

Max Weber and the November Revolution of 1918 in Germany; or, Why Bolshevism Had No Chance in the West

Timofey Dmitriev

Candidate of Philosophical Sciences, Associate Professor, Faculty of Humanities,

National Research University — Higher School of Economics

Address: Myasnitskaya Str., 20, Moscow, Russian Federation 101000

E-mail: tdmitriev@hse.ru

Among the canonic genres of the modern social-philosophical and social-scientific thought, in German sociology and social theory of the 20th century, there is a special type of research called “the diagnosis of the era” (*Zeitdiagnose*), i.e. the analysis of a specific historical situation. Max Weber’s articles, publications and speeches in the last years of the war and first post-war years are an excellent example of such an application of the social-theoretical knowledge for the diagnosis of the modernity. The article considers Weber’s political and social diagnosis of the time in his articles of 1917–1919 on the post-war reorganization of Germany on democratic principles. The author focuses on Weber’s assessment of the ways of the political and social development of Germany after the defeat in the World War I and the November Revolution of 1918. The article also analyzes Weber’s proposals on the reform of the political and electoral system of the German Empire and considers Weber’s views on the prospects for a socialist revolution in Central Europe after the end of World War I on the model of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia. The final part of the article provides a generalized assessment of the theoretical scheme that Weber applied in the analysis of the events and processes of the November Revolution of 1918 in Germany, and identifies its significance for understanding the historical fate of the modern world.

Keywords: Max Weber, diagnosis of the era, German Empire, November Revolution of 1918 in Germany, modern mass democracy, individualism, freedom, Bolshevism, rationalization, bureaucratization, modernity

Among the canonic genres of modern social-philosophical and social-scientific thought in German sociology and social theory of the 20th century, there is a special type of research called “the diagnosis of the era” (*Zeitdiagnose*), i.e., the analysis of a specific historical situation. As the development of social-scientific thought in the 20th century proved, this genre is an absolutely indispensable way of understanding modern societies and the current trends of their development. This genre is a practical application of social-theoretical and empirical-analytical conclusions and generalizations of the social sciences. It contributes not only to a better understanding of the social events and processes but also to the practical orientation of political and social action (Joas, Knöbl, 2004: 37–38).

As a rule, this genre becomes especially important under the large-scale crises and social upheavals that destroy the old social order and sends traditional norms and guide-

lines of action into oblivion, which in turn determines an urgent need to understand the future course of events. Max Weber's articles, publications, and speeches in the last years of World War I and the first post-war years are an excellent example of such an application of social-theoretical knowledge for the diagnosis and forecast of current trends of modern development. Weber's immaculate knowledge of the conceptual apparatus of the modern social-scientific thought, of which he made a significant contribution to its development, and his perfect understanding of the social nature of modern societies allowed him to present a clear and devoid-of-sentiment picture of the current trends in the development of Germany and the West after the "Great War."

Weber objected to those romantic intellectuals and prophets who insisted that Germany and the West would inevitably reach the verge of either socialist revolution or decline after the war. In his articles and speeches of 1917–1919, he unequivocally showed the groundlessness of such forecasts. At the same time, he argued tirelessly that the fragile modernity of the West in its resistance to the attacks of the right-wing and left-wing radicals and to the tendencies of decline and collapse could not rely only on the current constellations of "material interests." Such a resistance demanded careful and responsible political action aimed at protecting liberal institutions, practices, and values; without such action, it would be impossible to protect individual freedoms, personal autonomy, and the private initiative of the modern individual.

In his reflections on the Russian Revolution of 1905, Weber had already drawn his readers' attention to the historical originality of Western liberal, political, and economic institutions, and to their extreme vulnerability and fragility in the face of the dominant economic and social trends in the development of modernity. The same tonality is typical for his articles and speeches about the German Revolution of 1918. In 1906, when warning Russian liberals of the groundless belief in the inevitable triumph of the political and cultural ideals of liberalism in Russia with the establishment and development of capitalism, Weber emphasized that "democracy' and 'individualism' would stand little chance today if we were to rely for their 'development' on the 'automatic' effect of material interests. This is due to the fact that to the very extent possible material interests obviously lead society in the opposite direction" (1995 [1906]: 108).¹

According to Weber, rational industrial capitalism, and the practices and ideals of autonomous personality and the rational culture of modernity determined by it constitute a unique historical constellation due to the confluence of a number of unique historical factors. The intersecting of these factors, such as the maritime expansion of the West, the peculiar economic structure of the early capitalism, the conquest of nature with rational science and technology, and, last but not least, the development of a system of values based on the religious complex of Protestantism, resulted in the rationalization of the individual's everyday behavior on the basis of *the methodical conduct of life* (*Lebensführung*), which is closely related to the ethical ideal of an autonomous person. However, Weber argues that the development of modern capitalism leads to an undermining rather

1. MWG, I/10: 269.

than a strengthening of the civilizational foundations of the modern world. Therefore, the fundamental question of modernity should be completely different: “How can these things exist at all for any length of time under the domination of capitalism? In fact, they are only possible where they are backed up by the determined *will* of a nation not to be ruled like a flock of sheep” (Ibid.).²

After presenting such an understanding of the historical destinies of the modern world in a series of articles on the first Russian Revolution (MWG, I/10: 86–279), Weber included his reflections on the post-war destinies of Germany and the West in his further studies. The article focuses on Weber’s political and social diagnosis of the era in his articles and speeches of 1917–1919, as well as paying particular attention to his assessment of the developmental paths of Germany after the November Revolution of 1918, and his prospects for a socialist revolution in Western and Central Europe based on the model of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The article also outlines and analyzes the social and political agenda of the time, which, according to Weber, could allow the German people to overcome the trials of the era and to create a new democratic state that was capable in terms of world politics with honor. Finally, the article briefly describes the general theoretical scheme applied by Weber in the analysis of the events and processes of the German Revolution of 1918, and shows its significance for understanding the historical destinies of the modern world.

From October 1917 to November 1918: Would Germany Repeat the Fate of Russia?

Weber harshly criticized the Bolshevik coup of October 1917 in Petrograd.³ He believed that the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks’ seizure of power with the support of a part of the workers and declassed soldiers was only a transient episode in the Russian tragedy. Weber did not really believe in the Bolsheviks’ ability to retain power, and gave them no more than a few months before the right-wing dictatorship of the propertied classes would replace them under the slogan of restoring the bourgeois order. He considered the Bolshevik government of February 1918 as “a government of an insignificant minority. It relies on the army being tired of the war. Under the given circumstances (and completely regardless of their beliefs’ sincerity) they are doomed to a purely *military dictatorship*, and not of generals but of *corporals*” (MWG, I/15: 404–405). Such an assessment of the Bolshevik regime eventually proved unrealistic, but Weber refused to change his assessment for quite some time. In his speech at a rally in Munich on November 4, 1918, he insisted that “bolshevism is the military dictatorship, therefore, like any other dictatorship, it is destined to collapse” (MWG, I/16: 365).⁴

2. MWG, I/10: 270.

3. Weber’s assessments of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Bolshevism, and the reasons for their unrealistic character can be found in: Dmitriev 2017: 305–328. An instructive analysis of Weber’s views on the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Bolshevism can be found in: Breuer 1992: 267–290; Breuer 1994: 84–109; Dahlmann 1998: 380–408; Dahlmann 2014: 81–102; Mommsen 1984: 267–282; Mommsen 1997: 1–17; Müller 2014: 32–40.

4. Deutschlands politische Neuordnung (Münchener Neueste Nachrichten, November 5, 1918).

However, in less than a year, the revolution knocked authoritatively at the doors not only of Russia, but also of the German Fatherland. In the fall of 1918, Germany was on the verge of military defeat. In October 1918, unrest began on the German Navy ships in Kiel, when the crews refused to sail for the last decisive battle with the English “Royal Navy,” thus refusing to go to a certain death. In early November, the uprising first spread to the naval bases in Hamburg and Lübeck, and then gradually to the entire North of Germany, and then throughout the country. Following the example of the Russian Revolution, soviets of workers and soldiers’ deputies were created everywhere to perform the functions of local authorities and demobilize military units. On November 10 in Berlin, the leader of the Majority Social Democrats, Philipp Scheidemann, proclaimed the German Democratic Republic from the Reichstag window, which was two hours before the leader of the German left-wing radicals, Karl Liebknecht, proclaimed the “Socialist Republic” from the balcony of the Imperial Palace. In the evening, the Council of Workers and Soldiers’ Deputies of Berlin approved the composition of the new revolutionary government, the Council of People’s Delegates (CPD) (*Rat der Volksbeauftragten*), with the representatives of the two factions of the German social democracy movement, those of the GSPD (the German Social Democratic Party, also called the Majority Social Democrats) and the USPD (the Independent Social Democratic Party, also called the Independent Social Democrats). This opened a new page in the history of Germany. Now it was not a question of whether the Bolsheviks would hold power in Russia, but of whether their followers would come to power in Germany, and of whether the Bolshevik revolutionary virus would spread throughout Germany and further to the West.

Initially, Weber fiercely criticized the November Revolution of 1918 in Germany. He described it as a “bloody carnival not deserving the honest name of the revolution” (Weber, 1984 [1926]: 642). He blamed the chaos in the country mainly on the system of the workers’ and soldiers’ soviets created one after another in different localities as the revolutionary events unfolded. Weber was especially critical of the attempts of the left-wing radicals from the Spartacus League pushing the revolution of the Russian way of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ and to the republic of soviets,⁵ which explains his angry philippics against “Liebknecht’s mad gang.”⁶ In the first weeks of the revolution, Weber noted the “confusion of the amateurish government” of Prince Max von Baden, and made the sad conclusion that “only intoxication with ‘revolution’ serves people as a kind of drug until the trouble came.”⁷ However, as Weber added, the socialist faith of the masses and their leaders, no matter how sincere it is, “cannot improve the ruined financial system and restore the lack of capital; therefore, a new disappointment, unbearable after all already experienced, can lead many, namely the most faithful believers, to the internal bankruptcy.”⁸

5. In January 1919, the Spartacus League was transformed into the German Communist Party (GCP), and would become the main conductor of Bolshevik ideas in Germany.

6. Letter to Helene Weber of November 19, 1918 (MWG, II/10-1: 310).

7. Letter to Helene Weber of November 19, 1918 (MWG, II/10-1: 310).

8. Letter to Else Jaffé-Richthofen of November 15, 1918 (MWG, II/10-1: 304).

As well as criticizing the German followers of the Bolsheviks, and the members of the Spartacus League and their leaders, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, Weber sharply criticized the policies of the Independent Social Democrats in the revolutionary *Rat der Volksbeauftragten* for their incorrigible doctrinairism and political romanticism that paved the road to hell with good intentions. It was the presence of the Independent Social Democrats in the revolutionary government that explained Weber's refusal to cooperate with it. In a private letter written shortly after the revolution broke out, he wrote: "Participation in *this* government, or even working for it, would be well-nigh impossible. *These people*, i.e., Herr Haase and his comrades, in contrast to the trade union officials and to Ebert — *only* require lackeys, just as the monarchy did."⁹ Weber considered the plans of the Independent Social Democrats to nationalize the German economy as complete nonsense under the auspices of losing the war and economic chaos. Moreover, when the country was to pay huge reparations, the transfer of main industries to the state would play into the hands of the allies making it easier for them to get reparation supplies. "Politically and economically," said Weber, "we are under foreign domination. Particularly, in economic terms, we are bound to depend on the foreign powers for decades to come. We need foreign loans for the maintaining of our supply lines and for the recovering of our economy as well. The proletarian government, however, cannot even hope to have credit assistance from abroad. The socialist economy is also out of the question; we can even say that in German economic history entrepreneurial activity has never been so urgent. If the current economic breakdown continues for some months ahead, not only will there be nothing left of our military earnings, but the most part of our industrial equities are going to be lost. In that case our industrialists will become mere servants to Americans" (MWG, I/16: 400).

Weber believed that the plans of the Independent Social Democrats to nationalize the economy were not related to the fundamental problems that the new democratic authorities had to solve, that is, the democratization and parliamentarization of the German political system, the adoption of a new constitution, and signing a peace treaty with the allies. Hence, Weber made an extremely important conclusion for his sociology of revolution: "From the point of view of socialist hopes for the future, the prospects for a wartime revolution are now the worst imaginable, even if it were to succeed. Under the most favorable circumstances, it could only mean that *political* arrangements would approach the form desired by democracy, this, however, would pull it away from socialism because of the *economically* reactionary consequences it would be bound to have. No fair-minded socialist may deny that either" (1994d [1918]: 301).¹⁰

Meanwhile, events went from bad to worse. In the late autumn of 1918, Weber, like many contemporaries, had a keen sense of the impending civil war. In his attempts to find the means to prevent a war, he added the considerations on domestic policy to the analysis of the international situation. In those critical moments for the new democratic authorities, Weber argued that foreign intervention was acceptable to block the path to

9. Letter to Lili Schäfer, around November 29 — December 4, 1918 (MWG, II/10-1: 331).

10. MWG, I/15: 632.

power for the left-wing radicals. He wrote that “If the situation worsens, we will have to let the Americans to put things in order whether we like it or not. Let us hope we will avoid the shame of allowing our enemies to act.”¹¹ Such an extremely undesirable turn of events would ensure the defeat of the left-wing extremists by a foreign force, and the nation would get another chance to unite to repel the foreign invaders.

However, Weber gradually realized that in order to prevent the left or right radicalization of the revolution, the moderate Majority Social Democrats had to cooperate with the forces of the bourgeois order. Certainly, such an understanding was determined by Weber’s participation in the work of the Heidelberg Council of Workers and Soldiers’ Deputies when he had the opportunity to see “the responsibility and honesty of the right-wing socialists, who tried to prevent the revolution they did not want but the Bolsheviks strived for” (Weber, 1984 [1926]: 644). It was at the request of the right-wing socialists that Weber became a member of the Heidelberg Council of Workers and Soldiers’ Deputies, hoping to help the new authorities with his knowledge.¹²

Under the collapse of the monarchy and the widespread formation of workers’ and soldiers’ councils, Weber saw the shortest way to the normalization of social-political life in convening a democratically-elected National Constituent Assembly. He understood perfectly well that the convocation of the Assembly would not serve as a panacea for civil war,¹³ but he had great hopes for it since the Assembly was to adopt a new constitution which would lay the foundations of the new republican-democratic system. In the fall of 1918, in referring to the collapse of all previous German dynasties, Weber wrote that “‘historical’ legitimacy is over. And now the only way back from the violent domination of soldiers’ councils to the civilian system, which is left to the specific ‘middle class parties,’ is *revolution* and natural-law legitimacy of the *constituent assembly* based on people’s sovereignty” (MWG, I/16: 103).¹⁴ Although for Weber, as a political thinker, it was not a republic but a constitutional parliamentary monarchy that was a more suitable form of government for Germany.¹⁵ However, in November 1918, he welcomed the republic as a

11. Letter to Helene Weber of November 19, 1918 (MWG, II/10-1: 310–311).

12. As acknowledged by Weber himself, the only thing that made him happy in those tragic days for Germany was “the unpretentious efficiency of ordinary people in trade unions and many soldiers, for example, in the local council of ‘workers and soldiers’ deputies’, in which I am a member. I have to admit that they did their job perfectly, without any idle talk” (Letter to Helene Weber of November 19, 1918 [MWG, II/10-1: 310]).

13. Weber stressed in the fall of 1918 that “the fact that the Constituent Assembly is a *reliable* means to resolutely prevent a civil war, is not at all necessary” (MWG, I/16: 105).

14. To explain Weber’s idea, Jan-Werner Müller wrote: “Weber was convinced that traditional legitimacy — based on precedent and prescription — was disappearing, and that Europeans had entered the democratic age for good. The charisma of monarchs — not so much as personal quality as what Weber called ‘the charisma of blood’ passed down from one generation to the next, but also attached to the institution itself — had been dispelled by the disasters of the war during which monarchs had generally revealed themselves as incompetent” (2014: 9).

15. According to Weber, “modern mass society, which was becoming increasingly ‘legalistic’ and value-neutral as a result of bureaucratization, should retain a monarchy as the surviving link to the source of charismatic legitimacy. Weber argued in this way because he believed that the legitimization of domination based upon a belief in legality was much weaker than one based upon charismatic or traditional forms of legitimacy, even though he viewed them both to be formally equivalent. Fundamentally, he held only the charismatic form to be a source of genuine legitimacy” (Mommsen, 1984: 290–291).

politically inevitable step under the given circumstances, and expressed the hope that the collapse of the old dynastic orders would finally allow “to put the bourgeoisie politically *on its own feet*” (MWG, I/16: 107).¹⁶

In the late autumn of 1918, under extreme political uncertainty, the perception of the new government by the bourgeois circles became crucial. The main political question determining the very future of Germany was “whether the bourgeoisie in its mass will acquire a new *political spirit*, more prepared for responsibility and with a greater self-consciousness” (MWG, I/16: 106). By December 1918, Weber had already called on the progressively-minded bourgeois circles of the German society to form an alliance with the moderate Majority Social Democrats to stop the revolution from slipping to the left and to chaos and anarchy. At the same time, Weber made a number of conciliatory gestures to the new authorities and even praised the plans of ‘socialization’ of the economy developed by the leaders of social democracy and of the social-democratic trade unions. When speaking at a rally in Frankfurt on December 1, 1918, Weber even said that his views were “very close to, if not identical with, those of many academically trained members of the Social Democratic Party” (MWG, I/16: 379).¹⁷

In the winter of 1918–1919, Weber took an active part in the creation of the new, liberal German Democratic Party. He considered it as a non-class organization capable of playing the role of mediator between the progressive bourgeois strata and the moderate working-class majority.¹⁸ Beginning at the end of November 1918, he gave speeches to support the new party in Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, Berlin, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe, and Fürth. He reproached the revolutionary government for inaction, and called on it to put an end to the danger threatening the revolution from the left. “Here he argued again and again that the German Democratic Party, and indeed all progressive sections of the bourgeois classes alike, ought to cooperate with the Majority Social Democrats in a joint effort to establish a stable democratic order” (Mommsen, 1989: 85). Weber believed that, under the given circumstances, a true alliance with the Majority Social Democrats was the only justified political strategy for both liberals and the middle strata.¹⁹ In those days, he used to say that “for decades, the paths of honest, absolutely peaceful and absolutely radical bourgeois and socialist democracies could be the same, and they could follow these paths shoulder to shoulder so that once to choose different paths” (MWG, I/16: 382–383).

16. However, it should be noted that, as a consistent German nationalist, Weber was convinced that “the interests and tasks of the nation are above . . . all questions of the political form” (MWG, I/16: 99–100).

17. *Das neue Deutschland* (Frankfurter Zeitung, December 1, 1918). Commenting on this issue, David Beetham wrote, that “in fact what Weber said was that his position was indistinguishable from many of ‘many academically trained members of the Social Democratic Party’ — that is, those who recognized the necessity of capitalism! — and in fact he went on in his speech to explain why he could not be a Social Democrat” (Beetham 1985 [1974]: 173).

18. “This organization sought to consist of representatives of all classes as an intermediate authority between the social-democratic and bourgeois parties, just like the National Social Party of Naumann once used to be. It was joined by many representatives of the spiritually leading strata who, just as resolutely as the socialist workers, supported the genuine democracy, but unlike them rejected experiments with the economic system and put the *national* idea above the international one” (Weber, 1984 [1926]: 653).

19. *Das neue Deutschland*: Speech in Frankfurt, December 1, 1918 (MWG, I/16: 379–383).

The political situation in Germany began to gradually improve in January, 1919, when the Independent Social Democrats left the revolutionary government. This determined the outcome of the German communists' attempt of a Bolshevik coup in Berlin, which was severely suppressed by the social-democratic government with the support of the army. The leaders of the unsuccessful uprising of the German Bolsheviks, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, were killed by reactionary-minded officers. Despite the fact that Weber did not approve of such a method of eliminating the "red threat,"²⁰ the suppression of the Bolshevik coup in Berlin by the forces of the bourgeois order objectively contributed to the stabilization of the social-political situation in the country on the eve of the elections to the National Constituent Assembly.²¹ For the first time, there was a hope of creating a broad political coalition of the progressively-minded groups of the German bourgeoisie and the moderate Majority Social Democrats, a coalition which could repel left-wing and right-wing extremist attacks and lay the constitutional foundations of a new democratic Germany.

At that time, the political situation in Germany was so critical that Weber considered the economically-meaningless partial nationalization of the means of production by the state as the lesser evil, provided it could satisfy the socialist aspirations of the masses, thereby preventing the radicalization of their mood. However, in the spring of 1920, this did not prevent Weber from rejecting the proposal of the leadership of the Democratic Party to become its representative in the Commission on Socialization formed by the marxist-minded Social Democrats headed by Karl Kautsky. Although Weber officially explained his refusal due to poor health, he wrote more frankly about the reasons not to participate in the commission's activities and to leave the party in a letter to his sister Clara. "Since the Democratic party . . . has dared me to concern myself with 'socialization' and I believe that this is 'insanity' at this time, I have to withdraw. Politicians *have* to compromise . . . — a scholar *cannot* justify this."²² Weber's decision to leave the National Democratic Party marked the end of his career as a politician, and his return to academic studies.

20. In those days, Weber used to say that "the dictatorship of the street has come to such an end that I did not want. Liebknecht was certainly an honest man. *He called the street to fight and the street killed him!*" (MWG, I/16: 461). According to Weber, "*the workers and soldiers' councils* were honest too. Burghers should not forget what they owe to their honest and fair work. But their *central body* in Berlin was politically below any criticism and was engaged in the worst possible amateurish activities" (Heidelberger Zeitung, January 18, 1919 [MWG, I/16: 462]).

21. When assessing the decision of the leaders of the Council of People's Delegates to resort to the help of the military to suppress the armed uprising of the German extreme 'leftists', the historian of Weimar Germany claimed that the official leaders of the German revolution simply did not have any other choice under the given circumstances. Horst Möller wrote: "One should admit both the need to criticize the government units' cruelty in suppressing the uprising in those days, and the need to use the military to save a chance to create a democratic republic and to really bring the matter to the National Constituent Assembly. Certainly, the 'Spartacus men' and their radical supporters aimed at preventing on the street what could not be prevented in the revolutionary bodies. They were not ready to accept democratic rules of the game — neither in their deputies' councils nor in the Congress. In this sense, Ebert and the leadership of the GSPD had no choice" (Möller, 2004: 53).

22. Letter to Clara Mommsen of April 20, 1920 (MWG, II/10-2: 983).

“Democratization” as an Imperative of the Era

When reflecting on Germany’s post-war development, Weber pinned great hopes on the democratization of its political system. According to Weber, such a democratization would not only beneficially affect domestic policy by making the German society more politically and socially united, but also strengthen Germany’s position in the international arena. The first step on this path was to be the reform of the Prussian three-class system of suffrage, which aimed to provide the masses with broader institutional guarantees for their participation in determining the destinies of the country. The idea of constitutional reform of Prussia, the largest of the German states, was not a new idea. The famous German scientists Ernst Troeltsch and Friedrich Meinecke had previously suggested the idea of the reform in 1914. This issue had become particularly acute at the final stage of the war when both the liberal opposition and the authorities had become concerned about how to enlist the support of the society tired of war.

Weber was a strong supporter of the reform of the outdated electoral system that gave clear preference to voters from the privileged classes (the bourgeoisie and the land aristocracy) over workers when casting votes. He hoped that the electoral reform would not only increase the chances of the working class and their political representatives, the German Social Democrats, to participate in public administration, but also would demonstrate the goodwill of the government to cooperate with the constructively- and patriotically-minded Majority Social Democrats.

Moreover, Weber considered the democratization of the Prussian electoral system, which was to be only the first step to the democratization of the German political system as a whole, as an imperative not only of the political moment but of the era as well. World War I turned unusually quickly from an old war of the dynastic type into a mass war of nations where only the nations’ active participation would lead to victory. However, the flip side of such “nationalization” of the masses by their engagement in military actions was their “politicization,” as the masses desired to determine their historical destiny at least partially. Ralf Dahrendorf commented on this issue, that “the wars of the 20th century were not fought by small groups of direct participants but demanded participation of almost the entire population. As a result, the ruling circles came to the conclusion that something had to be done for those who risked their lives but did not have any official social-political rights. They were to get civil rights, as Winston Churchill said at the end of the war” (Dahrendorf, 1992: 73).

Weber shared this opinion on the masses’ participation in the ‘total’ war and on the dialectics of the extension of civil rights. While waiting for the return of millions of soldiers from the front, one could talk about their integration into the social-political order of post-war Germany only by providing them with the same civil rights with those who had remained in the rear during the war. In the modern nation-state with the armed forces based on universal conscription, the demand to risk one’s life and even sacrifice it on the battlefield for the future of one’s nation implies the right to participate in the political will that determines the most important issues of the nation-state existence. Weber wrote that

the *legal* introduction of equal suffrage in Prussia is, however, a demand of the *Reich* in the interests of national politics, for the *Reich* must be able to call on its citizens to fight for their own existence and honor again in the future, should this prove necessary. It is not sufficient for this purpose to have supplies of munitions and other materials and the necessary official bodies; what is also needed is the nation's *inner readiness* to defend this state as *its* state . . . This is the crucial political reason why the *Reich* must ensure that equal suffrage is implemented everywhere, by coercion if necessary. (1994b [1917]: 125–126)²³

Despite the fact that politics, according to Weber, “is not an ethical matter,” he considered the extension of suffrage after the war a “matter of political decency” for the soldiers who fought at the front to defend their German Fatherland. In other words, Weber saw the meaning of the urgent reform of the Prussian three-class system of suffrage primarily in that “the warriors who fought in the battles would get a decisive vote on the new arrangement of the homeland after the war.”²⁴

However, for Weber, the reform of the electoral system of Prussia and of the political system of Germany did not only have an internal political significance. He argued that the rapid restoration of Germany's position on the world stage after the war was only possible provided political unity and social consolidation within the country were achieved, which required both the extension of civil rights of the broad masses and the democratization of the political system. According to Weber, that was the only way to establish the plenipotentiary parliamentary government and responsible political leadership. He defined this problem as a clear alternative when he wrote: “There are only two choices: either the mass of citizens is left without freedom or rights in a bureaucratic ‘authoritarian state’ which has only the appearance of parliamentary rule, and in which the citizens are ‘administered’ like a herd of cattle; or the citizens are integrated into the state by making them its *co-rulers*” (Weber, 1994b [1917]: 129).²⁵ However, as Weber acknowledged, formulating this alternative in such a sharp, antithetic form was by and large imaginary, because Germany, which was one of the few industrially developed countries of the West at that time, could not but play the role of a ‘great power’ on the world stage. Therefore, in a certain sense, Germany was doomed to either create such a viable national state that would meet the aspirations of both ruling elites and broad masses, or to lose the status of world power.²⁶

23. MWG, I/15: 392–393.

24. Frankfurter Zeitung, March 28, 1917 (MWG, I/15: 221).

25. MWG, I/15: 396.

26. *Ibid.* Earlier in 1916, Weber, when asked why Germans condemned themselves to being a nation with a great power and to playing an important role in world politics, answered: “*Why* did we doomed ourselves to this political fate and surrendered to the spell of history? Not due to vanity, but due to *the responsibility to history*. Not from the Swiss, Danes, Dutch or Norwegians the descendants will demand an answer for the form of culture on the Earth. It is us not them that the descendants will rightfully scold, if in the Western hemisphere of our planet there will be nothing except for Anglo-Saxon conventions and the Russian bureaucracy . . . The nation of seventy million people living between such world conquerors must be a powerful state . . . The honor of our people demands this. The German war — and we will never forget this — is a *matter of honor*, not a question of changes on the map or economic benefits” (MWG, I/15: 192).

To solve the tasks of the nation and the country, Weber proposed to supplement the democratization of the suffrage and the political system with the parliamentarization of the empire. In January 1918, Weber emphasized that “we wish *the democratization of the suffrage and the extension of the rights of parliament.*”²⁷ He considered these two lines of the political reform to be closely related. When speaking about the “parliamentarization” of the empire, Weber did not mean the simple existence of an institution, called a ‘parliament’ by modern political science, or its wider powers. He defined parliamentarization as a reform of the political system of Germany, which would give the parliament the actual means of political control over the state bureaucracy. However, to perform this task successfully, a democratically-elected parliament needed serious political authority. Such authority was available only for the people’s representation elected on the basis of universal, equal, and secret suffrage. The introduction of such a non-class universal suffrage would provide millions of Germans with an opportunity to take part in the most important political decisions.

Weber sharply objected to those German right-wing and left-wing intellectuals who opposed the country’s parliamentarization in claiming that the “Great War” allegedly proved the advantages of *the direct military-dictatorial rule*. According to Weber, such judgments and assessments were reckless and short-sighted. Like the military socialism in the economy, the direct military dictatorship in politics was a product of extreme conditions typical for the wartime, regardless of its hidden monarchical or parliamentary forms; after the war, the direct military dictatorship would inevitably go into the past. Weber would write that

enthusiasm for “democracy without parliamentary rule” was nourished during the war, of course, by the fact that as in any serious war — in all countries without exception, in England, France, Russia and Germany — a political-military *dictatorship* of the most comprehensive kind actually replaced the normal form of government, whether this was called a “monarchy” or a “parliamentary republic” and this will undoubtedly cast its shadow far into peacetime. This type of rule operates everywhere with a specific kind of mass demagogy and shuts down all normal valves and controls, including control by parliament. (1994b [1917]: 127–128)²⁸

Weber’s conclusions based on the analysis of the “Great War” were opposite to the conclusions of the supporters of “Prussian socialism” in Germany, such as Oswald Spengler, and the Bolsheviks in Russia. While Spengler considered the experience of war as the advantage of ‘individual’s serving the whole’ in the old-Prussian spirit and as a justification of the dictatorship of strong personalities in politics,²⁹ the Bolshevik leaders

27. Berliner Tageblatt, January 17, 1918 (MWG, I/15: 744).

28. MWG, I/15: 394–395.

29. In 1920, Spengler wrote in the pamphlet “Preussentum und Sozialismus”: “The German, or more precisely Prussian, instinct is that power belongs to the whole. An individual *serves* it. The whole is sovereign. The king is only the first person of the state (Frederick the Great). Everyone takes his place. He is given orders and obeys orders. From the 18th century this is the authoritarian socialism, not liberal and anti-democratic in its essence for we speak of the British liberalism and French democracy” (Spengler, 1920: 15).

considered Prussian “military socialism” as the first, necessary step towards a socialist planned economy. On the contrary, Weber believed that those political and social-economic forms, born in an emergency situation, were to die off or be dismantled in the course of the return of social, political, and economic life in Western countries to a peaceful norm. “Just as the war economy cannot serve as a model for a normal peacetime economy . . . wartime political arrangements cannot be the pattern for a peacetime political structure” (Weber, 1994b [1917]: 128).³⁰

Weber’s 1917 articles and speeches on the reform of the constitutional order of Prussia prove that he saw the future of Germany not in the right-wing or left-wing dictatorship, but in strengthening the foundations of parliamentarism. Weber stated that “one of the most powerful arguments *for* the creation of orderly *responsible* political leadership by *parliamentary* leaders is that such an arrangement weakens, as far as this is possible, the impact of purely emotional influences both from ‘above’ and ‘below’” (1994b [1917]: 125).³¹

Just before the overthrow of the monarchy, Weber agreed that “where the system of Caesarism (in the wider sense of the word) operates, which is to say the direct, popular election of the head of state or a city, as in the United States, . . . democracy can exist *without* a parliamentary system — which does not mean entirely *without* parliamentary power” (1994b [1917]: 126–127).³² Weber argued that such a model was not suitable for Germany with its monarchic rule, because it did not solve two fundamental problems: (1) it did not block the dilettantism of the monarch, who — due to the exclusion from the current political struggle — did not need to weigh his words or bear personal responsibility for his actions in politics, especially in foreign affairs, and (2) it did not have the effective means to control the activities of the bureaucratic management apparatus. Therefore, Weber concluded that

the full power of parliament is indispensable wherever *hereditary* organs of state — monarchs — are the (formal) heads of officialdom. Inevitably, the modern monarch is always just as much of an *amateur* as any member of parliament and therefore quite incapable of controlling an administration. But there is this difference: a member of parliament can learn to weigh the *power of words* in party *conflict*, whereas the monarch is required to remain *outside* this struggle; furthermore, provided it has the right to hold *enquiries*, parliament is in a position to acquire the relevant facts on a subject (by cross-examining experts and witnesses under oath) and thus to control the actions of officials. (1994b [1917]: 127)³³

Weber defined the functional advantage of the democratically elected parliament (as opposed to the unlimited monarchic rule and the system of soviets not recognizing the separation of powers), as the body that controls the bureaucracy while at the same time serves as an ideal platform for selecting political leaders.

30. MWG, I/15: 395.

31. MWG, I/15: 392.

32. MWG, I/15: 394.

33. MWG, I/15: 394.

Weber never shared the faith of orthodox Marxists that “the dictatorship of the proletariat” could serve as a means of salvation capable of putting an end to the “exploitation of man by man”; he considered such hopes as naive. Moreover, as a scholar and politician, Weber was well aware that “the system of political councils, despite the so-called elements of direct democracy, had nothing to do with democracy due to the class restrictions of suffrage” (Möller, 2004: 37–38).

The idea of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” in its Leninist-Bolshevik interpretation was contrary to the hopes that Weber and other liberal German academics and intellectuals pinned on the democratization of the electoral system and political regime in Germany. The reforms for democratizing the German political system introduced universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage for all men and women who were citizens of the *Reich* and having reached the age of 20 (Article 22 of the Weimar Constitution, adopted on August 11, 1919). On the contrary, the Constitution of Soviet Russia (RSFSR) which was adopted in 1918 “explicitly did not give equal rights: members of the old exploiting classes were deprived of the right to vote in soviet elections, and urban workers’ votes were heavily weighted as against peasants’ votes. Associated with this was an elaborate structure of class-discriminatory laws and regulations designed to put workers in a privileged position and to disadvantage the bourgeoisie that had been in place since the Revolution” (Fitzpatrick, 2001: 155).

Finally, the idea of the self-governing ‘state-commune’ suggested by V. Lenin in *State and Revolution* (1917) did not solve the problem of the effective administrative control in mass industrial societies. Like the slogan “All Power to the Soviets!,” the idea was good as a pretentious phrase capable of mobilizing workers and soldiers to break the bourgeois social order, but it turned out to be completely incapable of administering a large multinational country. Self-government as a form of direct political participation of individuals in public administration — Weber called such a method “management without domination” (*Herrschaftsfremde Verbandsverwaltung*) — was feasible only in small communities (MWG, I/23: 574). Concerning the control in large mass industrial societies, Weber identified two alternatives, those of either the amateur management by representatives of the old respected “nobility” (*Honoratioren*), which was leaving the social-political stage everywhere in the West in the early 20th century, or management by the specially-trained, professional bureaucracy. There was no third way. Weber emphasized that “democracy has only the choice of being run cheaply by the rich who hold honorary office, or of being run expensively by paid professional officials. The latter alternative, the development of professional officialdom, has become the fate of all modern democracies in which honorary office was inadequate to the task, that is, in the great mass states” (1994d [1918]: 276).³⁴

The widespread use of old specialists in the Bolshevik government bodies and in the Red Army, as much as the November Revolution of 1918 in Germany, when the old bureaucratic apparatus of the empire transferred over to the new power without any exceptions and reductions, convinced Weber that the modern bureaucracy is nothing more

34. MWG, I/15: 603.

than a “living machine” of rational management based on formal rules, and is ready to indiscriminately serve whoever is interested in its services and ready to pay the officials their salary and ensure their proper social status. In November 1918, Weber wrote that “it turned out that a bureaucratic machine — by the nature of its ideal and material driving forces, and due to the nature of modern economic life, which, if it failed in this machine, would be in a catastrophic state — without hesitation is ready to serve *anyone* who physically possesses the means of violence and guarantees the preservation of bureaucratic posts” (MWG, I/16: 103).

Thus, speaking of the need to create a democratic political system in Germany after the fall of the monarchy in November 1918, Weber did not at all mean such a political structure would imply the democratic self-government of the masses. A year earlier, he wrote that “the system of the so-called direct democracy is technically possible only in a small state (canton). In all mass states, democracy leads to bureaucratic administration and, without parliamentarization, to *pure* rule by officials” (Weber, 1994b [1917]: 126–127).³⁵ Therefore, according to Weber, the conflict between the real alternatives of the German political system reform of the democratic type did not go along the lines of “direct democracy” versus the “rule of bureaucracy.” In a mass industrial society, which Germany was by that time, the former was technically impossible, while the latter was technically necessary and inevitable. In fact, the question of German political system reform was whether the unlimited dominance of officials in a new democratic Germany would remain, or would this dominance be directed by elected and responsible political leaders and placed under the control of the democratically-elected parliament on the basis of universal, equal, and secret suffrage. At the same time, the democratization of the German political system was to put an end to the pressure of street radicals and both left-wing and right-wing political businessmen. Before the fall of the monarchy, Weber noted in December 1917 that “*only* the orderly *leadership* of the masses by responsible politicians is at all capable of breaking *unregulated* rule by the street and *leadership* by chance demagogues” (1994b [1917]: 125).³⁶ Weber’s ideas on the political system of Germany after the November Revolution of 1918 and the collapse of the monarchy were presented in 1918–1919 in his theory of *mass plebiscitary democracy*.³⁷

Germany in 1918: An Unfinished Revolution?

Why wasn’t there a socialist revolution based on the Russian model in 1918 Germany? If we ignore the nuances of the political and geopolitical situation, then the general interpretation schemes that Weber used to analyze the revolutionary processes in Russia and in the West, including Germany, are very similar.³⁸ The normal capitalist development

35. MWG, I/15: 393–394.

36. MWG, I/15: 392.

37. On the significance of mass plebiscitary democracy for Weber’s political theory, see: Beetham, 1985: 226–249; Loewenstein, 1966: 63–90; Mommsen, 1974: 72–94; Mommsen, 1984: 390–414; Müller, 2014: 40–48.

38. This general theoretical scheme of Weber’s analysis of the revolutionary processes in Russia in 1905 and 1917 and in Germany in 1918–1919 will be discussed in the final part of the article.

of the economy and normalization of the conditions of everyday life were not possible in Russia or in Germany without private entrepreneurs managing the capital and being capable of getting the necessary loans for economic recovery from banks and foreign investors, and without an adjusted control apparatus that met the needs of the everyday administrative management.³⁹ As Weber emphasized in his public speeches of 1918–1919, a purely proletarian government did not inspire confidence in foreign countries and creditors. “Only a *bourgeois* government will get loans for *recovery*” (MWG, I/16: 113). Therefore, Weber considered all of the measures which were demanded by the doctrinal-minded circles of social democracy for the socialization of the economy as untimely and disastrous for the economic recovery of Germany. From his point of view, such measures had to be decisively rejected. In 1919, in his famous speech “Politics as a vocation,” Weber emphasized that “where there is nothing, not only the Kaiser but also the proletarian has lost his rights” (1946 [1919]: 128). Certainly, when reflecting on the prospects for Germany’s economic recovery after the war, Weber did not deny the possibility that Germany would use the methods of government intervention to overcome the catastrophic situation in the economy in the short term. However, he was convinced that the economic order based on state-controlled syndicates and state enterprises would lead to economic stagnation and to the exacerbation of social conflicts in the long run (Münkler, 1995: 46).

The same was true of political radicals and extremists from both the left and the right. All extreme political movements whose demands and actions were contrary to the needs of social-political stabilization and economic recovery, had to be marginalized and pushed out of politics. Under the economic chaos and post-war depression, the stabilization of the political and social-economic life was possible only if the bourgeois and business circles that sought to democratize the political system agreed with the moderate circles of social democracy and the trade union movement.⁴⁰ If such an alliance failed, an extreme reaction would push the bourgeois strata to the right. This would force the moderate strata of the middle class and even some workers to support the dictatorship of the wealthy classes (perhaps, together with foreign intervention) in order to restore the foundations of the bourgeois order. Weber argued that, without the normalization of the social-political life and without creating the prerequisites for a peaceful economic recovery and the peace treaty, “the socialist faith of the masses will be broken, and then the nation will ‘ripen’ for long periods of submission to the *new authoritarian authorities*, anyway how” (MWG, I/16: 380–381). Such a statement was determined by Weber’s firm

39. On the social-political stabilization in the leading countries of Western Europe after the World War I and on the restart of the economic development as two imperatives of the post-military recovery in the 1920s, see the detailed study in Maier, 2015. See also a very informative essay by the same author on the two post-war periods in the restoration of Western Europe in the 1920s and 1950s: Maier, 1981: 327–352.

40. It was not without reason that Weber considered the agreement between the organizations of the German business community (initiated by the largest German industrialist Hugo Stinnes) and the Majority Social Democrats unions (the agreement was signed by Carl Legien) as one of the main real achievements of the November Revolution of 1918. This agreement, called the Stinnes-Legien Pact, laid the foundations for the social partnership of labor and capital, established an eight-hour working day, and excluded the so-called “yellow trade unions” from the negotiations of entrepreneurs and representatives of the organized labor movement (MWG, I/16: 399).

belief that it was simply impossible to manage the modern mass industrial society in the normal non-emergency conditions by any other means than rational-bureaucratic and market-capitalist. As Weber mentioned in his Viennese lecture on socialism in 1918, “the modern economy cannot be managed in any other way” (1994d [1918]: 279).⁴¹

In other words, Weber considered all lower-classes revolutions which aimed at overthrowing the existing social order and property order as reactionary in essence and unrealizable in principle, as evidenced by his analysis of Russian Bolshevism. Even before World War I, Weber wrote that the modern rational bureaucratic “apparatus makes ‘revolutions’ in the sense of the forceful creations of entirely new formations of authority, more and more impossible — technically, because of its control over the modern means of communications (telegraph, etc.) and also because of its increasingly rationalized inner structure” (1978/2: 989).⁴² His works and speeches of 1917–1919 prove that neither the 1917 Russian Revolution nor the 1918 German Revolution made him change his views.

The question is why Weber’s arguments failed to explain the process of revolution in Russia 1917, but were extremely accurate for the analysis of the revolutionary process in Germany and in the West in general. The answer to this question can be found in the peculiarities of the social-political situation in Russia and Germany, in the balance of social-class forces, and in the political and cultural-national traditions of the two countries.

When the Bolshevik coup took place in Russia in the fall of 1917, the war continued and the Russian army was in a state of advanced disintegration. There was no trace of the previous order and discipline. The authority of the officer corps was unusually low, which determined a sharp deterioration in the relationship between soldiers and officers. The soldiers’ and sailors’ councils controlled the situation at the front and in the rear units, and not a single order of the military command was executed without their approval, so that “Russian desertions, already rising as peasant soldiers responded to news of the land seizures, grew to epidemic proportions” (Fitzpatrick, 2001: 57). After the October coup, the declassed soldiers initially supported the new revolutionary government that had promised to end the war and give land to the peasants.

In Germany, the situation was quite different. Unlike the October 1917 in Russia, the peak of the revolutionary events in Germany was in the winter of 1918–1919, when the truce with the Entente powers was already signed, the fighting had stopped and the German soldiers, unlike the Russian soldiers, did not need to demand peace. In the internal political struggle of 1918–1919, both soldiers and war veterans played an important role, but they did not stand in a united front on the side of any particular political force. Many soldiers, especially war veterans, adhered to radical views, but again, unlike Russia, these were rather right-wing than left-wing views. By the summer of 1919, the number of *Freikorps*, the German right-wing paramilitaries consisting of former soldiers and officers, consisted of 442 thousand people (Weissbecker, 1990: 27). It was these paramilitary forces that played a decisive role in suppressing the putsch of the German Communists in Janu-

41. MWG, I/15: 607.

42. MWG, I/22-4: 210.

ary 1919 in Berlin, and in the defeat of the Soviet republics in a number of German lands in 1918–1919.

The fast demobilization of the army, accompanied by the provision of war veterans, soldiers, and officers with a number of social guarantees and payments, allowed the revolutionary-minded units to disband and neutralize the soldiers' councils that practically ceased to exist by the summer of 1919. The skillful demobilization policy of the military authorities and the lack of mass unemployment contributed to the fact that demobilization did not worsen the situation in the country.

The peace treaty with the Entente powers was a matter of life and death for Germany and the German nation, but the leaders of the Entente countries refused to negotiate peace with anyone except the authorized representatives of the National Constituent Assembly. This greatly undermined the position of the radical leftists because they could not count on the Entente powers to sit down with them at the negotiating table, and raised the chances of the bourgeois center and right-wing social-democratic center of holding power. The readiness of the leaders of the right-wing social democracy to form an alliance with the parties of the bourgeois center and even with the militarized right-wing groups in order to suppress the left-wing extremists and to protect the foundations of social order made the socialist revolution in Germany based on the Russian model almost impossible. The aspirations of the organized workers, especially the members of trade unions, also had very little in common with the intentions of the left-wing radicals from the Spartacus League. The aspirations of the middle strata and of a large part of workers were limited to the peace treaty and a democratic system based on liberal-bourgeois principles, which resulted in demands for the early convocation of the democratically-elected National Constituent Assembly so that it would adopt a new constitution, and sign a peace treaty with the allies on terms acceptable to Germany.

Finally, in 1918–1919 Germany, the problem that played a fatal role in the Russian Revolution of 1917, that is, *the agrarian question*, did not exist. In Russia, the peasant masses were united by the radical agenda. They demanded the gratuitous alienation of the landlord and private land and its equal redistribution among the members of the rural community. In Germany, on the contrary, the strong peasants-landowners prevailed in the village and made good money during the war on food and raw materials supplies. Their interests were closer to those of the large landowners than to those of the rural poor and farm laborers. Therefore, the peasants-landowners became a powerful stronghold and a stabilizer of the social order which the German urban bourgeoisie and the old imperial bureaucracy could fully rely upon. It should also be noted that such a strong commitment of German farmers to the principles of the inviolability of private property and social order affected the attitudes of the army in which many peasants served. Thus, the majority of peasant-landowners supported the bourgeois 'forces of order' in Germany, unlike in Russia. The bourgeois classes in the cities also did not intend to surrender their social-class positions and their newly acquired power without a fight.

In other words, despite the trials and hardships of the masses during the war, the configuration of the social-class forces in post-war Germany did not favor a socialist

revolution of the Bolshevik type. It was this peculiar balance of social-class forces that Weber meant when he spoke contemptuously about the attempts of the radical leftists to organize a communist coup in Germany, and establish a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' following the example of Soviet Russia. Weber stressed that both the urban and rural bourgeoisies of Germany would give a decisive armed rebuff to such adventures. When speaking to Austrian reserve officers in Vienna in the summer of 1918, Weber mentioned the hopes of the Bolshevik leaders to unleash the socialist revolution in Germany, and in particular of Leon Trotsky who led the Soviet delegation at the negotiations with the powers of the Fourth Union in Brest-Litovsk, calling these hopes completely baseless: "Trotsky hoped, by means of wars of words and the misuse of such words as 'peace' and 'self-determination,' to unleash civil war in Germany. He was, however, so ill-informed as to be ignorant of the fact that at least two-thirds of the German army is recruited from the countryside: and a further one-sixth from the petite bourgeoisie, for whom it would be a genuine pleasure to slap down the workers, or anyone else who wanted to start any such revolution" (1994d [1918]: 300).⁴³

When analyzing the trends of the political-social development of Germany after the November Revolution of 1918, Weber had to take not only the balance of social-political and social-economic forces in the country but also the geopolitical situation into account. The latter clearly did not favor a stable republican democratic system in Germany.

The fact that the democratic republic was established in Germany in the most unfavorable political and international conditions repeatedly affected its historical fate negatively. The democratic republic was established under the armed defeat and the collapse of the old political order; it had had every chance of becoming a "republic without republicans" and a new political form alien to both the old ruling elites and the broad masses. Weber saw the difficulties that the authorities of new democratic Germany had to face from the very beginning perfectly.

In the fall of 1918, Weber wrote that "it is very bad for the development of the sense of national dignity that democracy did not come to us in the same way as to Holland, England, America or France — due to the successful battles, or as we sought: it became the result of the defeat and not of the honorable peace. Moreover, there is also the shameful liquidation of the bankrupt old regime, which was a burden to our democracy and now darkens politically its future. At first our democracy can promise the nation only sad days. The republic sends us rays of hope, but today we do not know if they all will come true" (MWG, I/16: 107).

The international context of the establishment of the first German democracy did not remove the question of the viability of the political forces that took the leading positions in the new political order.⁴⁴ The fate of the revolution in Germany crucially depended on

43. Weber's passage is even more harsh in German (MWG, I/15: 630).

44. The second German democracy — the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) — was established in 1949 also due to the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, but this military defeat was accompanied by the complete and unconditional surrender, occupation by the troops of the anti-Hitler coalition and subsequent division of the country into the Western and Soviet zones of influence. Paradoxically, it was in 1945-1949 that all of Weber's painful fears of 1918-1919 came true. "In the East," wrote Raymond Aron, commenting on

the political position of the social democracy that split into three rival factions during the war. "Under the strain of responding to the war effort, the GSPD finally split in 1917. The more radical wing formed the so-called Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), while the majority remained with the more moderate GSPD, sometimes known as the Majority Social Democratic Party. A loose, more radical grouping further to the left of the Social Democrats was the Spartacus League, whose leading lights were Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. It was in this complex domestic configuration that the new republic was born" (Fulbrook, 2015: 21). The majority of the organized workers remained loyal to the former right-wing leadership of the GSPD headed by Friedrich Ebert and Philipp Scheidemann, who became the leaders of the Majority Social Democrats.

In his articles and public speeches in the winter of 1918–1919, Weber expressed doubts that the leaders of the German social democracy would be able to solve their political tasks. In his 1894 speech when he took the position of professor in Freiburg, Weber had already expressed doubts that German social democracy was mature enough in terms of its political experience and ability of its political leaders to decide Germany's political fate. Weber blamed not only the political legacy of Bismarck, whose authoritarian course did not develop equal civil partnership with various forces of the German society, but also the internal vices of the social-democratic movement.

Weber said then "what is *threatening* about our situation is the fact that the bourgeois classes seem to be wilting as the bearers of the *power-interests* of the nation, while there is still no sign that the workers are beginning to become mature enough to take their place" (1994a [1894]: 26). According to Weber, "if we were indeed successful in creating an 'aristocracy of labor' to be the bearer of the political sense of purpose (*Sinn*) which today's labor movement, in our view, lacks, could the spear of leadership, which the arm of the bourgeoisie is still too weak to bear, be transferred to the broader shoulders of the workers. But that moment still seems a long way off" (Ibid.: 27).

Thus, Weber had every reason to fear that the Majority Social Democrats in November 1918 could not cope with the overwhelming burden of administering the new state under economic chaos and military defeat. The success of the political system reform and social-political stabilization depended on the decisions of the new authorities that had replaced the collapsed monarchy to a great extent. In November 1918, the Council of People's Delegates, consisting of the leaders of the moderate factions of the German social democracy, became the new power. For decades, German social democracy had demanded the socialist restructuring of society; therefore, most of the members of were law-abiding, right-wing reformists. For them, just like for the representatives of other

the results of World War II in Europe, "the outcome of World War II was the same as it would have been for World War I if the Tsarist regime had survived. As soon as Germany was eliminated, the contested areas of Eastern Europe fell under Russian domination. They were occupied by Soviet troops and turned into popular democracies. In the twentieth century, armies are accompanied by regimes and ideologies" (Aron, 2002 [1957]: 59). Nevertheless, the second democracy in Germany was much more successful than the first. The second democracy escaped the fate of the Weimar Republic. Moreover, in the 1950s and 1960s, it managed not only to integrate into the military-political structures of the Western world but also to become the engine of the economic development and unification of Western Europe.

groups of German society, the revolution that many experts had predicted for so long was still a complete surprise. Having been taken to the top of power by the revolutionary whirlwind, they very soon found themselves in the forced and unusual role of the defenders of the bourgeois order from the attacks of left-wing radicals. In its turn, the new socialist government managed to hold power because it accepted the help of the army command and right-wing paramilitary units consisting of former front-line soldiers from the very beginning. The alliance with the army command allowed the right-wing social democracy to avoid the mistakes of the moderate Russian socialists from the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries parties. The fact that there was no “German October” can be also explained by the united opposition of the reformist moderate Majority Social Democrats and forces of the bourgeois order to the “red threat.”

The stabilizing political role of social democracy at the moment of crisis in the history of Germany had its historical background. Unlike the Bolshevik Party in Russia, the German Social Democrats became a powerful national political force during the war that led a large part of the organized labor movement. Before the war, German social democracy perceived the national political system and especially the monarchy with a certain distrust and even hostility; after the war began, social democracy and its faction in the *Reichstag* took the social-patriotic position. There was a dynamic *nationalization* of the party, which the “iron chancellor” Bismarck once called, together with German Catholics and their political organizations, the main internal enemies of the new German Empire. According to Weber, the evolution of the German Social Democratic Party during the war was an important lesson for anyone interested in politics in the modern world. He described this evolution as follows: “Precisely the experience of this war (including what is now happening in Russia) has demonstrated a point we have emphasized already, namely that *no* party, whatever its program, can assume the *effective* direction of the state *without becoming national*” (Weber, 1994b [1917]: 106–107).⁴⁵

In the pre-war period, Weber had already advocated for the real participation of the moderate social democracy in public administration (Mommsen, 1984: 101–123). He believed that such participation in the national parliament as well as in public administration was the best way to ensure the social unity of the nation and progressive social policy. Moreover, such participation would provide the leaders and activists of social democracy with an indispensable experience of state administration which could be of a worthy use. Weber explained this position using the fact that “democratic parties which *share in government* are bearers of nationalism everywhere” (1994b [1917]: 82).⁴⁶

The change in Weber’s attitude towards the German socialists was determined by both the vote of the social-democratic faction in the *Reichstag* for military credits and the Majority Social Democrats’ support for the military efforts of the German Empire in World War I. During the war, the right-wing Majority Social Democrats became the key participant of the intra-German political coalition that aimed at keeping the civil peace (*Burgfrieden*). When commenting on the position of German social democracy during

45. MWG, I/15: 373.

46. MWG, I/15: 349.

the war, Weber noted that “even the truly modest measure of actual and precarious participation conceded to the representatives of radical democracy in Germany during the war was sufficient to persuade them to place themselves at the service of objective (*sachlich*) national politics” (1994b [1917]: 82).⁴⁷

The position of the party’s leadership and of the majority of its members during the war inevitably affected the political choice made by the moderate social democracy after the defeat of Germany and the fall of the monarchy. This was the choice of concluding a peace treaty, democratizing the political system, and implementing progressive social reforms within the capitalist system, and not the choice of the complete destruction of the old bourgeois order under socialist slogans. If the moderate social democracy welcomed a revolution, it was only the revolution that did not threaten the foundations of the traditional bourgeois order. The late autumn of 1918 position of the Majority Social Democrats and their leaders of democratic reforms to prevent the revolution determined their readiness to make an alliance with the bourgeois forces to preserve the foundations of social order. In July, soon before the eve of the November Revolution of 1918, the leader of the Majority Social Democrats and the future first president of the Weimar Republic, Friedrich Ebert, unequivocally expressed the position of the party leadership: “Anyone who witnessed the events in Russia, in the interests of the proletariat cannot wish for the same development of affairs in our country” (Ebert, 1918: 586). For the same reason, the right-wing social democracy condemned the October coup of 1917 and the civil war in Russia, and called the “dictatorship of the proletariat” established by the Bolsheviks a version of the “Asian despotism” (Zarusky, 1998).

One of the features of the German Revolution of 1918 was that the main struggle was not between right-wing and left-wing forces, but between the moderate leftists and the left-wing radicals which created the German Communist Party (GCP) in the winter of 1918–1919. German communists openly focused on Russian Bolshevism, and demanded the dictatorship of the proletariat in Germany. On the contrary, after the military defeat and the collapse of the monarchy, the right-wing forces were so demoralized that they could not play an independent political role. On the evening of November 10, 1918, the new chief of staff of the Western front army, General Groener, called Ebert and offered his troops to fight the Bolshevik danger. In the next few months, the Ebert-Groener agreement allowed for the suppression of the actions of the left-wing radicals, thus preventing a full-scale civil war of the Russian type.

The idea of an early peace with the countries of the Entente and the demands for democratizing the political system were very popular among all groups of German society, while the left-wing radicals’ demands for establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the social restructuring on the basis of Marxist socialism were not widely accepted. The most important condition for the victory of the right-wing Majority Social Democrats was their unification of all the powers of the propertied bourgeois Germany

47. Ibid.

under the slogans of convening the National Constituent Assembly and preserving the foundations of the bourgeois social order.

An important stabilizing role in the development of the German Revolution was the fact that the main demands of the masses for the democratization of the political system and the implementation of progressive social reforms were met by the Council of People's Delegates in the very first months of the revolution, which eliminated the grounds for the radicalization of revolutionary slogans at the first stages of the revolutionary process. The Council of People's Delegates approved an eight-hour working day and unemployment benefits, guaranteed the mandatory re-instatement of demobilized soldiers to their previously-held jobs, and proclaimed universal and equal suffrage for men and women from the age of 20, together with all political rights and freedoms. The Commission on Socialization of a number of industries was created and led by the famous Marxist theorists Karl Kautsky and Rudolph Gilferding. Thus, the German Revolution ended before it had even managed to begin.

The attempt of the left-wing radicals to use the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" to direct the revolutionary process in Germany on the Russian path completely failed. At the Berlin All-German Congress of Soviets from December 16-20, 1918, only 10 delegates out of 489 voted for the transfer of power to the soviets, while the overwhelming majority voted for elections to the National Constituent Assembly in January, 1919. The struggle of the radical leftists against the revolutionary government of the right-wing Majority Social Democrats, which reached its peak in the winter of 1918–1919, ended by the complete defeat of the radical leftists and the deaths of their most prepared and prominent leaders, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. This ensured the conditions for the stabilization of the social-political situation and for democratic elections to the National Constituent Assembly. The Assembly's deputies, meeting in Weimar in February, 1919, elected the social democrat Friedrich Ebert as the first president of the republic, and adopted the constitution of the new democratic Germany. Therefore, the 'party of businessmen' (an expression of the Russian philosopher Fedor Stepun, who studied in Germany on the eve of World War I and knew the social-political situation in the country quite well), consisting of moderate social democrats and centrist bourgeois circles, quickly won over both the left-wing and right-wing radicals.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that Weber's 1917–1919 articles and speeches on the political system reform in Prussia and the German Empire and on the development of the institutions of new democratic Germany were topical and their content was determined mainly by the rapidly changing social-political context, their value is far beyond a situational political analysis.⁴⁸ Moreover, Weber's conclusions and proposals for the new political structure

48. David Beetham was among the first to note this in his study of Weber's theory of modern politics. Despite the fact that Weber's works on Germany and on Russia during revolutions of 1905 and 1917 primarily "commented on some specific issues of politics . . . such issues could only be made intelligible in terms of

of Germany are determined by a coherent theoretical system based on several theses. The conclusion of the article focuses on the key features of this theoretical scheme and its significance for the social-philosophical and social-scientific study of the historical destiny of modernity.

As Weber stressed in the series of articles “Parliament and Government in Germany under a new Political Order,” the world of modernity as developed in the West in Modern Times could have become the winner in all of the disasters of the era by only providing worthy answers to the three main questions that determined the historical fate of the West in the early 20th century. Weber carefully studied these in a series of articles on the future political structure of democratic Germany.

Designed to describe the main features and development trends of modernity, Weber starts his theoretical scheme with rationalization and bureaucratization, along with their global significance. In 1918, Weber asked the question of “how is it *at all possible* to salvage any remnants of ‘individual’ freedom of movement *in any sense*, given this all-powerful trend towards bureaucratization?” (1994c [1918]: 159).⁴⁹ This question clearly echoes the question raised by Weber in 1906 in the articles on the revolution in Russia of the civilizational prerequisites and historical destinies of the modern world. Weber’s concern about the fate of modern individualism and liberalism of the Western type was determined by his understanding that the economic development trends of the early 20th century did not contribute to the consolidation of these cultural-political values and corresponding forms of behavior, but, on the contrary, led to their destruction and decline. Weber had already noted in 1906 that “if it were *only* a question of the ‘material’ conditions and the complex of interests directly or indirectly ‘created’ by them, any sober observer would have to say that *all* economic indicators point in the direction of growing ‘unfreedom.’ It is absolutely ridiculous to attribute to the high capitalism which is today being imported into Russia and already exists in America — this ‘inevitable’ economic development — any elective affinity with ‘democracy’ let alone with ‘liberty’” (1995a [1906]: 108–109).⁵⁰ In other words, Weber linked the tendencies towards rationalization and bureaucratization, typical for mature Western capitalism, with the tendencies to economic stagnation and political non-freedom, thus trying to find such forces that would constitute a counterbalance to these negative trends.

In the political domain, the question of the historical fate of modernity takes on a different form. Here Weber asks: “In view of the growing indispensability and hence increasing power of state officialdom, which is our concern here, how can there be any guarantee that forces exist which can impose limits on the enormous crushing power of this constantly growing stratum of society and control it effectively? How is democracy even in this restricted sense to be *at all possible*?” (1994c [1918]: 159).⁵¹ Under the auspices

a wider analysis of the social and political forces involved. It is possible to build up a remarkably consistent picture of these from the different periods of Weber’s writing” (Weber, 1985 [1974]: 151).

49. MWG, I/15: 465–466.

50. MWG, I/10: 270.

51. MWG, I/15: 466.

of the 1918 Revolution in Germany, Weber tried to answer this second, political question on the historical fate of modernity by creating a theory of mass plebiscitary democracy designed to solve the three main problems of modern politics in the mass industrial society, those of (1) political leadership, (2) effective administrative management, and (3) the political participation of the masses in making the most important state decisions. Thus, the Weberian interpretation of the essence of modern politics is the search for an effective balance of three main actors of the mass politics of the 20th century, those of political leaders, the bureaucratic apparatus of domination and control, and the political role of the masses.

It is well known that Weber rejected the natural-law and radical-democratic approaches for the justification of modern democracy. He preferred a more prosaic and businesslike approach, for he simply did not see any other serious alternative to democracy in the modern world. According to Weber, mass democracy was necessary as a form of mass public legitimation and justification for political rule and institutions in the West in the twentieth century. Concerning Germany, he was also convinced that the dissemination of democratic institutions and management techniques was the only means of overcoming authoritarian rule and of limiting the uncontrolled power of government officials with effective forms of public control. As the modern mass democracy has no alternative except for public administration by specially-trained officials, the control over the bureaucratic apparatus of domination becomes of paramount importance. Moreover, the primary task of modern politics is to learn how to take advantage of the professional officials' competencies and skills while putting them under reliable democratic control at the same time. Therefore, when officials-functionaries and the masses become the main actors in modern mass states, responsible leadership becomes the main challenge for Weber who considered it as a source for solutions to the problems of political control over the bureaucracy and of the political leadership of the masses.

Finally, in the domain of social-historical anthropology, the question of the fragility of the modern world and its possibilities for survival takes on the following form: "Which human and social types are historically in demand to preserve individualistic freedoms, economic dynamism and political democracy inherent in the world of modernity?" Weber formulates this third and "the most important of all questions" (1994c [1918]: 159) on the current trends in the development of the modern world by focusing on the professional bureaucracy when he writes that "it is clear that its effectiveness has strict internal limits, both in the management of public, political affairs and in the private economic sphere. The *leading spirit*, the 'entrepreneur' in the one case, the 'politician' in the other, is something different from an 'official'. Not necessarily in form, but certainly in substance" (Ibid.).⁵²

What distinguishes a politician and an entrepreneur from a professional official? Weber stressed that "the difference lies rather in the kind of *responsibility* borne by each of them, and this is largely what determines the demands made on their particular abilities"

52. MWG, I/15: 466.

(1994c [1918]: 160).⁵³ He adds that “the official should stand ‘above the parties,’ which in truth means that he must remain outside the *struggle* for power of his own. The struggle for personal power and the acceptance of full *personal responsibility for one’s cause* (*Sache*) which is the consequence of such power — this is the very element in which the politician and the entrepreneur live and breathe” (Ibid.: 161).⁵⁴

Just as the entrepreneur represents the main source of dynamism and innovations in the market-capitalist economy and prevents it from making no headway by his innovations, the leadership in politics requires a great insight and responsibility from those politicians who should be fundamentally different from the officials-executors’ social-psychological type in order to effectively perform their tasks.⁵⁵ It can be seen here that the figures of a dynamic entrepreneur and a responsible politician are put forward in the center of Weber’s analysis of modernity. Lacking their assistance, the institutional order of modern society is doomed to lose its own dynamic character both in economics and politics. Moreover, Weber draws a far-reaching analogy between a private entrepreneur and an independent politician. He regards these figures as the carriers of the private initiative and personal autonomy which allow them to be the most important counterbalance to the far-gone proceedings of rationalization and bureaucratization in the world of modernity.

Thus, in his articles and speeches during the German Revolution of 1918, Weber-the-scholar and Weber-the-politician used a coherent social-theoretical system to study the historical fate of the modern world in the West. This theoretical scheme, originally used by Weber to analyze the 1905 Revolution in Russia and then refined in his analysis of the historical material of the 1918 Revolution in Germany, is still valid for interpreting the problems of contemporary political and public life, provided the new historical experience of the 20th century is taken into account along with integrating the theoretical potential of Weber’s scheme into present-day social-scientific work.

References

The titles of the Max-Weber-Gesamtausgabe referred to in this article are cited as follows:

MWG I/4 — (1993) *Landarbeiterfrage, Nationalstaat und Volkswirtschaftspolitik: Schriften und Reden 1892–1899* (eds. W. J. Mommsen, R. Aldenhoff), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

MWG I/10 — (1989) *Zur Russischen Revolution von 1905: Schriften und Reden 1905–1912* (eds. W. J. Mommsen, D. Dahlmann), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

MWG I/15 — (1984) *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg: Schriften und Reden 1914–1918* (eds. W. J. Mommsen, H. Hübinger), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

53. MWG, I/15: 467.

54. MWG, I/15: 468.

55. Weber wrote in 1917: “However — and people often forget this — even the most outstanding civil servant is not necessarily a good politician, and vice versa” (MWG, I/15: 244; Weber, 1995b [1917]: 245).

- MWG I/16 — (1988) *Zur Neuordnung Deutschlands: Schriften und Reden 1918–1920* (eds. W. J. Mommsen, W. Schwentkler), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).
- MWG I/17 — (1992) *Wissenschaft als Beruf 1917/1919; Politik als Beruf 1919* (eds. W. J. Mommsen, W. Schluchter, B. Morgenbrot), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).
- MWG I/22-4 — (2005) *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Die Wirtschaft und die gesellschaftlichen Ordnungen und Mächte. Nachlaß. Teilband 4: Herrschaft* (eds. E. Hanke, T. Kroll), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).
- MWG I/23 — (2013) *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Soziologie. Unvollendet. 1919–1920* (eds. K. Borchardt, E. Hanke, W. Schluchter), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).
- MWG, II/10-2 — (2012) *Briefe 1918–1920* (eds. G. Krumeich, M. R. Lepsius, U. Hinz, S. Oßwald-Bargende, M. Schön), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).
- Aron R. (2002 [1957]) *Nations and Empires. The Dawn of Universal History. Selected Essays from the Witness of Twentieth Century*, New York: Basic Books, pp. 3–65.
- Beetham D. (1985 [1974]) *Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Breuer S. (1992) Soviet Communism and Weberian Sociology. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 5, no 3, pp. 267–290.
- Breuer S. (1994) Die Organisationszision als Held: Der sowjetische Kommunismus und das Charisma der Vernunft. Bürokratie und Charisma. *Zur politischen Soziologie Max Webers*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, pp. 84–109.
- Dahlmann D. (1998) Theorie im Handgemenge: Die russische Revolution in der Kritik der deutschen Soziologie und Geschichtswissenschaft. *Deutschland und die russische Revolution 1917–1924* (eds. G. Koenen, L. Kopelew), München: Fink, pp. 380–408.
- Dahlmann D. (2014) Max Weber und Russland. *Max Weber in der Welt: Rezeption und Wirkung* (ed. M. Kaiser), Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), pp. 81–102.
- Dahrendorf R. (1992) *Der moderne soziale Konflikt: Essay zur Politik der Freiheit*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.
- Dmitriev T. (2017) Max Weber and Peter Struve on the Russian Revolution. *Studies in East European Thought*, vol. 69, no 4, pp. 305–328.
- Ebert F. (1918) Friedrich Ebert vor dem Parteiausschuß am 23.9.1918. *Protokolle der Sitzungen des Parteiausschusses der SPD 1912 bis 1921, Vol. 1* (ed. D. Dowe), Bonn; Berlin.
- Fitzpatrick S. (2001) *The Russian Revolution*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fullbrooke M. (2015) *A History of Germany 1918–2014: The Divided Nation*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Joas H., Knöbl W. (2004) *Sozialtheorie: Zwanzig einführende Vorlesungen*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Loewenstein K. (1966) *Max Weber's Political Ideas in the Perspective of Our Time*, Cambridge: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Maier Ch. S. (1981) The Two Postwar Eras and the Conditions for Stability in the Twentieth-Century Western Europe. *American Historical Review*, vol. 86, no 2, pp. 327–352.

- Maier Ch. S. (2015) *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Möller H. (2004) *Die Weimar Republik: Eine unvollendete Demokratie*, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.
- Mommsen W. J. (1984) *Max Weber and German Politics, 1890–1920*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mommsen W. J. (1997) Max Weber and Regeneration of Russia. *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 69, no 1, pp. 1–17.
- Müller J.-W. (2014) *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Münkler H. (1995) Max Weber und der Sozialismus. Weber M., *Der Sozialismus* (ed. H. Münkler), Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, pp. 7–67.
- Spengler O. (1920) *Preussentum und Sozialismus*, München: C. H. Beck.
- Zarusky J. (1998) Vom Zarismus zum Bolschewismus: Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und der „asiatische Despotismus“. *Deutschland und die Russische Revolution, 1917–1924* (eds. G.Koenen, L. Kopelew), München: Wilhelm Fink, pp. 99–133.
- Weber M. (1946 [1919]) Politics as a Vocation. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (eds. H. H. Gerth, C. Wright Mills), New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 77–128.
- Weber M. (1984 [1926]) *Max Weber: Ein Lebensbild*, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).
- Weber M. (1978 [1921]) *Economy and Society* (eds. G. Roth, C. Wittich), Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Weber M. (1994) *Political Writings* (eds. P. Lassman, R. Speirs), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weber M. (1994a [1894]) The Nation State and Economic Policy. *Political Writings* (eds. P. Lassman, R. Speirs), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–28.
- Weber M. (1994b [1917]) Suffrage and Democracy in Germany. *Political Writings* (eds. P. Lassman, R. Speirs), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 80–129.
- Weber M. (1994c [1918]) Parliament and Government in Germany under a New Political Order. *Political Writings* (eds. P. Lassman, R. Speirs), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 130–271.
- Weber M. (1994d [1918]) Socialism. *Political Writings* (eds. P. Lassman, R. Speirs), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 272–303.
- Weber M. (1995) *The Russian Revolutions* (eds. G. C. Wells, P. Baehr), Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Weber M. (1995a [1906]) Bourgeois Democracy in Russia. *The Russian Revolutions* (eds. G. C. Wells, P. Baehr), Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 41–147.
- Weber M. (1995b [1917]) Russia's Transition to Pseudo-Democracy. *The Russian Revolutions* (eds. G. C. Wells, P. Baehr), Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 241–256.
- Weissbecker M. (1990) Wegbereiter und Widersacher eines neuen Herrschafts- und Parteiensystems. *Macht und Onmacht der Weimarer Republik* (ed. M. Weissbecker), Freiburg: Haufe, pp. 11–38.

Макс Вебер и Ноябрьская революция 1918 года в Германии, или Почему у большевизма не было шансов на Западе

Тимофей Дмитриев

Кандидат философских наук, доцент школы культурологии факультета гуманитарных наук

Национального исследовательского университета «Высшая школа экономики»

Адрес: ул. Мясницкая, д. 20, г. Москва, Российская Федерация 101000

E-mail: tdmitriev@hse.ru

К числу канонических жанров современной социально-философской и социально-научной мысли относится особый тип исследования, который в немецкой социологии и социальной теории XX века было принято называть «диагнозом эпохи» (Zeitdiagnose), т.е. анализом конкретной исторической ситуации. Первоклассный пример такого применения социально-теоретического знания для диагноза и прогноза актуальных тенденций развития современности дают статьи, публикации и выступления Макса Вебера последних военных и первых послевоенных лет. Статья посвящена политическому и социальному диагнозу эпохи, данному Вебером в его статьях 1917–1919 годов, связанных с обсуждением проблем послевоенного переустройства Германии на демократических началах. Особое внимание уделяется оценке Вебером путей политического и социального развития Германии после поражения в мировой войне и Ноябрьской революции 1918 года. Отдельно рассматриваются взгляды Вебера на перспективы социалистической революции в странах Центральной Европы после окончания мировой войны по образцу большевистской революции в России 1917 года. Подробно освящаются и анализируются также предложения Вебера по реформе политической и избирательной системы Германской империи. В заключительной части статьи дается обобщенная характеристика той теоретической схемы, которой Вебер руководствовался при своем анализе событий и процессов революции 1918 года в Германии и раскрывается ее значение для понимания исторических судеб мира модерна.

Ключевые слова: Макс Вебер, диагноз эпохи, Германская империя, ноябрьская революция 1918 года в Германии, современная массовая демократия, индивидуализм, свобода, большевизм, рационализация, бюрократизация, современный мир