

Editorial

What is a value free standpoint? Max Weber is seen to state the classic position: the obligation to remain unpartisan in scientific statements and the obligation to express values as a person and citizen. Social scientists do not live solely within the academy, they have lives outside it. The scientific life and the everyday life are made of values and their determination. In the Weberian sense, it is the ability and the necessity to connect to the field of studied objects through values and meanings that makes social science possible. Those values and meanings have no objective status – other than the fact that they belong to and suffer from the coordinates of time and space that is the condition of all human existence. Interpretative social science is a science of the experiential, because there is no other datum. Ideal types are thrown heuristic nets with which we try to catch and cognize the complex experience of others. We are connected to the latter by history and by co-temporality and by our always moving spatial position in relation to others' experience. Objectivity is the crafted forensic skill of establishing that *this* happened and being able to discount on reasonable grounds alternative hypotheses of what might have happened. Objectivity is the refusal to occlude theory and reality and the refusal to be prescriptive other than on grounds that reflect the intrinsic value of science. To live in a scientific age is to live in an educated civilization, and the place of the academy is to provide that education which includes educating its citizens about science.

Some of us, like Max Weber, trace this legacy back to the ancient Greeks. Wilhelm Hennis traces Weber back to the Sophists, to the philosophy of Democritus and the historiography of Thucydides. This was a world that predated the ethical and communal sentiments of Plato's academy and its alliance of truth and morality. The Sophists described the world, for the first time, with pitiless objectivity. 'Yet it will be clear that to know how each thing is in reality is a puzzle', wrote Democritus; also: 'In truth we know nothing unerringly, but only as it changes according to the disposition of our body, and of the things that enter into it and impinge on it'. These statements are not

incompatible with Weber's (non-)foundational essay, 'The "objectivity" of knowledge in social science and social policy'. Thucydides gave us *The Peloponnesian War*—how the *polis* deliberates, how it makes war, how it makes peace treaties, how without prudence it can destroy itself. We know of Pericles from Thucydides, of how democracy was born through oratory. Pericles' demagogic and rhetorical skills through the vote of the people won and created for him a place on the Athenian war council, the *strategoï*—so opening the way to the Athenian empire. Weber, in this aspect, made no distinction between ancient and modern democracy. Pericles, Bismarck, Gladstone, Lloyd George and—to update—John F. Kennedy and Tony Blair have the oratorical gifts to take the *demos* to places (ethical, political, strategic) to which it would not otherwise have acceded. Hennis sees this Attic disposition written into Weber's own education—in his reading of Roscher's key text on politics that, in its turn, was informed more by Thucydides than Aristotle, and conversations with his cousin Fritz Baumgarten, an influential Hellenist. Weber's objectivity was not the philological scholasticism of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff but the re-experiencing of the brute realities of the powers of the word, of force, and the fates of the Greek world.

In his review of *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece* by Kurt Raabflaub, Duncan Kelly raises the question of how the Greek world is used as a 'reality-check' for modern democracy. For Raabflaub this is not a matter of endorsing our idea of freedom in relation to an abstract Greek political philosophy, but noting that freedom only came about as new form of political opposition to tyranny. It was a practice, contingent and often expedient. Likewise Greek democracy was born out of chronic war. As Weber observed, in an observation taken from Thucydides: 'Almost every victorious battle was followed by the mass slaughter of the prisoners, and almost every conquest of a city ended with the killing or enslavement of the entire population'.

Does this entitle us to say any analysis of politics and international relations should be 'realist'? In a Weberian methodological sense (and not to exclude Democritus) no one has an infallible grasp of the real; and in terms of political sociology, while enduring regularities of power can be depicted, mobilizing troops and battle fleets is inherently risky and the outcome uncertain. Hennis suggests that the realist tradition should be followed through Machiavelli, Hobbes, Montesquieu and Weber to Philip Bobbitt's *The Shield of Achilles*. Hennis' main point, though, is that these matters come down to practical political judgements, which can never be assured by theory,

and hence in principle all judgements remain fallible. Weber was a stunning political analyst, but agreeing with his political judgements is a different matter.

The same issue recurs in two recently discovered articles by Weber, which resided unnoticed and presumably little read in the pages of *The Americana: A Universal Reference Library*, whose 16 volumes were rolled out from 1904 to 1912. Weber wrote two articles for it in 1905, one on German agriculture, the other on German industries. As Guenther Roth notes in his introduction, they are more informative and more reliably translated than his lecture in 1904 at the Congress of Arts and Sciences at the Universal Exposition in St Louis. As may be expected, they reprise his extensive writings on structure and formation of agriculture in Germany. The articles conform to the needs of a factual presentation and they open with a blizzard of statistics. Careful reading of Weber's vulgar fractions (which change to decimals a third of the way through) shows that the average price of cereals in North America was almost half that of Germany. The German east with its thin sandy soil was something of an agricultural desert—potatoes grown for distilleries, grain for livestock, with sugar beet the only profitable cash crop. Because the growing and harvesting season for sugar beet was so short, seasonal migrant farm workers were the most economic source of labour. The social structure of the east was artificial—noble titles were attached to large plots of land and the newly rich bought these estates up for their *von* predicates. The old aristocracy were constrained in the disposal of land by feudalistic laws of primogeniture. The independent farmer was being squeezed out by moneyed and business interests—as would be the case, Weber notes, of the English squirearchy and the American farmer. Weber was against tariffs. 'The high tariff on grain accrues, in an increasing measure, to the advantage of the large capitalistic farmer.' Weber stood out against the tariff politics of Joseph Chamberlain in Britain and he was broadly behind the arguments of free trade: cheaper imported grain brings down the price of food and hence the costs of goods and labour. Weber backed Germany's growth path as an industrial nation, though he did not follow the full logic of this position in the German east. Here he demanded state subsidies to encourage small farmers to settle in the border regions (with Poland and Russia). 'Germany', he wrote, 'is surrounded by enemies...'

On the page preceding Weber's articles in *The Americana* is a list of the effective ships in the German Navy, 1 January 1905. It was com-