes a pact with the means of violence, for whatever purpose – and every politician does this – is at the mercy of its specific consequences. This applies particularly to the man fighting for a belief, whether religious or revolutionary. Let us simply take the present as an example. Anyone wishing to establish absolute justice on earth by *force* needs a following in order to do so, a human 'apparatus'. He must promise these people the necessary inner and outward prizes – rewards in heaven or on earth – because the apparatus will not function otherwise. Under the conditions of modern

class-warfare the inner rewards are the satisfaction of hatred and revenge, of *ressentiment* and the need for the pseudo-ethical feeling of being in the right, the desire to slander one's opponents and make heretics of them. The outward rewards are adventure, victory, booty, power and prebends. The success of the leader is entirely dependent on the functioning of his apparatus. He is therefore dependent on *its* motives, not his own. He is dependent also on the possibility of providing those prizes *permanently* to his following, the Red Guard, the informers, the agitators he needs. Given these conditions of his activity, what he actually achieves does not, therefore, lie in his own hands but is, rather, prescribed for him by the, in ethical terms, predominantly base or common (*gemein*) motives prompting the actions of his following. He can only keep control of his following as long as a sincere belief in his person and his cause inspires at least some of the group, probably never in this life even the majority of them. Not only is this faith, even when held with subjective sincerity, in many cases merely the ethical 'legitimation' of the craving for revenge, power, booty and prebends (and let no-one try to persuade us differently, for the materialist interpretation of history is not a cab which may be boarded at will, and it makes no exceptions for the bearers of revolutions!), but the emotionalism of revolution is then followed by a return to traditional, *everyday existence*, the hero of the faith disappears, and so, above all, does the faith itself, or it becomes (even more effectively) a part of the conventional rhetoric used by political philistines and technicians. This development comes about particularly quickly in a war of faith, because these are usually conducted or inspired by genuine *leaders*, prophets of revolution. For it is one of the conditions of success in this, as in any apparatus subordinate to a leader, that things must be emptied and made into matters-of-fact (*Versachlichung*), and the following must undergo spiritual proletarianisation, in order to achieve 'discipline'. This is why the following of a man fighting for a faith, when it begins to rule, tends to decline particularly easily into a quite ordinary stratum of prebendaries.

Anyone wishing to practise politics of any kind, and especially anyone who wishes to make a profession of politics, has to be conscious of these ethical paradoxes and of his responsibility for what may become of *himself* under pressure from them. He is becoming involved, I repeat, with the diabolical powers that lurk in all violence.

The great virtuosi of unworldly goodness and love for mankind, whether they came from Nazareth or Assisi or from the palaces of Indian kings, did not employ the means of politics, force. Their kingdom was 'not of this world' and yet they worked, and work still, in this world, and the figures of Platon Karatayev[56] and Dostoyevsky's saints are still the closest imitations of their lives. Anyone seeking to save his own soul and the souls of others does not take the path of politics in order to reach his goal, for politics has quite different tasks, namely those which can only be achieved by force. The genius – or demon – of politics lives in a state of inner tension with the god of love, and even with the Christian God as manifested in the institution of the church, a tension that may erupt at any moment into irresolvable conflict. Even in the days of church rule people were aware of this. Again and again the interdict was imposed on Florence (something which represented at the time a far greater power over men and the salvation of their souls than what Fichte has called the 'cold approbation' of Kant's ethical judgement),[57] and yet the citizens of Florence fought against the Holy See. Machiavelli had such situations in mind when, in a beautiful passage in his Florentine histories (if my memory does not deceive me),[58] he has one of his heroes praise those citizens who placed the greatness of their native city above the salvation of their souls.

To see the problem in its current guise, replace the terms 'native city' or 'Fatherland' (which may not strike everyone as an unambiguous value at present) with 'the future of socialism' or even 'the achievement of international peace'. The 'salvation of the soul' is endangered by each of these, whenever men strive to attain them by *political* activity, employing the means of violence and acting on the basis of an ethic of responsibility. Yet if the soul's salvation is pursued in a war of faith fought purely out of an ethic of conviction, it may be damaged and discredited for generations to come, because responsibility for the *consequences* is lacking. In such circumstances those engaged in action remain unaware of the diabolical powers at

[56] Platon Karatayev is a character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

[57] 'Das System der Sittenlehre nach den Principien der Wissenschaftslehre', *Johann Gottlieb Fichtes sämmtliche Werke*, vol. IV (Berlin, 1845), p. 167.

[58] The reference is to Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, Book 3, ch. 7, p. 114: 'so much more did those citizens esteem their fatherland than their souls' (in the translation by L. F. Banfield and H. C. Mansfield, Princeton, 1988).

work. They are inexorable, bringing about the consequences of their actions, including consequences for their inner being, to which they will fall helpless victims if they remain blind to them. 'The devil is old, so become old if you want to understand him'[59] – the saying does not refer to one's age measured in years. I too have never allowed myself to be outdone in debate simply because of a date on a birth certificate; equally, the mere fact that someone is twenty whereas I am over fifty does not persuade me that this in itself is an achievement before which I must expire in awe. What matters is not age but the trained ability to look at the realities of life with an unsparing gaze, to bear these realities and be a match for them inwardly.

For truly, although politics is something done with the head, it is certainly not something done with the head *alone*. On this point the conviction-moralists are entirely correct. But whether one *ought* to act on the basis of an ethics of conviction or one of responsibility, and *when* one should do the one or the other, these are not things about which one can give instructions to anybody. There is just one thing one can say in these times of excitement – *not*, you believe, a 'sterile' form of excitement (although excitement is not always the same as true passion) – if, *suddenly*, conviction-politicians spring up all around, proclaiming, 'The world is stupid and base (*gemein*), not I. Responsibility for the consequences does not fall on me but on the others, in whose service I work and whose stupidity or baseness I shall eradicate', then I say plainly that I want to know how much *inner weight* is carried by this ethic of conviction. For it is my impression that, in nine cases out of ten, I am dealing with windbags, people who are intoxicated with romantic sensations but who do not truly feel what they are taking upon themselves. Such conduct holds little human interest for me and it most certainly does not shake me to the core. On the other hand it is immensely moving when a mature person (whether old or young) who feels with his whole soul the responsibility he bears for the real consequences of his actions, and who acts on the basis of an ethics of responsibility, says at some point, 'Here I stand, I can do no other.'[60] That is something genuinely human and profoundly moving. For it must be *possible* for *each* of us

[59] Goethe, *Faust*, Part II, lines 6817–18.

[60] Luther is reported to have said this at the Diet of Worms in 1521.

to find ourselves in such a situation at some point if we are not inwardly dead. In this respect, the ethics of conviction and the ethics of responsibility are not absolute opposites. They are complementary to one another, and only in combination do they produce the true human being who is *capable* of having a 'vocation for politics'.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, let us return to these questions *ten years* from now. If by that time, as I am bound to fear will be the case, an age of reaction has set in for a whole series of reasons, and little has been realised of all those things which many of you and (as I freely admit) I too have wished and hoped for – perhaps not exactly none of them but apparently only very little (this is very likely, but it will not break my spirit, although I confess that it is an inward burden) – then I would very much like to see what has become of those of you – what has 'become' of you in the innermost sense of the word – who at present feel themselves genuinely to be 'politicians of conviction' and who share in the intoxication (*Rausch*)[61] which this revolution signifies. It would be fine indeed if Shakespeare's Sonnet 102 fitted the situation:

> Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
> When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
> As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
> And stops her pipe in growth of riper days.

But that is not how things are. What lies immediately ahead of us is not the flowering of summer but a polar night of icy darkness and hardness, no matter which group wins the outward victory now. For, where there is nothing, not only has the Kaiser lost his rights but so too has the proletarian. When this night slowly begins to recede, which of those people will still be alive whose early summer seems now to have flowered so profusely? And what will have become of you all inwardly? Embitterment or philistinism, sheer, dull acceptance of the world and of your job (*Beruf*) – or the third, and not the least common possibility, a mystical flight from the world on the part of those with the gift for it or – a frequent and pernicious variant – on the part of those who force themselves into such an attitude because

[61] In criticising the *Rausch* ('intoxication') of revolutionary enthusiasm, Weber is striking at the ready welcome given to the 'Dionysian' aspects of Nietzsche's thought by many German intellectuals at the time.

it is fashionable. In every such case I will draw the conclusion that they were *not* inwardly a match for their own actions, *nor* were they a match for the world as it really is, nor for their daily existence. Objectively and actually, they did not have the vocation they thought they had for politics in the innermost sense of the word. They would have done better to cultivate plain and simple brotherliness with other individuals, and, for the rest, to have worked soberly (*sachlich*) at their daily tasks.

Politics means slow, strong drilling through hard boards, with a combination of passion and a sense of judgement. It is of course entirely correct, and a fact confirmed by all historical experience, that what is possible would never have been achieved if, in this world, people had not repeatedly reached for the impossible. But the person who can do this must be a leader; not only that, he must, in a very simple sense of the word, be a hero. And even those who are neither of these things must, even now, put on the armour of that steadfastness of heart which can withstand even the defeat of all hopes, for otherwise they will not even be capable of achieving what is possible today. Only someone who is certain that he will not be broken when the world, seen from his point of view, is too stupid or too base for what he wants to offer it, and who is certain that he will be able to say 'Nevertheless' in spite of everything – only someone like this has a 'vocation' for politics.