

## Editorial

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The journal carries two long articles, one by Max Weber himself, translated for the first time into English, the other by the historian Eberhard Demm which undertakes a systematic comparison of the brothers Alfred and Max Weber. Seen from the outside the brothers appear to take similar positions, but if Alfred is studied in his own right without ceding priority to his elder brother he was an independent personality able to formulate his own viewpoints and research agenda. Seen sociologically, they were both born into a leading Bildungsbürgertum family at the heart of the German Empire. Taking the main themes of Demm's (two part) presentation, we are presented with university policy and politics; the Association for Policy Science and its momentous research projects and debates; democracy, leadership, political reform and bureaucracy; geopolitics and World War One; the German revolution in November 1918 and the creation of the Weimar Republic. Both brothers advanced the legacy of progressive liberalism in the age of reactionary authoritarianism, patriarchalism, industrial discipline and exploitation, nationalism and grinding international tensions. Drill down into the detail of what Alfred had to say on these subjects and clear differences emerge. In academic quality and brilliance Max Weber claims superiority, but with this an unforgiving intellect; while Alfred, never afraid to pioneer new areas for study, could often lack precision in his analysis and writing. But on the above listed topics, Alfred's standpoint—argues Demm—is a valid starting point for any assessment of the achievements of the two men.

It should also be remembered that Alfred Weber was professor at the University of Heidelberg from 1907 until his death in 1958. He headed up Weimar's leading research institute, the Institute for Social and Political Science until forced into internal exile in 1933. His extensive academic hinterland never really took off after 1945, firstly because prominent ex-Nazis were allowed leading positions at the university, and secondly because neutral empirical social science was favoured over the qualitative themes of culture and humanity. Karl Jaspers, by

way of comparison, did his important work, after 1945, at the University of Basel in Switzerland.

Both brothers were involved in the founding of the German Democratic Party (DDP) in November 1918. Theodor Wolff, the chief editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, became the focal point in creating a new left of centre political party of liberals who wanted to pursue a parliamentary democracy open to international cooperation, and a party untainted by the disasters of the previous Reichstag parties. There is an extraordinary exigency to its foundation. Armed soldiers and workers had occupied Wolff's newspaper office on 10th November declaring the paper an organ of the Independent Social Democrats and Soldiers' and Workers' council. On the 11th Alfred Weber met with Wolff to found the DDP. Wolff records in his famous diary: 'Er ist Feuer und Flamme'. Max had already been on the telephone to Wolff at the end of October, desperate to force the abdication of Willhelm II, and on the 28th November at Wolff's invitation he becomes a member of the DDP's executive.

Not just a new political party, but a new republican state had to be created. This was Max Weber's 'republican moment', when he is tasked by the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to design the framework of the future German state. He does this in a series of five articles, published at the end of November/beginning December. Soon after on 9th December he was in Berlin, a member of Hugo Preuss' constitutional committee that produced an outline for the upcoming Constituent National Assembly of February 1919, which was held in Weimar. Journalism has never been more serious. *Max Weber Studies* publishes the first English translation of this profoundly serious endeavour: 'Germany's Future Form of State.' It remains a classic analysis of the interconnections, and trade offs, between democracy, its institutions, federalism and the unitary state, leadership, voting and political parties.

Exigency may be taken as the *force majeure* of events. In November 1918 the tumultuous events were the consequences of collapsing structures and the necessity of putting in place new forms of government and society. Hinnerk Bruhns (cited p. 18 below) has noted that 'Germany's Future of Form of State' contains the structural ideas—of the state, of political parties, of leadership, of democracy and the economy—that reappear in the far better known lecture, 'Politik als Beruf'. Yet, Bruhns observes, it is the ethics of responsibility and conviction that now command attention in the latter. Etienne de Villiers in his *Revisiting Max Weber's Ethic of Responsibility* argues that the central role Weber 'allocates to it [...] did not condense out of thin air, but reflects its emergence as a central concept in Western thought.' Sung Ho Kim, in his review, sees rather the influence of Nietzsche where, *In Zur Genealogie der Moral*, he

asserted 'that responsibility was invented to create an individual moral agency where none existed as an a priori locus of moral imputation.' Rather than raising up the politician as an ethical exemplar, politics is dealing with exigency and having the robustness of personality to see politics properly for what it is.

Friedrich Wilhelm Graf and Edith Hanke mounted a major exhibition in 2020 in Schwabing's Villa Seidl documenting Weber's time in Munich from September 1919 to his death in June 1920. In his review Hans Henrik Bruun guides us through this scholarly and well illustrated volume. Graf argues against a common view that Weber was a late victim of the influenza epidemic. Quarantine was then still an option, and no measures were made to secure his isolation. There is also the well-known ironic joke that Weber drove his students away with his 'Most General Categories of Sociology' lectures. Records show, however, that over the three semesters 1,781 students from markedly diverse backgrounds, including 10% female students, attended his lectures. By then Weber was more sympathetic and engaged with the revolutionaries than he was at the end of 1918. Otto Neurath was a visitor (who saw the possibilities of a planned socialist economy) and the dramatist Ernst Toller. At the other end of the political spectrum Weber refused to join in the campaign to have Count Arco's sentence to death commuted. Arco had assassinated Kurt Eisner in early 1919, just at the point when Eisner was about to hand in his resignation as minister president of the (socialist) Bavarian government. Weber had witnessed Eisner's oratory in the formative period of the revolution in Bavaria, one of the few modern politicians named by Weber as charismatic in *Economy and Society* – a 'littérateur ... overwhelmed by his own demagogic success.'

Nietzsche argued that Christianity created choice at a time when for the mass of the population none existed. Christianity invented sin, and the choice of asceticism for its avoidance. Randall Collins in his studies of the micro sociology of violence has been arguing that actions and outcomes are situationally defined and that is the level at which revolutionary events should be examined. Toller, who intervened – one might say ethically – to save hostages from execution, wrestled as a dramatist with the problem of choice and moral responsibility, finding only an expressionistic solution. Eisner had a moral neo-Kantian sensibility in his drive for socialism. Bruun notes that Weber admired Arco for fully accepting his judicial fate which, Weber said, should not be altered. And for this Weber had his lectures disrupted by right wing and anti-semitic students. Political ethics is a tough assignment.

Marianne Weber also joined Weber in cramped lodgings in Munich. She was then a politician, author, and women's rights campaigner in

her own right. Her *Wife and Mother in the Development of Law* appeared in 1907, a groundbreaking study of the legal, social, and economic standing of women from antiquity to modern times. Evelyn Höbenreich in her book 'specifies Marianne Weber's achievement by comparing it to French, Austrian, and Italian counterparts', writes Katherine Kaesling.

*Max Weber Studies* has facilitated the translation from the French of 'Max Weber and Anthropology' which originally appeared in *L'Année Sociologique*. Michael Löwy and Eleni Varikas confront the issue that Weber must have engaged with anthropology, even though the term does not appear in his work in our disciplinary sense. For Weber the origins of society is a historical question but this did not mean he avoided the literature, then termed ethnology. Löwy and Varikas write: 'Anthropology and sociology are inseparable from a historical approach: Weber's sociology is both anthropological and historical. What distinguishes them isn't so much the method or the objects—religion, social norms, family—but rather the type of society/community studied.' They follow this up with Weber's cultural approach to race and his sharp critique in debates where racism was based on a spurious physical anthropology. They also outline Weber's exposition of masculine violence in the origin of political communities.