

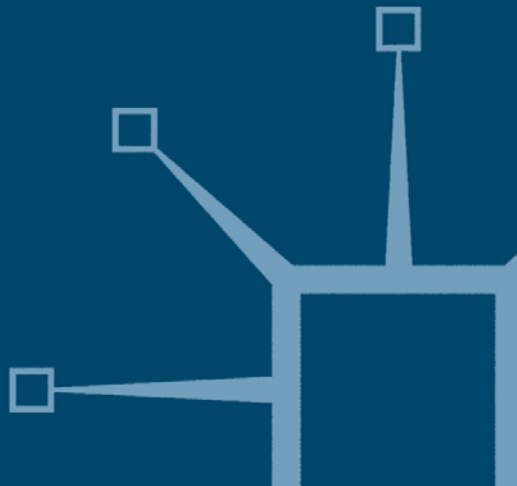
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# German Thought and International Relations

The Rise and Fall of a Liberal Project

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Robbie Shilliam



# German Thought and International Relations

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The Rise and Fall of a Liberal Project

Robbie Shilliam

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2009 978-0-230-22422-3

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First published 2009 by  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

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Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

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ISBN 978-1-349-30918-4 ISBN 978-0-230-23415-4 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1057/9780230234154

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shilliam, Robbie, 1969–

German thought and international relations: the rise and fall of a liberal project / Robbie Shilliam.

p. cm. — (Palgrave studies in international relations series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Political science—Germany—History.
  2. Philosophy, German.
  3. Liberalism—Germany.
  4. Germany—Politics and government.
- I. Title.

JA84.G3S55 2009

327.101—dc22

2008052861

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09

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# Acknowledgments

This book was initially written as a DPhil thesis at the University of Sussex supervised by Beate Jahn and Justin Rosenberg. To them I owe a weighty intellectual debt; over a number of years they have generously shared with me their considerable expertise in political thought and historical sociology. Julian Saurin also played an important part in the early development of this thesis, pushing me to communicate my position and raising historical and philosophical issues that will engage me for a long time to come. Benno Teschke and Michael Williams examined the original thesis in an exhaustive fashion. The further development of the thesis thus owes another significant debt to the comments and critiques of my examiners. Jeppe Strandsbjerg, Kamran Matin and Gurminder Bhambra provided quality comments on – and critiques of – my further drafts. One anonymous reviewer provided helpful advice on the presentation of the argument.

I am fortunate in that when writing this book I was surrounded by a further community of scholars, all of whom influenced me intellectually: (in no particular order) John Maclean, Zdenek Kavan, Alex Colas, Rick Saull, Kees Van der Pijl, Ronan Palan, Adam Morton, Sean Molloy, John Holmwood, Andrew Chitty, Sam Knafo, Branwen Gruffydd Jones, Siba Grovogui, George Lawson, Naeem Inayatullah, Andrew Hurrell, Max Pensky, Tim di Muzio, Adrienne Roberts, Mike Drymoussis, Earl Gammon, Clemens Hoffman, Rahel Kunz, Johnna Montgomerie, Or Raviv, Duncan Wigan, Mihnea Panu and Raluca Parvu.

I thank the editors at Palgrave Alexandra Webster, Knud Erik Joergensen and Audie Klotz for their generous and professional support. With regards to practical and spiritual support I am entirely indebted to my friends and my family, especially for the untiring support of my wife, Cynthia Mathonsi.



# Part I

# 1

## Introduction

### **The liberal project and realist politics in context**

If there is one question that has haunted the discipline of International Relations (IR), it is whether humanity might become a universal political community or whether it will remain fractured by irreducible political differences. Posed more succinctly, the question is whether the value system of liberalism can be universalized, or whether, in fact, the illiberal reality of international politics systematically rules out such a project. This contestation between the liberal project and realist politics is documented in the founding myth of the IR discipline, the ‘first great debate’. Here, a pessimistic and realistic worldview of how things ‘are’ – namely a timeless anarchic world wherein national interest reigns supreme and selfish state interest consistently overrides the formation of a universal community – is purported to have defied an optimistic liberal worldview of how things ‘ought to be’ – namely a project to institutionalize inter-dependency between nations so that the ‘good life’ that individuals enjoy within the state can be universalized progressively across humanity.<sup>1</sup> In effect, the contestation between liberalism and realism has acted as a master framework in which the political–philosophical content of international relations has been arranged into a series of dichotomies that furnish mutually opposing worldviews: ethics versus politics, the universal versus the particular, prescription versus analysis and change versus continuity (Walker 1993; Crawford 2000).

In recent years, there has been increased dissatisfaction with this text book understanding of the mutually exclusive nature of liberal and realist worldviews. These critiques make the case that Realism makes no sense if understood as anti-liberal: it should be more accurately understood as a critique of idealist assumptions about the international

spread of liberal values.<sup>2</sup> It has been pointed out, for example, that both realist and liberal worldviews were entwined within many analyses of the 'twenty years crisis' of the inter-war period, the time when the 'first great debate' was said to have taken place (Wilson 1998; Ashworth 1999: 128; Thies 2002; Quirk and Vigneswaran 2005). Some authors have noted that talk of the outright triumph of Realism in the post-war American administration is also somewhat of an exaggeration: during the Cold War, US foreign policy was always guided by a paradoxical 'utopian Realism' wherein the national interest was ultimately anchored in the desire to protect and spread domestic liberal values (Donnelly 1995: 184–185; Hill 1989: 325; Kratochwil 1993: 71). In the face of such comments, the ascription of a dichotomous nature to liberal and realist worldviews becomes less common sense and more problematic to maintain.

One can, however, further problematize the mainstream framework of the discipline of IR. Though the word 'liberal' is often unproblematically associated with *the* modern condition, its own ethico-political content has by no means been so singular. There are, and have been, many different political philosophies that analytically and ethically investigate the condition of individual freedom in a sympathetic manner (Macpherson 1977; Schechter 2007);<sup>3</sup> and it would not be outrageous to include some Realisms within this collection. Can we, therefore, speak of a *general* modern relationship between *the* liberal project and realist politics?

In order to answer this question it is crucial to consider the discrete historical geo-cultural contexts within which this relationship is investigated. Within the discipline of political theory, context has usually been understood as either universal in scope, incorporating the sum of the experiences of human development at a historical point in time (e.g., *the* 'modern' experience),<sup>4</sup> or particular to the development of a bounded political community.<sup>5</sup> This choice between the universal and the particular as context is replicated in many efforts to contextualize the development of IR itself as a discipline. On the one hand, a number of writers paint this context effectively in generalized terms wherein the dichotomy of liberalism and realism can be made sense of as a problematic of modern political subjectivity *per se* (Ashley 1989; Walker 1993; Campbell and Dillon 1993; George 1994; Der Derian 1995). But it has also been popular, on the other hand, to dwell on the particular American context in which IR has found institutional roots (Hoffman 1977; Krippendorf 1987). Realism, it is noted, bears the imprint of its founding purpose – to furnish the foreign policy of a newly hegemonic

power with the mores and techniques necessary to order a new Cold War world (Ashworth 1999: 122). In this latter perspective, special attention has been given to the institutional peculiarities of the American Academy (Schmidt 1998), and this concern has even been extended to highlight the differences between particular national contexts of knowledge production (Alker Jr and Biersteker 1984; Wæver 1998; Crawford and Jarvis 2001).

Nevertheless, the problem is that if all traditions or bodies of political thought only gain meaning and relevance in particular contexts, then a general theory of international relations is ruled out. But perhaps this choice between the particular and the universal context is, in the discipline of IR above all, a choice between veering toward either Charybdis or Scylla. For, the challenge that we are presented with when we enter into this peculiar discipline that seeks to explain the inter-relation of differentiated societies is precisely that of questioning *universality* in human affairs, but in a way that still allows for a *general* theory that might illuminate *particular* conditions. It seems then that at the most abstract level we must interrogate the international as a dimension of social being existing beyond the particular but before the universal. And it follows that we must interrogate the historical context of political thought on international relations in the same way – as more than the particular, but less than the universal.

To this effect, the argument in this book expands upon a growing body of work that seeks to contextualize political thought in neither particular nor universal terms, but by reference to the *international dimension of knowledge production*.<sup>6</sup> Recognizing this dimension requires us to re-imagine context as neither bounded to a particular society, nor universal in scope, but rather delineated in and through a specific society's interaction with other, differentially developed societies. Thus, approaching context in this way requires us to imagine that political thought does not develop through internal reference to a particular society, nor does it simply translate perfectly across differentially developed societies. Instead, political thought is generated in and through intellectual engagement with the problem of alterity presented by the socially constituted border of political community. What is more, this intellectual engagement with alterity occurs as part of – and in conversation with – the substantive processes of social transformation themselves generated through the interaction of differentially developed polities. In other words, the international dimension of knowledge production is necessarily linked to a wider international dimension of social transformation.

In this book, I utilize this position in order to re-think and clarify the way in which the theorization of international relations constructs the relationship between ethics and politics, especially as they pertain to the rubric of a realistic tempering of the liberal project. To do so, I pursue two related strategies. First, I show how intellectuals have made sense of the relationship between a liberal project and illiberal politics from within a historical context delineated by the problem of alterity – of the interaction between differentially developed societies. And second, and in order to better clarify the nature of this context of alterity, I explore the substantive effect of this interaction upon processes of modern social transformation encountered and experienced by intellectuals. I investigate this problem of alterity in its manifestation as an experience of *comparative backwardness* concerning the political institutionalization of individual freedom.

In order to speak to some of the core legacies of classical political thought that, in IR, have been mobilized as a canon to frame the liberalism/realism dichotomy, I concentrate on the German experience of backwardness that concerned Immanuel Kant, Georg Hegel, Max Weber and ultimately Hans Morgenthau. This German context, stretching between the French Revolution and the rise of Nazism, is especially instructive because it seems to have produced an inordinate amount of critical theory on the condition of and possibilities for individual freedom in a world of illiberal politics.<sup>7</sup> Morgenthau, the Godfather of Realism (Hoffmann 1977: 44), bridges this intellectual era and the subsequent takeoff of IR in the New World; but many of the preceding authors in this era have also been given prominence in contemporary IR debates in various ways: Kant and Hegel have been used as exemplars of cosmopolitan and communitarian normative theories, and Weber's vocation of politics informs much of the Realist debates on the nature of ethical foreign policy making.

Specifically, I contextualize the critical engagement of these authors with the condition of individual freedom as arising out of a consciousness of German backwardness that first emerged among the German intellectual stratum during the French Revolution and climaxed in the Weimar era. I investigate how this consciousness of backwardness developed among certain intellectuals through varied investigations of foreign 'advanced' societies – especially republican France and capitalist Britain – wherein individual freedom had been, in comparison to 'illiberal' Germany, politically guaranteed. I argue that in the works of Kant, Hegel, Weber and Morgenthau, one can extract a shifting yet cumulative engagement with the relationship between the project to

politically institutionalize individual freedom and the reality of a world of differentially developed polities. I argue that a consciousness of backwardness played a major role in the fusing by intellectuals of liberal values with the conditions of backward politics thereby producing novel political philosophies of the modern condition of individual freedom.

I make sense of this fusion of ethics and politics by employing a heuristic device, but one nevertheless derived from German Enlightenment thought itself: the notion of *Bildung*. At the most general level, one might say that *Bildung* alludes to an intellectual cultivation of knowledge, an education of the self. However, from the French Revolution onward, *Bildung* was mobilized by various intellectuals to refer specifically to the 'real-world' constitution of the political subject as the free and equal individual. Against the disruptive problem of unrestrained egoism created by the individualization of social bonds, *Bildung* was considered as the potentially progressive side of this process, namely, a self-cultivation of an awareness of the social constitution of one's own political individuality that would lead to an ethical social order rather than to the dissolution of social bonds.

In the following investigation I take the quality of *Bildung* to be counter-posed to an unthinking egoism, thus representing for the intellectual the progressive liberal value to be pursued within the world of politics in order to escape the condition of backwardness. At the same time, I also take *Bildung* to be the intellectual's understanding of his own special political agency, an agency, moreover, that the intellectual believed to be crucial in order to politically institutionalize an ethical individual freedom. Thus stated, my deployment of *Bildung* is not a willful fiction, but rather an emphasis that I make in interpreting the political philosophies of Kant, Hegel, Weber and Morgenthau in such a way that will draw out the framework of their shifting yet cumulatively developed 'liberal' project. Through this strategy I show that their 'liberal' project was not self-referentially 'German', nor passively received from abroad, nor a German derivative of a universally understood Liberal tradition, but rather a specific engagement with modern social transformation generated through the international dimension of knowledge production (manifested through a consciousness of backwardness).<sup>8</sup>

Three major points arise from this investigation, which are of pertinence to current debates in IR that seek to re-interpret the relationship between the liberal project and realist politics.

The first pertains to the practice of historically contextualizing political thought. I show that the interaction of differentially developed

societies is germane to the production of political thought on that development. This problem is obfuscated when the context to which political philosophy speaks is assumed to be either self-referential to a specific society or universal to the community of, or historical stage of, humankind. Therefore, rather than simply as an object of political thought, the 'international' has to be posited far more foundationally as constitutive of the construction of that thought itself. Highlighting the generative nature of the international dimension of knowledge production in this way makes us think more carefully about how we historically account for the similarities and differences between descriptively similar traditions of thought, for example, the many different sympathetic engagements with the condition of individual freedom that have historically developed across the world and that together make up a body of 'liberal' thought. This consideration gains breadth and depth through my investigation of the different kinds of 'liberal' political philosophies constructed by Kant, Hegel, Weber and Morgenthau, and the different ways in which they fused liberal ethics with illiberal politics.

The second point pertains to the project of using historical sociological approaches to account for the international relations of modernity. In this respect, I investigate inter-societal differences not in the abstract, but as constructed in a specific way within modern world development. By investigating the French Revolution and the succeeding development of the German state I argue that the condition of backwardness inaugurated inter-societal comparisons that led to the launching of substitute development projects and the creation of novel social forms and political orders. Thus, rather than conceiving of the 'international' as either an arena of pre-social anarchy, or as simply the extension in thought and practice of a particular form of domestic society, e.g., liberal modernity, I show that by focusing on the paradoxically generative nature of the condition of backwardness we might be able to think of the 'international' as a historical dimension of sociality *in its own right*. In so doing the argument in this book not only places the 'international' within the constitution of political thought but also suggests a narrative to make sense of the modern social substance of the 'international'.

Third, by placing these two related investigations in productive tension I reveal how some of the most influential classical authorities in IR theory engaged with, but at the same time obfuscated, what forms the special mandate of the IR discipline within the social sciences – investigation of the specificities of the social space generated through relations between differentially developed polities. In fine, I show that

Kant, Hegel, Weber and Morgenthau *all* imagined international relations in a way that, paradoxically, *elided an engagement with the international dimension of social transformation*. And the main purpose of this book is to draw out this serious lacuna that runs through this 'liberal' project and all of its historical twists and turns. In various ways the intellectuals associated with this German project were unable to recognize that in engaging with the context of backwardness they themselves were generating *both* the particular political condition *and* the universal criteria by which this condition could be judged to be progressive or backward. Ultimately, they failed to recognize the impossibility of occupying an objective vista from which to view the universal archetype of liberal structure and agency. By making a *faux pas* into universalism, all the intellectuals I investigate, in various ways, failed to recognize the *generative* impact that inter-societal difference had on their relating of an illiberal state of politics to a liberal ethical criterion. Moreover, by presuming the existence of a universal archetype of the political structure and agency of individual freedom, none realized that the condition of backwardness, starting in 1789, had tended to generate *multiple* (but not purely contingent) novel forms of modern political subjectivity, rather than simply facilitating the uni-linear expansion of a *singular* liberal political subject.

Although I would by no means wish to claim that the following enquiry exhausts all contexts in which intellectuals have tempered the liberal project with the reality of illiberal politics, its argument does hold ramifications for the way in which we critique the mainstream understanding of our disciplinary history. This is especially relevant to the way in which much theorization in IR – critical and otherwise – engages with Liberalism and Realism as singular and implicitly universally understood worldviews *even if* by doing so these investigations seek to disrupt the apparently dichotomous relationship between them. I argue that a more serious ambiguity over the relationship between ethics and politics resides in the generative nature that inter-societal difference injects into the development of political thought; and this provides a window onto an often-overlooked international dimension of social transformation that has been constitutive in the making of modern world order. Most importantly, and as I shall conclude, by shifting the problematic in this fashion, new analytical questions and ethical challenges arise regarding the relationship between the individual, the national and the condition of modernity – a relationship that is at the heart of the contestation between liberalism and realism.



In the rest of this introductory chapter, I expand some more on the missing international dimension of knowledge production in approaches that historically contextualize political thought. I then present a method of contextualization that is sensitive to this missing dimension with regards to both knowledge production and substantive social transformation. Finally, I outline the form and substance of the succeeding argument.

## **The context of knowledge production**

In this section I sketch out various approaches to contextualizing political thought. The point of this exercise is to introduce various dimensions of context that have so far been addressed but, while not dismissing these dimensions, to draw attention to the relative absence of attention to the international dimension of knowledge production. As good a place as any to enter the debates over context is still Maurice Mandelbaum's (1965) essay in which he asked this question: is the 'history of ideas' a heuristic exercise meant to better articulate a philosophical position, or is it a social history of the development of that philosophical position?

Certainly, with the rise to prominence of the so-called Cambridge School (led by John Pocock and especially Quentin Skinner), it is the latter approach that has become more fashionable.<sup>9</sup> According to Skinner, the history of political thought should seek to reveal the historical context surrounding the authors' intentions and the documentation of the actual struggles over formulating the meaning of this intent.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, social context is important, but not enough in and of itself for a historical reconstruction of intention. For, there is a difference between 'to do' and 'in doing': the former is 'prelocutory' – it provides motivation from outside the text to persuade readers toward a certain course of action; the latter is 'illocutory' – it evinces this motive by manipulating statements within the text. Thus, to expose authorial intention, one must be sensitive to the illocutory dimension of 'speech acts' (Skinner 1969: 42, 45, 1974: 294, 1988: 73).

However, Skinner strikes a note of caution: not every author has a full understanding of his/her own intentions. Therefore to expose intention more clearly than the author could himself/herself do requires the illocutory act to be contextualized within the prevailing conventions of political communication at the time. Only in this way can one decide whether an author is being, for example, ironic, conservative, or revolutionary through his/her statements (Skinner 1974: 283,

1988: 77, 1988a: 94). It is, then, the illocutory dimension of knowledge production that Skinner takes to be crucial to the contextualization of political thought. Skinner's approach is important in that it attempts to link the inter-textual to political context. However, Skinner has little to say on the way in which the conventions of political communication may themselves be framed by a further political context provided by inter-societal relations.

Post-structuralism provides an alternative approach to the relationship between the inter-textual and political, and here I shall focus on one writer, Michel Foucault. This is no arbitrary choice: Foucault (2002: 23, 151–156) himself acknowledged that his archaeological method had developed from a special intimacy to the History-of-Ideas tradition. Fundamentally, Foucault's (1991) method stands against the notion of a meta-physical origin to truth, and the use of history as the expression of a foundational logic. For Foucault (1991b: 148), there is no *logos*, only one more discourse of truth. Moreover, discourse is no neutral activity, but rather always animated by a particular expression of desire – a will to truth. Because truth exists only as an effect of a historical disruption and re-organization of a network of statements (*ibid.*: 144), knowledge can exist only by the support of various historical institutions (Foucault 1991b: 138, 144–146, 2002: 112–116). Knowledge therefore produces institutional experts who decide upon who can or cannot speak this discourse. This means that an author is never simply a discoverer of truth or a carrier of intent, but rather functions as a producer of discourse. The author function retrospectively constructs a recognizable discourse from a discontinuous array of texts that gives unity to the writing, resolves the differences between texts and neutralizes contradictions. Revealing the author function as a crucial dimension of knowledge production requires the investigator to abolish the sovereignty of the signifier and introduce into the history of ideas notions of discontinuity, specificity, chance and exteriority (Foucault 1991a, 1991b: 148–149).

Yet Foucault seems curiously insensitive to the specific national contexts to which political thought is addressed. Working from and within a quintessentially French social science tradition Foucault rather unsatisfactorily attempts to map this onto other national traditions of thought (Said 1983: 183–225; Ghosh 1998). However, he does touch upon the implications that a comparative approach would bring to a study of the mechanisms of knowledge production: in the introduction to *The Order of Things* Foucault (1974) briefly contrasts China's order of things to that of the West. Nevertheless, this flirting with a comparative method only serves to affirm for Foucault the specificity of modern Western terms of

categorization. It does not seek to illuminate an international dimension to the production of the order of things.

Similar problems are to be found in the latest approach in the German academy to conceptual history called *Begriffsgeschichte*, of which Reinhardt Koselleck has been the most influential proponent.<sup>11</sup> For Koselleck (1985: 84), a concept is bound to a word, but that word only becomes a concept if a whole politico-social context can be condensed into it. In this respect, the meaning of a concept is variable according to the historical social context, even if the word remains the same. Specifically, *Begriffsgeschichte* focuses on the transformation of concepts during the period between 1750 and 1850 (the *Sattelzeit*), which saw the rapid rise of modernity in Germany (Richter 1986: 252; 1987: 616).

By serving as a heuristic means of accessing past understanding, and also as a critical check on the contemporary reconstruction of political thought traditions, *Begriffsgeschichte* becomes a formidable tool with which to connect concepts deployed within texts to their historical social context. But it is again ultimately lacking with regards to assessing the international dimension of the transformation of concepts. In fact, *Begriffsgeschichte*, as some observers have commented, has an inadequate sensitivity even to the national context: there is a tendency to implicitly conflate the workings of the German '*Sattelzeit*' to that of global modernity in general. What would be the ramifications for the *Begriffsgeschichte* project understanding of a singular modernity, some have asked, if different political communities in the same era witnessed different transformations of the same concept? (Richter 1986: 633–634; Gordon 1999: 25)<sup>12</sup>

Finally, Historical Materialists seek to contextualize knowledge production within socio-economic relations, specifically, class conflict (for example, Wood 1978: 364; Wood and Wood: 1978). In this approach the dominant political ideas of social intercourse are understood as manifestations of ruling class consciousness that have become 'naturalized' and institutionalized as common sense. Proponents of ruling ideology might not recognize their instrumental role in reproducing relations of power (Femia 1981: 132; Morton 2003: 133); yet the political thinker, if not a party hack, still plays a constitutive role in the reproduction of structures of power. Historical Materialism seeks to de-naturalize ruling ideas by contextualizing them from the perspective of the subaltern's position in the relations of production. Indeed, some writers go so far as to claim that the position of exploitation breeds its own language, a form of intercourse that constantly threatens to problematize the common sense of the ruling elite (McNally 1995: 24).

Most Historical Materialist investigations focus on the dialectical interplay of class struggle *within* one historical society when contextualizing an author's political thought. Nevertheless, redolent of Foucault's *Order of Things*, George Comninel (2000) and Ellen Meiksins Wood (1991, 2000) have used a comparative method to draw out the divergent historical trajectories that have produced different ideologies and political theories in different societies. These efforts go some way in addressing the international dimension of knowledge production ... but not far enough. For, the comparative approach does not seek to systematically explain how the relationship between differentially developed societies might be generative in the production of novel forms of knowledge within discrete societal contexts. In this respect, the international dimension of knowledge production has yet to be factored into a Historical Materialist approach; and I shall return to this challenge presently.

Alternatively, it is possible to discern within humanities and social sciences a growing appreciation of the combination of traditions of thought emanating from differentially developed societal contexts; and this appreciation has been most notably picked up in the nascent field of Comparative Political Thought/Philosophy.<sup>13</sup> Although it is common in this field to remain at a level of comparative analysis that implicitly takes as its ontological starting point the existence of self-contained societal entities, other works point toward the generative nature of the act of translation.<sup>14</sup> By this way of thinking, the act of translation is not a technical attempt to produce fidelity of comparative meanings, but a moment of political contestation over different meanings of the social. Yet translation, though part of an expression of a political project such as colonialism, is neither simply a process of knowledge domination whereby one society imposes its own meanings on another. Rather, there is a generative effect of this contestation whereby the 'receiving' society transforms its own meanings in novel ways through the enforced act of comparison. In other words, there is a growing recognition that there exists something beyond simply comparison or, indeed, mimicry (Bhabha 1984) in the moment of translating traditions of thought between differentially developed societies.

### **A framework for interrogating the international dimension of social transformation**

The framework that I now build below seeks to address what this 'something extra' might be. The foundation of this framework is Historical

Materialist, even though I draw variously from the approaches outlined above. Because of this foundation the first issue that I address is a general, and of course, contentious one: how can a method based on the concept of a mode of production, be able to shed light on the process of knowledge production? I start, therefore, by unpacking some foundational assumptions and propositions of Historical Materialism.

Production is more a philosophical statement on the conditions of reproducing social life than a technical category of activity. Indeed, for Marx and Engels (1998: 37), the mode of production is, for those who take part, a '... definite form of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life* on their part.' In other words, social intercourse is *itself* part of the productive forces, and therefore transformations in the mode of production are at the same time transformations in the mode of life (Marx 1993: 494). Moreover, any mode of production is the expression of a power relation, namely the control over the means of reproducing society, especially land and labor. The ruling strata that control the means of production do so ultimately by commanding the apparatuses of coercion. And this political authority is constituted through a division of labor, the ultimate point of which is to order the extraction of surplus from producers (Marx 1976a: 927). Surplus can be extracted through rent by those classes that own the means of production, and also through taxation and the obligation of military service demanded by those classes that occupy broader and more centralized apparatuses of political control – for example, offices of state. In addition, the classes that make up political authority, though united in a general exercise of power, might well exhibit friction against each other's position regarding the pursuit of these multiple aspects of surplus extraction.

A basic aspect of the political nature of the division of labor is that it is never simply an organization of manual labor, but just as much of mental labor. For, as production is a *social* endeavor, it necessarily encompasses the production of subjectivities and inter-subjectivities, aspects of social intercourse that frame notions of association and contestation. Therefore a crucial aspect of reproducing political authority is to encode social beings as *political subjects* through a delineation of rights and duties pertaining to the organization of social reproduction. Historically, there have usually existed an array of relational subject positions under any one political authority, all possessing various rights and duties over social reproduction (crudely, for example, lord and peasant). Capitalism is unique in encoding a singular political subject to be shared by both expropriator and expropriated. Moreover, the political subject should not be treated naturally as an individual. Again, rights

and duties pertaining to the individual are historically specific to the capitalist form of social intercourse. In fact, historically, the sense of self – identity – has overwhelmingly been *corporate* in character (and often more than one corporate self at the same time).

The main point here is that struggles and contestation over the existing articulation of political authority are not purely biological reactions to, for example, a time of dearth. Rather, the reaction to dearth is decided through the sense of political self: to what degree, for example, do the exploited, as particular political subjects, consider that the ruling strata are transgressing existing rights and duties? Similarly, classes engage each other over the struggle to reproduce political authority by contesting how the political subject should be constructed. In short, contestations from above and below are articulated through and over the encoding of the rights and duties of the political subject and are therefore as much ethical in orientation as they are practical in nature. This is why mental labor – or knowledge production – is necessarily an aspect of the reproduction of political authority.

By this reasoning, knowledge production occupies a specific and relatively privileged position in the division of labor. To be clear about this claim, first, the position of the intellectual stratum and its relation to the executors of political authority might vary greatly among societies and also within the historical development of specific societies; and second, one need not necessarily be an official member of the intellectual stratum to perform an intellectual role.<sup>15</sup> But this having been said, not everyone can occupy a platform from which to speak authoritatively on the rights and duties of the political subject.<sup>16</sup> The intellectual's work, for our purposes here, the resulting text, is the encoding of a political philosophy – an analysis of the social world that seeks to orient social beings in a particular way, practically and ethically, toward this world. In times of crisis this activity is especially important: intellectuals often make novel interpretations of the current conventions of social intercourse<sup>17</sup> by which the rights and duties of the political subject are inter-subjectively constructed (Wood and Wood 1978: 3–4). The text of political thought therefore speaks both practically and ethically to the delineation of the political subject, to a set of rights and duties regarding social reproduction, and, ultimately in this way to the moment of surplus extraction.

But placing the intellectual stratum within political authority in this way requires a further sensitivity to the context in which knowledge is produced. General struggles over the structure of social reproduction are not simply mirrored in the texts of political thought. Rather,

intellectuals engage with these struggles by proxy, as it were, as struggles over the various mediating institutions the purpose of which is to decide the legitimate form and content of knowledge production. This is not to say that intellectual struggles over the form and content of knowledge production have a separate logic. The fundamental point is rather that the specific institutional position of the intellectual stratum within political authority is a crucial consideration when painting the context of political thought.<sup>18</sup>

Although the majority of intellectuals – and certainly those who are able to effectively disseminate their opinions – are indirectly or directly complicit in the structures that support the ruling strata in general, this relationship is usually fragile. And if the intellectual stratum does not command the means of production directly, their interests might take a shape different from that of all other ruling classes. Crucially, it is the form and content of knowledge production that underwrite the claims to legitimacy of the intellectual stratum regarding their special place within the ruling strata as scribes and mediators of political subjectivity. If wider social struggles seek to qualitatively transform the rights and duties of political subjects, then this struggle directly threatens the existing framework within which the intellectual stratum pursues knowledge production so as to better order social relations.

In other words – and this is an important assumption of the method presented here – struggles over the form and content of knowledge production are the intellectual stratum's proxy engagement with struggles over the rights and duties of social reproduction.<sup>19</sup> In this conflict, divisions within the intellectual stratum over contending projects of political development might be exacerbated; and in addition, non-institutionalized intellectuals might use a general crisis to debate against precisely the form and content of institutionalized knowledge production. Moreover, these contestations are cumulative in nature: the results of prior contestations over knowledge production and social reproduction form the starting framework – political, philosophical and ethical – for future generations of intellectuals.

In this respect, 'context' has to be populated, to some extent at least, by the biography of specific authors (Wood 1978: 349). This is not to claim that there is a primordial motive within the author waiting to be revealed, behind the layers of false interpretation (Foucault 1991: 110). But it is necessary to investigate a certain amount of biography in order to place the author and the text more adequately within all these variable and contingent struggles over knowledge production. In other words, the contextualization of knowledge production cannot

posit an agentless intellectual because knowledge production as political philosophy, if not carefree, nevertheless demands agency (and some imagination). Indeed, this is why one must often contextualize an author's intellectual development in terms of his/her engagement with the issues of the day. The author, as I have suggested, is already presented with a legacy of knowledge production, and over a lifetime further transforms this knowledge in relation to contemporaneous experiences. This is why the text, even if spurred on by motive and constructed with intent, *cannot* be interrogated as rational authorial control over the message.<sup>20</sup> For, what was intended is itself historically constructed and unfinished in nature and therefore cannot be revealed exclusively through the synchronic structure of language.

So one might construct a general Historical Materialist framework for contextualizing the production of political thought; but what of its international dimension? I shall now outline a framework for achieving this purpose, one heavily influenced by Leon Trotsky's attempt to theorize the international dimension of capitalist development in his notion of uneven and combined development, but one that also draws upon the general sociological literature on comparative backwardness and the literature surrounding the concept of translation.<sup>21</sup>

Geo-political relations are implicated in struggles over social reproduction both inside and between polities. What gives these geo-political relations determinacy in processes of social transformation is their uneven nature: some polities might be 'rising', others 'falling' and some expanding as others are contracting. The uneven character of geo-political contestation can certainly manifest itself in a violent struggle by ruling classes over extending their control over the means of production. But what is just as much prevalent, and tends to be the more 'everyday' form in which geo-political contestation plays out, is the clash over differentially developed modes of life – a clash over forms of social intercourse, subjectivities, and the rights and duties of the political subject. Geo-political contestation can create a demonstration effect; and in this way, it is entirely possible for political subjects to fight each other without taking up arms.

This contest takes place via the act of *comparison*. A geo-political relationship becomes charged with tension when the comparative light it generates exposes qualitative differences in terms of both the legitimacy of the rights and duties polities accord to their subjects, but especially in terms of the capacity of their structures of social reproduction to generate the human and fiscal resources needed for a strong military or policing apparatus. This means that geo-political contestation produces



a dull or sharp impetus toward reform in the now comparatively 'backward' polity. In this sense, the geo-political enemy is at the same time a mentor, demonstrating the kinds of transformations in the structure of social reproduction that would enable a 'catch-up'.

In the struggle over political authority an attempt is often made by certain classes (or elements within these classes) to import aspects of a 'foreign' political subject that are deemed to valorize their own project for reform. But in grafting on this 'alien' political subject, various *substitutions* are required to compensate for the institutions of social reproduction that, present in the 'home' of the 'alien' subject, are missing in this foreign domain. Even the importing of new technologies of production inevitably requires some kind of transformation in the existing social relations of production. Therefore, existing institutions are mobilized to perform novel tasks, and through this process of substitution a novel political subject can be created that articulates a novel encoding of rights and duties. These unintended consequences of the process of substitution might produce political subjects the ethical and practical makeup of which impinges upon other political authorities, including, quite possibly, the once-advanced mentor.

To clarify, social transformation possesses an international dimension in so far as it is prompted by the act of *comparison* (when existing geo-political unevenness becomes problematic to the reproduction of political authority) and enacted through the process of *substitution* (that combines pre-existing and foreign modes of life and production to form a new political subject). In sum, the processes of comparison and substitution are what I take to constitute the international dimension of social transformation. And what is more, this international dimension, at a general level of abstraction, has the propensity to produce novel political structures and social agencies, and therefore tends to give world development a *multi-linear* character that consists of relational, yet differential, trajectories.

Knowledge production has to be understood as deriving from more general processes associated with the international dimension of social transformation. However, and in keeping with the above discussion, the intellectual stratum experiences external pressure on the structure of social reproduction in a mediated form. In other words, the challenges of geo-political contestation are intricately woven into existing struggles over the status of the intellectual stratum in the ruling strata and the tasks of knowledge production. In this way, the international dimension of social transformation is necessarily debated in the language of philosophy and ethics, and not, narrowly, of politics.

The act of intellectual comparison takes place as an awareness of comparative backwardness. Here, the existing mode of life is problematized by the impinging foreign polity and therefore so, too, is the existing framework through which the intellectual stratum debates rights and duties in general, and knowledge production in particular, and through these debates, the legitimizing of its position within the ruling strata. With a growing consciousness of backwardness, intellectuals who believe that an engagement with the qualities of the foreign political subject is at least necessary – even desirable – tend to prescribe substitute processes in order to overcome comparative backwardness. Certain domestic agents and institutions are argued to be most suitable to carry forward a substitute social transformation for the ‘original’ transformation that produced the superior political subject.

However, as I have noted, the act of importing aspects of a foreign political subject can undermine the political position of those whom the act is supposed to protect. And for the intellectual stratum this danger arises in its prescriptions of substitution processes. The substitute agent must be deemed able to exercise his/her transformative agency in such a way that re-legitimizes the standing of the intellectual stratum within the proposed new political order. It is in this way that various concepts employed in existing political philosophies are imbued with new meanings.

Hence, comparison and substitution come to foundationally motivate the development of political philosophy, and this means that a consciousness of backwardness forms a framework within which transformations of political rights and duties are investigated. In other words, the consciousness of backwardness (that can sometimes verge on an anxiety over escaping backwardness) can often form a core motivating force for the development of political philosophy to the extent that this development is framed by the practical and ethical challenges of negotiating a multi-linear geo-political milieu. And these processes of comparison and substitution can even generate novel political philosophies.

Finally, this consciousness of backwardness must be understood in historically cumulative terms. The promotion of political philosophies to escape backwardness engenders reactions from various discordant elements in the ruling classes that impact (often negatively) the position of the intellectual stratum as well as the politics of knowledge production. And these ramifications form the starting framework of contestation for the next generation of intellectuals who seek to confront and negotiate the condition of backwardness and its effect on the social structure in

general and the intellectual stratum in particular. Thus, for the purposes of the present argument, *I contextualize knowledge production in its international dimension by exposing the shifting yet cumulative consciousness of backwardness at work in the production of political philosophies of modern social transformation.*

In the following investigation, some aspects of the above method of contextualization will be more or less important than others, in various chapters. But in general I seek to illuminate a number of aspects in the German context of backwardness. For the present investigation, these aspects include

- The historical accumulation of the effects of geo-political contestation on the general viability of an existing political authority;
- The historical accumulation of comparisons drawn from the geo-political contestation between forms of political authority, especially in terms of their relative encoding of the rights and duties of the political subject;
- The cumulative effects of struggles by various ruling classes (or elements within these classes) over the very question of, and, if relevant, method of substitution ( This process of substitution, or just as importantly as we shall see, the avoidance of such a process, addresses the way in which struggles within the ruling strata embrace or avoid the international dimension of social transformation);
- The historical accumulation of intellectual responses (if any) to comparative backwardness, and the way in which these come to affect the intellectual stratum's legitimacy within the ruling strata and thus the politics of knowledge production; and
- The specific position of the author under investigation within the intellectual stratum in relation to the above aspects. This biographical detail, which includes the interrogation of key texts, charts the development of tensions over the possibilities of social transformation emanating from a growing consciousness of backwardness, tensions manifested in analytical comparisons and prescriptive substitutions.

### **German backwardness in context**

I operationalize the above framework to investigate German backwardness from the French Revolution onward. To do this necessitates an abstraction of the peculiarly modern character of the international

dimension of social transformation and the concomitant form of multi-linearity it produces in world development. At this maximal level of abstraction, I take modernity to be defined by the quality of *impersonality* in the mode of production and associated form of social intercourse.

My main argument is that the processes of comparison and substitution associated with the French Revolution set in motion a specific multi-linear character of modern world development.<sup>22</sup> Whereas pre-existent political authorities organized social reproduction through sets of rights and duties that were personalized in nature, a political subject that was impersonal in nature first arose in the capitalist transformation of English agriculture wherein the right to own and dispose of private property unencumbered with wider social duties replaced personalized, directly communal rights and duties over property. I call this political subject of capitalism the 'impersonalized individual'.

I then argue that the geo-political contestation between Bourbon Absolutism and British capitalism gave rise to the French Revolution. Guided by a sense of comparative backwardness developed amongst the French ruling strata during the colonial wars, the revolutionary deputies attempted to import the rights of the British impersonalized individual into an existing absolutist corporate political subject – the Third Estate – which effectively acted as a substitute for the formal political equality found within British civil society. Through this process of comparison and substitution a novel political subject was produced: the 'impersonal collective'. For reasons that will become clearer in Chapter 2, I concentrate on the Jacobin manifestation of this political subject. The Jacobin subject distinguishes itself from the capitalist subject in that it affirms the rights of the impersonalized individual – political freedom and equality – but sets those rights in friction with a duty of all such individuals to secure the 'general will' – the social welfare of an impersonal whole. Crucially, this general will became militarized in the course of the Revolution, so that the Jacobin subject impinged most forcefully on the rest of the world, including capitalist Britain, in the form of the 'citizen-soldier', a process that culminated in the Napoleonic wars.

By this reasoning, modernity cannot be understood to have been driven forward by a singular logic of struggle over the impersonalization of rights and duties of social reproduction; rather, its dynamic is to be understood as a cumulative tension between two intimately related yet contesting development projects regarding (a) the rights of the impersonalized individual and (b) the duties toward securing the welfare of an impersonal social whole. In other words, the multi-linear character of modern world development can be conceptualized, at the

most general level, as driven by a pressure generated by two frictionally related meta-subjects – the impersonalized individual and the impersonal collective, both of which at the same time came to impinge upon existing personalized and corporatized systems of social reproduction. The effect of these pressures on any society can only be made sense of by a detailed analysis of its specific historical legacies. And in this particular case I focus on the way in which these pressures impacted Germany in general, and, before unification, Prussia especially.

The martial integrity of an army raised through the personalized corporate set of political subjects that made up German political authorities was put under pressure by the ‘national’ French revolutionary (and then Napoleonic) army. Prussian reforms were designed to emulate the qualitative and quantitative superiority of this citizen-soldier army by re-organizing the hierarchical corporate constitution of the Prussian military with reference to universalized and impersonalized martial rights and duties. However, though intended to defend the existing ruling strata, reform necessarily threatened to dissolve the personalized and corporate mode of life through which the ruling classes derived their authority. Contributing further to this paradox was the concomitant attempt to emulate the success of the British tax base, rooted in agrarian capitalism; the drive toward free trade dissolved Prussian corporate life even further, opening it up to the vagaries of the (British dominated) world market.

The need to graft the rights and duties of impersonalized political subjects onto the existing Prussian structure of social reproduction gave rise to a specific fear among the ruling strata – the *Pöbel*, a politicized and autonomous rabble. This rabble, though produced largely by reforms designed to emulate British capitalism, was nevertheless perceived in terms of a French Jacobin-like threat, especially in light of the prior military reforms that had sought to turn peasants into defenders of their own rights. Imported into Germany at large, the Jacobin impersonal collective was translated into the political subject of the *Volk*, with its accompanying discourse of *Deutschtum* (German-ness). The fear of a French-like revolution of the (especially urban) masses from below drastically impacted the desire of even ‘progressive’ elements of the ruling strata to finish reform by launching a substitution process. However, by the end of the century, the *Volk* was being mobilized even by conservative elements to set the pace and direction of German development. The substantive narrative of the book therefore charts the creation and transformation of the meaning of this Jacobin threat within the ruling strata up to the Weimar era, and how this German-Jacobin subject

was implicated in various attempts to initiate (or offset) substitute development projects.

This substantive historical investigation is not designed to provide an exhaustive account of German state development but rather to furnish the context in which I make sense of the cultivation of a consciousness of backwardness among the Prussia-German intellectual stratum and the development of a 'liberal' project. As I have discussed above, I am primarily concerned with those intellectuals who attempted to negotiate the problem of comparative backwardness in modern world development by consistently re-formulating *Bildung* as the political agency of the intellectual designed to progressively resolve the negative social effects of impersonalized individualism. And I do this through investigating four episodes of crisis that plagued the German intellectual stratum from the French Revolution to the Weimar era.

The first episode that forms Kant's context is centered upon the impact of the French Revolution on the German Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*). Prior to the French Revolution, Kant's political philosophy promoted a non-modern reform of the Prussian estates system. Kant posited that the Reason of the free individual existed noumenally; however, between this ideal realm and the phenomenal realm of politics there existed a chasm. It was the intellectual's task to guide progressive reform of the corporate political order by reference to a universal history that, in telling the story of the coming to being of individual freedom, attempted to regulate political action by reference to ideal standards. By posing this regulative history, the intellectual was exercising *Bildung*. Yet because of the incommensurability of Reason and experience, the exercise of *Bildung* was not supposed to lead to a radical transformation of the corporate political world toward one that encoded the equality and freedom of the individual. Rather, Kant's political philosophy was one of enlightened corporate *reform*.

The French Revolution threatened all this by manifesting the bearer of Reason – the impersonalized individual – within a political constitution. And the constitution produced in Kant a consciousness of backwardness regarding the (minimal) tangible results of his own corporate enlightenment within Prussia. Kant attempted to save the legitimacy of his existing corporate reform project by interpreting the effect of the French Revolution in such a way that it could be said to prove the existence of individual Reason ideally, but not the manifestation of the free and equal individual phenomenally in the world of politics. Kant approached this task by exploring the ethical and political relationship between the individual, the state and humanity. In this way a

consciousness of backwardness structured Kant's most famous writings on international relations.

Therefore, Kant's political philosophy constructed both the particular possibility for German development out of backwardness – a continuation of the corporate Enlightenment – and the universal archetype of liberal agency against which such possibilities were measured and illuminated – a resolutely noumenal (and not phenomenal) Reason. The experience of German backwardness did not so much make Kant take a *faux pas* into universalism; rather, he refused to step out of the noumenal realm of universal Reason into the phenomenal realm of multi-linear world politics.

The next episode I document is a continuation of the above crisis. Unlike Kant, Hegel accepted and dwelled upon the radical and phenomenal difference between France and Germany. Furthermore, the Napoleonic imperialistic turn now cast France as a direct threat to the integrity of the German Reich. And with the comparative backwardness between the two societies sharpened, Hegel produced a political philosophy that sought to guide Germany out of backwardness through an international dimension of social transformation, a dimension he conceptualized through the movement of *Aufhebung*.

Specifically, Hegel sought to find a way to import French impersonalized individualism into a traditional German communal social base, in so doing introduced individual freedom but in such a way that it would not lead to social dissolution. Hegel believed that the Terror and the Napoleonic turn were a result of structuring the public sphere solely through the principle of unrestrained egoism. To achieve this, Hegel gave the intellectual's political agency of *Bildung* a radically new meaning and scope: in its capacity to spread self-awareness of the social basis of individual freedom *Bildung* was to be the progressive other to the egoism of impersonalized individualism. This dialectic played out through the institution of *Geist*, the 'liberal spirit' that directed modern world development. In effect, the German intellectual stratum, in exercising *Bildung*, had now become integral in the movement of *Geist* by launching, in Germany, a substitute revolution for the French variant – a revolution of Philosophy.

Therefore, Hegel's political philosophy constructed both the particular possibility for German development out of backwardness – a revolution of Philosophy – and the universal archetype of liberal agency against which such possibilities were measured and illuminated – *Geist*. Moreover, the German intellectual's political agency of *Bildung* would now, for Hegel, be integral to the progression of a singular world

historical movement spreading an ethical individual freedom. In this way, *Geist*, a manifestation of Hegel's consciousness of backwardness, led him to take a *faux pas* into universalism. And this universalism depended upon a historical narrative that exhausted the meaning of the French Revolution as the political constitutionalizing of impersonalized individualism. In fact, Hegel was opposed to the fledgling nationalist movement in Prussia because he believed that the pursuit of German-ness (*Deutschtum*) would essentialize and stratify political identity into an impersonal collectivist form, thus leaving Germany backward by placing its political community outside of the dialectic of impersonalized individualism that drove *Geist*.

The third episode starts with a new crisis brought on by the failure of the 1848 revolutions. In order to make sense of this extremely complex period of German intellectual history, I use the figure of Max Weber. The 1848 defeat of the 'middle classes' by the nobility and aristocracy accompanied, paradoxically, the modern process of industrialization. The post-1848 era therefore seemed to inaugurate a 'special path' for Germany (*Sonderweg*), one that stubbornly mixed traditional and modern social forces, and one that refuted the Hegelian claims to a universalizing liberal *Geist*. What compounded this challenge to the Hegelian 'liberal' project was the increasing mobilization of the French Jacobin subject *within* Germany, across the ruling strata, as an alternative referent for struggles over the peculiar German 'modernization' of political rights and duties. The general will of the *Volk* and its associated quality of *Deutschtum* invoked the moral supremacy of the rights and duties of an impersonal collective.

To address these unforeseen developments, Weber used a Nietzschean and neo-Kantian standpoint to refute the Hegelian assumption that one could mount value comparisons across differentially developed cultural systems. Rather, each system had to be critically appreciated by its own standards. Narratives of historical 'progress', for Weber, were by and large fictions to be mobilized to make more sense of the geo-cultural peculiarity of current German ways of thinking about the truth of human existence. Indeed, any claims to the existence of collective harmonies or of universal rapprochement of human societies were, for Weber, ideologies that facilitated the will to power of individuals. Thus Weber reformulated the political agency of *Bildung*: though still spreading a self-awareness of the social basis of individual freedom, this self-awareness now had to address itself to the national limits of this condition, rather than its universal reach. And for this purpose, Weber



documented his particular fusion of an ethics and politics of limits through his writings on the vocations of science and politics.

Yet Weber did not simply use these vocations to produce an ethico-political standpoint on inter-societal difference as an object of enquiry. In fact, Weber's vocations were built upon a value comparison made across cultural systems. Specifically, Weber saw exemplified in the historical rise of the English middle classes the universal archetype of liberal political agency. Comparing the German *Sonderweg* with this English history, Weber judged the German middle classes to be suffering an arrested development owing to the fact that they pursued their own interests through promoting the collectivist ideology of the atavistic nobility – the *Volk* and the discourse of *Deutschtum*. In this way Weber therefore re-imagined and re-defined *both* the particular political condition *and* the universal criteria by which this condition could be judged to be progressive or backward.

Weber then prescribed a substitute agent for the arrested development of the German middle classes – the demagogic politician. By influencing the actions of this politician through their agency of *Bildung*, the German intellectual would steer the *Sonderweg* toward an ethical engagement with the modern condition. Illiberal political means would lead to liberal ends, and this was Weber's political philosophy of 'practical politics' – *Realpolitik*. However, by the end of the Great War, Weber believed that this German 'liberal' project was the last best hope for humanity as a whole, and here he made a *faux pas* into universalism. Furthermore, the ontological basis that allowed for this *faux pas* was one ultimately inherited from the German intellectual engagement with modernity through the French Revolution. For, both analytically and ethically, Weber assumed the problem of modern social transformation to be exhausted by the struggle over the negative and positive aspects of a singular political subject – the impersonalized individual.

The fourth episode takes place in the crisis era of the Weimar Republic: the rise of Nazism, and the capture and containment of the German *Sonderweg* at Versailles by outside forces – and liberal ones at that. In the Weimar intellectual context the differential development between Germany and all other political communities became existentialized into a life/death binary rather than a backward/advanced model. Traveling from this founding intellectual context across the Atlantic, Morgenthau attempted to re-legitimize Weber's 'liberal' project for post-liberal times in the halls of American foreign policy making.

Morgenthau judged the existential crisis of humanity to be an outcome of a uni-linear world-historical development driven by the internal dialectic of the singular modern subject. Specifically, the liberal ideology that posited liberal politics as a consensus of individual wills created a collective will to power that mistook its own interests to be universal truth. In short, the political institutionalization of the impersonalized individual led, tragically, to an impersonalized collectivist delusion of 'nationalistic universalism'. To reformulate the intellectual 'liberal' project Morgenthau compared a decadent modern middle class with a self-aware pre-modern aristocracy. And for this decadent middle classes, he substituted a policy-making elite wielding *Bildung* through what were once aristocratic political tools. In this way, Morgenthau quarantined the agency of *Bildung* to a policy-making elite institutionally buffered from direct political responsibility to follow the will of the masses. Presenting the fate of Liberalism as tragic in its own world-historical unfolding is therefore what ultimately gave Morgenthau's reformulated 'liberal' project its conservative quality.

Yet Morgenthau's tragic narrative retained the world-historical framework, constructed by Hegel's revolution of Philosophy, of a universal and singular liberal project driven by the dialectic of egoism and *Bildung*. Crucially, Morgenthau inherited Hegel's conjoining of the progressive liberal value of *Bildung* with the political agency of the intellectual. Furthermore, by using Weber's neo-Kantian/Nietzschean epistemology of multi-linearity as irreconcilable difference, Morgenthau filtered the Hegelian inheritance through the ethical limitations that Weber had placed on the political agency of *Bildung*. It was from this historical-philosophical baseline that he made sense of a putative existential crisis of Liberalism. And from this basis, Morgenthau then proceeded to analyze and prescribe the purpose of American politics in a new world order.

Courtesy of the cumulative universal *faux pas* that these intellectuals made, their liberal project effectively documented a rise and fall of *Bildung*. In other words, the rise and fall of the reach and penetration of progressive liberal agency into the world of politics was a contour sketched out by variously judging the historical possibilities of German development by reference to a singular world-historical Liberal project. Initially, Kant refused to associate *Bildung* with the modern condition. Hegel in the aftermath of the French Revolution took *Bildung* to be a determining aspect of the universalizing *Geist* of individual freedom. Through his vocations of science and politics, Weber, in the post-Bismarck reactionary period and amid increasing geo-political

friction within Europe, placed national limits on the presumed universal reach of *Bildung*. And Morgenthau denied *Bildung* even a full national reach: speaking to the collapse of Germany at Versailles, and the following Nazi abuse of reforming the *Volk*, *Bildung* could only be retained to work within the circles of policy-making elites – hence, his conservative liberalism.

However, this story of a rise and tragic fall of the ethical promises of the impersonalized individual is *not* the full story of the international relations of modernity. In fact, it is a partial story, and one that could only be written through a continual inability to engage with the international dimension of modern social transformation and its generative result – a multi-linear developmental relation concerning two meta-political subjects, the impersonalized individual *and* the impersonal collective. For, at all times, and especially in the writings of Hegel, Weber and Morgenthau, the Jacobin impersonal collective, in the guise of the *Volk* and its related discourse of *Deutschtum*, was a political subject deemed to be unmodern, then anti-modern, and then a tragic *internal* effect of the characteristics of the impersonalized individual. By conceptually flattening the multi-linear dialectic of modern social transformation into a uni-linear struggle *internal* to the liberal modern subject, namely the impersonalized individual, the consciousness of backwardness has a major part to play: this consciousness was both the motivating force for political philosophies of modern development and the accumulated political–philosophical framework through which to judge the trajectory of this development.

The argument proceeds in the following steps:

In the remainder of Part I (i.e., Chapter 2), I explore how the international dimension of the French Revolution produced a novel subject, the Jacobin citizen of the nation, intimately related to, but profoundly different from, the British capitalist subject. This chapter sets up and makes sense of the relationship between two differential political subjects, the impersonalized individual and the impersonal collective, the effect of which would pressure Prussia-Germany to embark on reforms. In the four chapters of Part II I relate each author to a specific moment in Prussia-German reform and modernization and examine how each author's political philosophy spoke to, and re-assessed, the German consciousness of backwardness. In Chapter 3 I position Kant in the first decade of the French Revolution as it impacted the then existing Prussian state and the German enlightenment. In this context I discuss Kant's tripartite relationship between the individual, the state and humanity. In Chapter 4 I place Hegel within the Napoleonic period and

the proceeding German and Prussian reforms. In this context I discuss Hegel's revolution of Philosophy and especially his notion of *Aufhebung* and *Geist*. In an interlude I document the lead-up to the 1848 revolution. Then, in Chapter 6, I position Weber in the post-1848 climate, and especially in the post-Bismarck era. In this context I discuss Weber's vocations of science and politics and the way that they fused into his political philosophy of *Realpolitik*. In Part III I sketch out in an epilogue the end point of the German *Sonderweg*: the rise of National Socialism during the Weimar era. I position Morgenthau in this context, document his critical conversation with these accumulated concrete and intellectual developments, and reveal how they underwrote the Americanization of his political thought.

# 2

## 1789: The Revolution of Backwardness

### Introduction

This chapter is essentially propaedeutic, its purpose being to document the processes of comparison and substitution that, through the French Revolution, produced the Jacobin political subject. In the chapter I explore not only the intimate relationship between the British capitalist and French Jacobin subject, but also the qualitative differences between the two, and render this intimate distance as an effect of the international dimension of social transformation. All this is necessary in order to set out the multi-linear context of modernity from the French Revolution onward wherein the impingement of the Jacobin and capitalist subjects operated as a dual compulsion on Prussia-German development, which in turn framed the key political questions that Kant, Hegel, Weber and even Morgenthau were to contend with. In fine, their discussions of liberal ethics and illiberal politics were rooted in an attempt to understand the developmental relationship between the impersonalized individual of British capitalism and the impersonal collective of French Jacobinism. Hence there is a need to first clarify this relationship through a historical sociological investigation.

Before proceeding, it might be useful to place the approach taken below to the French Revolution within the voluminous existing literature. For my present purposes, this literature may be distilled into two streams, one dealing with the geo-political factors involved in revolution and the other with the social versus economic understanding of revolution. A new generation of sociological thought on revolution emerged in the 1970s, the most influential author of which was Theda Skocpol (1979).<sup>1</sup> Skocpol (1988: 148–150) sought to uncover how geo-political pressure, in the form of modernizing impulses, might produce a

revolution at the societal level via mass military mobilization. Although path-breaking, Skocpol's work does not demonstrate how geo-political relations are implicated in domestic processes of transformation so that they produce *novel* forms of political authority. Indeed, central to Skocpol's efforts is an attempt to produce a *general* theory of revolution, in other words, to show the *same* mechanisms at work by comparative investigations of France, Russia and China regardless of the historical accumulation of the transformative effects of these revolutions. This works to downplay the historically transformative nature of the inter-societal relations.

The period starting with the 1960s also saw the growth of a revisionist literature on revolution. The revisionists originally sought to overturn Marxist theories of revolution that posited the determinate factor within the economic domain as a class struggle driven by a self-conscious bourgeoisie. The ensuing 'cultural turn'<sup>2</sup> proclaimed that the great revolutions were far broader in reach (Sewell 1985: 77). Historical Materialism, however, has since mounted its own revisionist turn (Comninel 1987; Mooers 1991; Wood 1991; Parker 1996; Teschke 2003) that charges previous Marxist models (including Marx's own) with taking the French liberal historians at their word when they recounted a bourgeois (and implicitly capitalist) revolution. This body of work is very useful for my present purposes, as it documents the differentiated developmental trajectories of France and Britain in the eighteenth century. Yet this enterprise has so far (again) been largely comparative in nature, seeking, ultimately, to make sense of eighteenth century France and the lead-up to the revolution so as to highlight the uniqueness of British capitalist development.<sup>3</sup> The actual import and meaning of a non-capitalist French Revolution for our understanding of modernity remains ill-defined.

In what follows I agree with a number of points made in these extant literatures, specifically, the social rather than narrowly economic nature of the Revolution, the critique of the bourgeois revolution model, and the focus, of course, on the importance of geo-politics. However, I seek to go beyond the internalist and/or comparative approach, and explain the processes and outcomes of the revolution as directly constitutive of the international dimension of social transformation.

I proceed by first laying out the sociological content of the British capitalist threat to French absolutism in the eighteenth century by delineating the novel properties of the capitalist political subject – the impersonalized individual. My discussion on the British genesis of this subject will be, necessitated by lack of space, more schematically

sociological than substantively historical.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, my main purpose is to show how this subject is implicated in the Anglo–French colonial contest of geo-political accumulation,<sup>5</sup> creating a sense of comparative backwardness within the French ruling strata and resulting, ultimately, in the events of 1789. I then isolate the moment of substitution in the import of the impersonalized individual into the existing French political structures, a process that creates a novel political subject, the impersonal collective. I associate the impersonal collective especially with Jacobinism, and argue that the internal contradictions of the rights and duties in the impersonal collective contribute to the Terror and ultimately the militarization of the Revolution. I end by highlighting the importance of the world-historical impact of this militarized Jacobin subject – the citizen-soldier – on subsequent nineteenth-century developments.

### **Enclosure and the creation of the capitalist subject**

*There is nothing which so generally strikes the imagination, and engages the affections of mankind as the right of property; of that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the eternal things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe.*

William Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England.<sup>6</sup>

With the enclosure of the English countryside, the peasantry (or at least the majority of the peasantry) lost direct access to the means of their reproduction, that is to say the various agricultural uses of the land. Prior to the onset of enclosure, social reproduction was institutionalized through local custom (Thompson 1991: 97–98), the most important aspect of which was common right – the communal regulation of the uses of certain tracts of manorial land (Neeson 1996: 313–314). Rights to the commons were embedded within a complex system of reciprocity between manor lord and peasant: lords upheld access to manorial resources and, possibly, the protection of the local community in return for various services undertaken by the peasantry ranging from military service to work on the demesne. Moreover, the mediation of these rights and duties was quite literally an intimate affair: a myriad of day-to-day functions cemented the personal (and asymmetric) relationship between landlord and peasant (*ibid.*: 324–326). These customary rights and duties were typically written into the manorial rolls, and were known as copyholds.<sup>7</sup> But even freeholders, whose tenure rights were not dependent upon duties to the lord, could not exercise

these rights outside the general strictures of manor custom (Lachman 1987: 38; Thompson 1991: 133). And although lords could sometimes alter the terms of tenancy in order to increase appropriation of peasant surplus, they could never tear up the contract itself.<sup>8</sup> In sum, prior to the enclosure movement, the political subjects of English political authority were encoded within a hierarchy of personalized collectives, the sociality of which took the form of 'relations of personal dependence'.<sup>9</sup>

The most important effect of enclosure was to remove customary rights and duties from the tenure contract, including access to the commons because this radically shifted the basis of rent regulation. No longer fixed in the manorial roll, the negotiation of rent moved from the personal and reciprocal nature of manorial custom to a market mechanism. With the push and pull of unregulated supply and demand, rents could now increase indefinitely, a process far removed from the bounded nature of rent regulated through custom (Hill 1967: 49). From the 1660s onward, rack renting, loss of usage of the commons, engrossment and a variety of other dull compulsions forced peasants to sell their tenures (Comninel 2000: 37). By 1750 Marx's classic triad of large landlord, tenant farmer and rural wage laborer had become generalized in the English agrarian milieu, and the scene was set for the frenzied finale of enclosures enacted between 1760 and 1820 (Thompson 1968: 217). In effect, the universe wherein social reproduction was regulated through relations of personal dependency shrank, through enclosure, from the manor to the walls of a small cottage (Thompson 1991: 178).

This process engendered a fundamental re-framing of the rights and duties of social reproduction, encoded (haphazardly) in common law. By displacing manor customs, common law re-defined copyholds as freeholds that contained no wider social obligations regarding the use of land, especially those concerning communal access.<sup>10</sup> Crucially, the absolutely private nature of property articulated through common law was historically unprecedented in that the individual owner was legally empowered to appropriate the fruits of the land, and dispose of it (by sale), with no political duty toward ensuring the reproduction of the community of social beings who, by working on the land, themselves produced such fruits (Macpherson 1975: 109). With Parliament consistently legislating for the enclosure process,<sup>11</sup> the political protection of the rights of absolute private property became so taken-for-granted that there was no need to look beyond the 'thing' to the right. Property itself – things *per se* – became the object of law.<sup>12</sup>

By the mid eighteenth century, then, social reproduction had become firmly regulated through a new encoding of rights and duties. The right



to things – that is, rights and duties of social welfare manifested through regulating access to the means of production – had been superseded by the right of things – the right to exploit the means of production as an *asocial* object. A political offence could now be committed, through the proxy of individuals, against a thing. This was a radical departure from pre-enclosure times, when rights and duties, whether accruing to lord or peasant, were never *not* collectively (and unequally) delineated. Once valued as the communal repository over which rights and duties of social reproduction were negotiated, land was now valued asocially, as a financial investment (Corrigan and Sayer 1985: 73, 96; Marzec 2002: 141–142). In fine, rights and duties over social reproduction became expressed and contested *impersonally* through the neutral, mathematical, market mechanism of supply and demand of things.

The development of this new political subject was necessarily accompanied by changes in the structure of political authority. After all, a division of labor organized through the market required a mode of association conducive to individuals politically divested of their communal rights and duties. But this could not be found in the halls of the lord's manor, or in the king's court. Rather, a new political space of association had to be forged, one concordant with the social intercourse of private property, namely, civil society – a space populated exclusively by politically free and equal individuals. Most importantly, civil society was institutionalized, during the turbulent course of the seventeenth century, by subsuming the political authority of the king under the rule of Parliament. *Habeas corpus* was established in 1679; judges enjoyed independence from the executive after 1701; and trial, rather than being undertaken as a communal indictment, now became a case between parties. Indeed, the king himself came to be thought of as simply another potential bearer of property (Aylmer 1980: 94; Corrigan and Sayer 1985: 79). And by 1734, Walpole could comfortably associate the reign of George II with the preservation of liberty and property (Hill 1967: 175).

Thus, civil society, as the realm of governance by contractual relations, allowed for a formal *leveling* of the political subject, even while ensuring that the distribution of substantive socio-economic power – access to and control over the means of production – remained *unequal*. And for such a political space to exist, the functions of political authority with regard to the reproduction of social beings had to be separated into a directly political sphere of governance and an economic sphere of surplus extraction (see Wood 1981). This separation enabled the rights of the political subject to become universally applicable regardless of socio-economic status and particular circumstances. It also allowed

the political space of civil society, despite – in fact because of – the asocial egoistic quality of its social intercourse, to exhibit an unprecedented unanimity in the political standing of the individuals associating within. This capitalist form of political authority posited no directly *political* hierarchy of political subjects; rather, hierarchy was leveled into one universal political subject. But again, this could be achieved only by *abstracting* the rights and duties of this political subject from any substantive socio-economic content.

None of this, it should be said, is to accept the *doux commerce* thesis: capitalism, in other words, was not a pacifier of violent struggles over social reproduction. In fact, common law upheld the impersonalized rights of property just as despotically and ruthlessly as previous laws had upheld the personalized rights of lords and kings. Between 1688 and 1820 capital offences grew from around 50 to over 200, almost all of them concerning offences against property (Hay 1975: 18; see also E.P. Thompson 1975). Nevertheless, by the start of the eighteenth century, justice, even if terrible, was no longer framed by the directly political and personalized stratification of privileged/unprivileged; rather, stratification was now a politically neutral, impersonalized, economic state of rich/poor (E.P. Thompson 1978: 48–49; Corrigan and Sayer 1985: 89–90; Mooers 1991: 164–171).

Yet the problem of social welfare could not be evacuated as clinically from the political sphere as it had been from the economic. After all, government still existed to secure the reproduction of the social whole at the most general level, even if this meant, paradoxically, upholding an economic form of social reproduction, the workings of which were ambivalent on the issue of social welfare. How to generally secure the subsistence of social beings while no longer directly regulating access to the means of production: this was the peculiar challenge that defined the mandate of the new political authority, and which poor relief was mobilized to resolve. It is necessary to briefly dwell on the poor law, because, as will be shown later, the rights and duties of social welfare in the French revolutionary political subject differed dramatically from those encoded in eighteenth-century common law.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of the sixteenth century the poor law had become central to addressing the newly problematized category of the landless (Slack 1995: 4–11). As enclosures proceeded apace, and as the dull compulsion of the market increased the numbers of the landless, so too did poor relief increase: by the 1780s, perhaps 11% of the English population were in receipt of this welfare (ibid.: 25). However, poor relief was a policing mechanism that would always be self-defeating. For, on the one

hand, its mandate was to ensure social welfare; yet on the other hand, it did not challenge the separation of the economic and the political that forbade any directly political regulation of the actual labor through which social beings derived their welfare. At best, then, this policy tool could only function as an *appendage* to the rights of property. In fact, the *poor law* eventually became inseparable from the development of a market in wage labor in that it part-regulated the migration of workers (Beier 1985: 173; Lachman 1987: 137–138). And with the Speenhamland law in 1795, poor relief took its final form as a *subsidy* to make up for low wages (Polanyi 1957: 78). Poor law regardless, in agrarian capitalism the rights of asocial things had come to trump the rights of the social being *qua* social being. This was the historically unique effect of impersonalizing relations of social reproduction.

How could this radical transformation of the rights and duties of social welfare be justified? The terror of the Black Acts could not, alone, secure a long-term acceptance of the new rights of property. In fact, concomitantly, a new normative base for the separation of the political and economic was established in the market-based rationality of *improvement*. The agrarian trinity of tenant, lord and wage laborer was defended as the structure that provided the most incentive to improving productivity. And as all of society putatively benefited from the cheaper food that such productivity generated, enclosure was judged to be morally sound.<sup>14</sup> But ‘improvement’ was no mere class ideology. Even though the fruits of agricultural production were unequally distributed and, more so, even though the rationale of distribution was no longer to be found in the rights and duties of social welfare but in the unceasing and uncontrollable asocial push and pull of supply and demand, agrarian capitalism still proceeded to objectify nature at an ever increasing rate.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the new mode of production worked fantastically well to produce abundance *precisely because* the imperatives that drove it were *agnostic* over the welfare of social beings *qua* social beings.

To recap, before enclosure, social reproduction was mediated through communally encoded rights and duties – through relations of personal dependency. Enclosure was a process that socially unencumbered the political subject and dissolved the personalized communality which, up until then, had acted as the social glue of English political authority. After enclosure, social reproduction was mediated through *individuals* engaged in apolitical market relations and surplus extracted through the *impersonalized* proxy of the exchange of private property between individual bearers. I therefore term this new capitalist political subject an *impersonalized individual*.<sup>16</sup>

In sum, as a result of separating the political and economic moments of social reproduction, the Britain<sup>17</sup> of agrarian capitalism was no longer composed of political subjects whose rights and duties were directly delineated by relations of personal dependency. Capitalist political authority existed, instead, to reproduce the separation of the political and the economic. The resulting political space, civil society, that universe of free and equal individuals, was an empire unto itself.<sup>18</sup> And the paradoxical and alien qualities of the political subject that traveled this empire – the impersonalized individual – unavoidably came to impinge upon neighboring non-capitalist political authorities.

### Comparative backwardness: France and Britain in the colonial contest

*England is our model and our rival, our guiding light and our enemy.*

Marquis de Luchet<sup>19</sup>

Throughout the eighteenth century absolutist France was embroiled in a geo-political contestation with capitalist Britain over the colonial spoils of the New World. This was as much a contest over the differential forms of their sovereignties as it was over military capacity. And it was in this contest that the perception of comparative backwardness arose among various French ruling strata. To draw out the effects of this contentious geo-political relationship, I shall concentrate on one crucial aspect of the Anglo–French contest: colonial trade.

Because of the ever-increasing separation of producers from the means of production, basic consumer goods figured heavily in British colonial trade far more than in other metropolis/colony relations. However, even though the product of colonial trade was extracted through that most personalized relation of dependency – slavery – it could nevertheless be transformed in its transit across the Atlantic into an augments of the impersonalized relations of the metropolitan market. In this way, colonial trade in the eighteenth century worked at the most general level to support the hegemony of the landed interest.

British foreign policy, too, especially in its ‘blue-water’ variant, similarly reflected the subordination of the King to Parliament (Baugh 1988). In the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) the British Parliament inaugurated an almost complete disengagement from direct interventions in Europe’s dynastic wars.<sup>20</sup> Military strength was concentrated instead in the navy in order to ensure unhindered passage for British shipping in both European and global waters. This was both a sound defense and a

lubricant for the domestic economy regarding its trading relations with the colonies.<sup>21</sup> With freedom on the seas assured, Parliament wished to play only a balance-of-power game on the European mainland, and not primarily a strategy of geo-political accumulation.<sup>22</sup> After all, accumulation was now being pursued within the 'empire of civil society' and not directly by the political class. Playing off monarch against monarch, it was enough to ensure that none rose to a supremacy that might threaten British trading interests – especially, of course, the French (Baugh 1988: 40–47; Sheehan 1996: 107).

The social sources of financing blue-water policy were also embedded within the new capitalist political-economy. By the eighteenth century, it was the British parliament, rather than the personal body of the King, that raised funds and incurred public debt. The importance of establishing parliament as the borrower was that the confidence of lenders was no longer predicated upon the personal whims of the monarch. Instead, the source of confidence lay with the centralization of tax revenues (courtesy of a unified domestic market), the relatively transparent handling of such revenues by the representatives of private property, and the scalable revenue stream derived from constantly improving agricultural production. This allowed for the public debt to be shifted from short-term to long-term loans (Dickson 1967: 40). And even if long-term loans yielded less interest, this was compensated by the increased security of reaping regular dividends. Indeed, by Walpole's era, the policy informing public debt was no longer centered upon the ability to pay it back, but rather upon the ability to pay the regular interest (Dickson 1967: 244; Brewer 1989: 123, 160).

In absolutist France, however, tax was administered through the system of venal office wherein privileged rights to collect specific taxes and control specific trades could be bought and sold (Teschke 2003: 172–178). The main tax, the *taille*, for example, was both collected and evaded on the basis of privilege and locality; and indirect taxes, for example, custom dues (the *traite*), were administered through a multitude of discrete and localized internal barriers and defended against the crown through the *parlements* (Cobban 1978: 58–60). But the crown, in order to secure its patrimony, had to rely on an increasing sale of tax and trade privileges, thus, in the long run, undermining its central authority. Here, colonial trade contributed to this patrimony thus forestalling, if not resolving, the ultimate demise of Bourbon rule. There was, then, no seamless linking of metropolitan and colonial markets as was the case in Britain (see Parker 1996: 32, 42–44). Rather, colonial trade existed as one more resource to both bolster particular corporate interests – especially

the merchants of the Atlantic ports – and prop up the shaky edifice of French absolutism.<sup>23</sup>

Yet, even though it was recognized in French administrative circles that the success of Britain's fiscal system rested on public confidence (Brewer 1989: 131), no similar scalable system of credit could be developed upon the shaky edifice of absolutism. For, the patrimonial hierarchy of privilege arrested the ability of the French crown to directly intensify political authority over peasant surplus extraction. Taxation was instead an arena of contestation over political authority in which the wealth of the polity dissipated through so many particularistic channels of interest. Moreover, it was still the person of the king who borrowed, and debts might even be forfeited on the death of the original divine debtor (Teschke 2003: 182). Such risks forbade long-term borrowing, and the financing of colonial war was therefore sharply limited.

For these reasons, even though France far outstripped Britain in resources, the British state could continually outspend its Bourbon rival in a colonial contest that was perhaps more central for the survival of absolutism than it was for capitalism.<sup>24</sup> And because most eighteenth-century European wars were fought as wars of financial attrition (Brewer 1989: 131), the French crown increasingly felt the pressure to reform its tax system, and, inevitably, even if indirectly, the absolutist rule itself. Thus, Anglo–French geo-political competition in the eighteenth century was not to be decided simply by the quantitative capabilities of power projection. Rather, it was, foundationally, a contestation over the efficacy of two different political subjects – over qualitatively different encodings of the rights and duties of social reproduction.

In this respect, the Seven Years War (1756–1763) stands out as the definitive contestation between France and Britain over the colonial world. Out of the war Britain emerged supreme, securing India, gaining Quebec along with a number of other possessions in the American hemisphere, and confirming its naval primacy worldwide. This ascendancy significantly damaged the legitimacy of the Bourbon throne because Louis XV, too afraid of noble contestation to reform the tax system, had funded the war by increasing the public debt (Riley 1986: 230). And with a massive debt that now overshadowed the crown even in peace time, and with no compensatory spoils of war, elements of the French ruling strata increasingly agitated for national 'regeneration' (ibid.: 232; Skocpol and Kestnbaum 1990: 17). The results of the Seven Years War confirmed the 'backwardness' of the French form of political authority in contrast to the 'advanced' British state (Jarrett 1973: 3–7), and in

so doing intensified existing tensions within the French ruling strata. The prime dilemma for reformers of the Bourbon state was that matching the power of the British state meant imitating its internal political settlement, especially the structure of its social reproduction and the relationship of this to taxation; but to do this would be to undermine the political position of the reformers themselves. This dilemma played out most directly in attempts at agricultural and fiscal reform.

Those French intellectuals who looked for the differences between the Bourbon and British state found it hard to understand the source of Albion's enigmatic power (Crouzet 1990: 127). Initially such investigations focused on the British ability to maintain their foreign trade, but increasingly the emphasis shifted to a *comparative anatomy* of the British polity with French absolutism (ibid.: 131). The Norfolk system of agriculture, especially, was studied in great technical detail in France from the mid century onward by an enthusiastic group of agronomes (Bourde 1953; Crouzet 1990: 137–139). Increasingly, French students took the *productivity* of English agriculture to be the object most worthy of enquiry. But this came with the recognition that the mechanisms allowing for such a rate of production required a political equality between those pursuing agriculture and commerce, and a system of taxation diametrically opposed to the corporate nature of the French system.

Most of the agronomes admitted, pessimistically, that the Norfolk system could not be implanted *in situ* on absolutist soil. No doubt, there were isolated attempts to duplicate the English system in discrete French estates,<sup>25</sup> but even in the Paris basin no capitalist *mentalité* triumphed in the late eighteenth century. In fact, rather than embarking on a process of enclosure – a qualitative shift of the relations of production enacted through 'primitive accumulation' – landowners and their tenant minions embarked upon engrossment – a one-time *quantitative* increase in the inputs and outputs of agrarian production that in itself necessitated no systematic transformation of the rights and duties of social reproduction to accord with impersonalized individualism (see Lis and Soly 1979: 137; Brenner 1985: 312–313; Parker 1996: 58–64).

The limitations in grafting on agrarian capitalism onto French absolutism are especially apparent in Physiocratic policy. Building on Richard Cantillon's refinements of William Petty and John Locke, and debated in the club culture borrowed from the English middle class, the Physiocrats' political-economy took the English triad of landowner, tenant farmer and wage laborer to be the ideal agrarian relation. Yet with no real enclosure movement in France, the Physiocrats had to prescribe the

harmonious mediation of self-interest to a force outside of this triad – a centralized state despot. Thus free trade was promoted to the extent that the unified national market it created would better allow for the jurisdiction of the despot (Habermas 1974: 100–101; Hampson 1998: 14–16).<sup>26</sup> Here, the best of both worlds was promised: an introduction of English improvement and a strengthening of the Bourbon crown.

Such adventures fed into wider projects to effect fiscal reform. Jacques Turgot, upon his appointment as comptroller general of finances in 1774, sought to put the Physiocratic policy of free trade into action. He broke up local customs barriers and guilds and replaced them with a single property tax and a drive toward a free labor market. These policies, however, necessarily invoked the ire of the privileged and precipitated peasant riots over grain price increases. Inciting contestation from above and below, Turgot's reform program lasted barely more than two years (Cobban 1978: 103–108). Nevertheless, Physiocratic policy returned once more before the Revolution when the Comte de Vergennes negotiated the Eden Treaty (1786). Convinced that free trade could work to strengthen a rural economy such as France, he dropped tariffs on British manufactured goods, though French wines were given most-favored-nation status (Hampson 1998: 5). The treaty in no way halted the disastrous continuing squeeze on the French peasantry; but it did succeed in decimating the textile industry of Northern France.<sup>27</sup>

Directly after Turgot's Physiocratic disaster, his successor as comptroller general, Jacques Necker, attempted to emulate the British through fiscal policy. In order to establish a long-term security and confidence among the financial community, Necker replaced Louis' arbitrary finances with a system of public loans administered by a consortium of bankers. Necker proposed to pay annuities for life rather than interest and the principle, and famously printed the *compte rendu* – the first public statement of Bourbon finance (even if 'creatively' so) (see Jarrett 1973: 155–173). However, effecting such a transformation again threatened venality, privilege, and the patrimonial system that went with it. Once Necker riled the nobility by attempting to control military expenditure, his dismissal, like that of Turgot, became inevitable.

In sum, British methods only produced a further destabilization of the already pressured absolutist system of social reproduction. Each succeeding comptroller general faced the same problem: raise new taxes, and risk the ire of the privileged strata; or raise new loans, transform the fiscal system, and in so doing, again, risk the ire of the privileged strata. Pressured to compete with the vitality and relative stability of the British tax base, the French ruling strata were unable and/or unwilling



to directly copy its social foundations. This was the developmental dilemma that was to become terminal for the Bourbons under Louis XVI: every reform only worked to exacerbate further the fragility of the absolutist system. Every retreat de-legitimized further the political centre – the crown (see Crouzet 1990: 145).

To the French ruling strata, Britain had therefore become both model and rival, guiding light and enemy.<sup>28</sup> And, notwithstanding a temporary retreat during the American War of Independence, Anglomania swept through the bourgeoisie who looked to British society as an example and justification of the equality and freedom of non-nobility and nobility, especially when this would allow for a political leveling of access to lucrative offices and tax revenues. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the French nobility, especially those of the sword (the *noblesse d'épée*) who legitimized their privileged position through the valuing of military honor over cowardly commerce, perceived Anglomania to be a fraternization with the enemy (Acomb 1950). Yet a minority of aristocracy and clergy, whose interests were more intimately tied to a strong central position for the Bourbon king, took the side of the bourgeois Anglophiles. They saw in British liberal constitutionalism a strategy for blocking the localist and provincial interests of the *parlements* (see Comninel 1989: chapter 5). Furthermore, by the 1780s, faced with a catastrophic breakdown of French political authority, even the Anglophile bourgeoisie – who agitated against noble privileges denied to them as non-noble subjects – were compelled to fall into line with the crown's most vociferous traditional enemy: the *parlements* (see Cobban 1968a). By now the *parlements*, through a heady mixture of natural law and Montesquieu, had cast themselves as the defenders of constitutionalism and representatives of public opinion against the despotism of the crown (Hampson 1973: 205–206; Bell 2001: 55).

But if the bourgeoisie fooled itself in these halcyon days that there might exist a home-grown basis for replicating the leveled nature of British political rights, such fantasies were crushed when Louis called the Estates General. For, at this critical moment, the Paris *parlement* invoked the old traditions of meeting, redolent, precisely, of French noble privilege. The First and Second estates had thus proved themselves unreformable to the bourgeoisie of the Third, who, re-branding their corporate body, the National Assembly, vowed in the Versailles tennis court not to separate until they had established a new constitution. And on the night of August 4 venality, tithes, manorial courts, city privileges and tax exemptions were all renounced.<sup>29</sup>

## The process of substitution: The creation of the Jacobin subject

Napoleon was *the last act in revolutionary terror's struggle against bourgeois society, which had been equally proclaimed by the revolution . . . He perfected the Terror by substituting permanent war for permanent revolution.*

Marx and Engels<sup>30</sup>

So did the comparative pressure, produced in geo-political contestation with British capitalism, force the collapse of French Absolutism. However, the eventual declaration of a new French political subject to suit the new constitution took its cue directly from Britain's new world offspring. The American Revolution had already contributed to a revival of republicanism in French debates over reform, thus providing even Anglophiles with an alternative system of government to the English mixed constitution (Jones 2005: 204). Nevertheless, the conditions in France were different to both Albion *and* its new world progeny. For, while the American Declaration had taken the form of a statement on common sense affirming, in effect, the *already existing* political subject of British common law, the French deputies could make no such common appeal given the immediacy of their absolutist heritage.

Instead, the *naturally* free and equal individual, paradoxically, had to be created by *political decree* (see Habermas 1974: 84–102; Fehér 1987: 17; Furet 1996: 73–76) and, crucially, in the absence of a long-term historical capitalist transformation in agrarian relations of production. After all, the French bourgeoisie had not risen to dominance by carving out a new political space of civil society: they had taken a historical shortcut via Versailles and the Bastille. And to make this shortcut, the revolutionary deputies were compelled to find a *substitute* base for the free and equal rights of man within an *existing* institutionalized space of political association left over by French absolutism. This new home was the Third Estate, chosen by virtue of being the *least* privileged existing institution, therefore the least particularistic, therefore the most 'naturally' universal space within Absolutism.<sup>31</sup> Essentially, the Third Estate was tasked with emulating British civil society – a generalized political domain of free and equal association of individuals.

However, this developmental route encountered one major obstacle: *internally*, the Third Estate was itself hierarchically differentiated. On the one hand, it housed the bourgeoisie, professionals of various kinds all of whom, even if inferior compared to the nobility and clergy, still held

offices of privilege; on the other hand, it also, and overwhelmingly, housed the entirely unprivileged *menu peuple*, namely the peasantry, artisans and hired workers. In other words, the route that the bourgeoisie followed in France, along with their fellow travelers from the nobility and clergy, ended with the construction of a politically non-differentiated subject of natural rights, the impersonalized individual, but within an internally differentiated *corporate* subject – the Third Estate.

The deputies attempted to paint over this disturbing crack in their new republican house by proclaiming a difference among equals – between themselves, as active *citoyens* attending the Assembly, and the passive remainder of the Third Estate (Rétat 1993: 6). Yet this crack could not be so easily rendered over because it had been produced by the act of Revolution itself. First, the *regeneration* of the French nation – and the regeneration of Bourbon authority was the order of the day for the aspiring deputies over the summer of 1789 – had demanded a destruction of the parasitical First and Second Estates, estates that had systematically stifled, during the colonial wars, the vitality of those who comprised the tax base: the laborers and producers (Sewell 1980: 78–81). Therefore the unfettering of the energy of these beings, whose *labor was useful* to both the reproduction of society and the powering of state sinews, was the end that legitimized revolutionary means.<sup>32</sup> And second, but most importantly, it had been the ‘useful’ – the *menu peuple* themselves – who had physically taken the battle to the ‘useless’ Estates. Not enlightenment, but the *grande peur* – the burning of chateau and destruction of records of feudal dues by peasants in the countryside – had propelled the deputies, regardless of their estate affiliation, to regain the initiative by proclaiming the new principles of sovereignty on the night of August 4 (Lefebvre 1973).

Because of these combined ethical and practical imperatives in delineating a new set of rights and duties, the political subject was encoded in the revolutionary Constitution as an antinomy. On the one hand, the citizen did indeed tell the story of the journey of the free and equal individual to political supremacy, an individual whose right it was to possess and alienate property as a thing unencumbered by wider social duties.<sup>33</sup> This essentially negative expression of rights – freedom *from* social encumbrance – fitted perfectly into the bourgeois project of leveling the corporate field of privilege. On the other hand, because both the prosecution and legitimacy of the Revolution emanated from the *menu peuple* of the Third Estate, the citizen had to tell the story of their revolutionary journey too, and in a language of republicanism lifted

from the American Revolution, yet one now injected with radically new meaning. The French general will expressed the duty to secure the social welfare of the 'useful' *qua* social beings, not simply as bearers of the rights of private property: article 6 of the Declaration claimed that law (the natural law of the impersonalized individual) was the expression of the general will (a political claim to social welfare that clashed with the absolute rights of private property).<sup>34</sup>

How did the revolutionary deputies deal with this antonymic set of rights and duties, born of substituting the Third Estate for British civil society? And how did this affect the course of the revolution?

Initially, the Assembly placed the emphasis on the rights of individual property ownership; and, with the *grande peur* fresh in the memory, they were reluctant to promote any substantive democratization of wealth. Although taxation was democratized through a universal progressive tax that differed only in degree and not kind,<sup>35</sup> the Assembly certainly did not wish to set a subversive example to the lower orders by wiping clear the public debt inherited from Louis. To restore the public finances and reimburse the creditors, the Assembly issued the Assignat, a bond the value of which was secured upon expropriated church property. Soon, however, the Assignat was circulating as currency, becoming susceptible to inflation, and putting many a French person's subsistence under increased pressure (Fehér 1987: 40). Despite this, the Assembly remained generally convinced that a free market in goods and labor, based on the sanctity of private property, was the preferable institution through which the social welfare could be ensured.

But the duties of social welfare, even though initially eclipsed by the rights of property, were nevertheless forced to the fore every time the revolution (and thus the ruling position of the bourgeois deputies themselves) came under threat (real or perceived) from the forces of the *ancien régime*. In December 1792, the Girodins could still win a showdown with Robespierre over the social composition of property, associating ownership with the right to profit (Gross 1997: 70–71, 148). However, in the meantime, more and more popular societies had formed owing to both a rise of democratic sentiment and an increased resistance to the discriminating membership rules of bourgeois clubs (the Jacobin clubs included) (Kennedy 1988: 369). At the same time, a group of bourgeois clubs with names such as the 'Society of 1789' had congregated as the Feuillant Convent opposing any dissolution of the active/passive citizen distinction. The popular societies gravitated toward the Jacobin clubs, and the Jacobins, in turn, befriended the popular societies in the battle against

the Feuillants whom they now considered to be a 'bourgeois aristocracy' (ibid.: 93).

The composition of the Jacobin clubs therefore started to become less representative of the *haute bourgeoisie* and more representative of farmers, artisans and urban workers (ibid.: 367). This representation, in turn, took on more of a populist character when the Parisian crowds rioted over sugar in the first quarter of 1793 and the same *menu peuple* rushed to defend Paris from that *ancien* avatar, the Duke of Brunswick. The Jacobin-influenced Montagnards at this juncture ascended to power on the backs of the *menu peuple* making the Parisian Jacobin club a de facto executive arm of government. From here on, the Jacobins were bound to proclaim that the Rights of Man could be saved only by limiting the egoistic relations of the free market if this threatened the welfare of the collective whole. And this was the antinomy revealed: as the Rights of Man and the Citizen, under attack from *ancien* privilege, were accordingly proclaimed more loudly than ever before, so too were the duties of the citizen to secure the welfare of the social whole.

The pitch of this friction was recorded in the Jacobin Constitution of 1793. The constitution explicitly asserted the right of the individual to enjoy the freely alienable fruits of his property. Moreover, individuals were now deemed to possess their political freedom even when contracted in labor relations.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the rights of the impersonalized individual were codified more rigorously than in 1789. Yet at the same time, another tale of property was told by Maximilian Robespierre who believed that ownership of property was sacrosanct *but only in so far as* it was used correctly as the means by which the general will could secure its ends: the common welfare (Cobban 1968b: 165–167; Gross 1997: 68–70). This was stated in the very first article of the Jacobin Constitution, while article 21 preached that such welfare was a 'sacred debt'.<sup>37</sup> This language, of course, reached beyond the rights of property; indeed, the 1793 Declaration entirely omitted property qualifications from the constitution of the 'active' citizen (Sewell 1980: 138).<sup>38</sup>

The Jacobins attempted to mediate the friction between these individual rights and collective duties through the principle of the vital minimum, from which derived that infamous regulatory tool – the maximum.<sup>39</sup> Initially designed in May 1793 to set a price limit on goods of prime necessity, by September a general maximum had been enacted. This led, in effect, to a moral economy existing in the same space wherein individuals exercised their rights to freely alienate their property.<sup>40</sup> In this sense, the maximum was no poor law because it did not act merely as an appendix to the rights of property; rather, it *directly*

constrained the supremacy of these rights. And yet, neither was the maximum an attempt to *sublate* these rights.

This antonymic policy regarding the rights and duties of social reproduction can be seen in the Jacobin attitude to an 'agrarian law' – a traditional peasant model of a moral economy. By the time of Robespierre's rule, the 'law' was already being promoted by sectors of the peasantry.<sup>41</sup> However, the Jacobins could not countenance such a fundamental threat to the rights of property and forbade talk of the 'law' on pain of death (Jones 1991: 106; Jesenne 1994: 228–229). Following the policy of the vital minimum, the Jacobins instead attempted to help the rural poor in their attempt to secure their subsistence. To this end, the property of the *ancien régime*, especially large estates, could be legitimately dismantled and reallocated to the duty of ensuring the social welfare of the useful (Jones 1991: 106, 113; Jesenne 1994: 238). Effectively, the Jacobin policy of the vital minimum, unlike the British poor law, *froze* the re-structuring of social reproduction in a contradictory and chaotic state. As we shall see presently, this contributed toward the militarization of the Jacobin subject.

However, the crucial point for now is that there were not two separate revolutions – a liberal one of 1789 and a proto-socialist/proto-totalitarian one of 1793.<sup>42</sup> And neither was 1793 the start of a *dérápée* – a sliding out of control of revolutionary fervor.<sup>43</sup> What did distinguish the Jacobins was their embrace, rather than avoidance, of the antinomy of revolutionary rights and duties. And this is why I prefer to label the new French political subject the 'Jacobin subject': Jacobinism encapsulated the tension between individual rights and collective duties that constituted the social intercourse of the Revolution. Crucial to remember in this respect is that the Jacobin subject, even if no longer embedded in absolutist relations of personal dependency, could not express his/her natural rights as an impersonalized individual, but necessarily as a member of the general will.<sup>44</sup> In this sense the Jacobin political subject was antonymic because it was borne of the attempt to graft the political universality and unanimity of the *impersonalized* individual of British common law onto an internally heterogeneous political *collective*, the Third Estate. Because of this process of substitution, the Jacobin subject was a *novel* product of the Revolution, neither an old personal corporate collective *nor* the impersonalized individual of British civil society. The Jacobin citizen, developed in the course of a substitute route to an enlightened government, was a combination of both, and took the form of what I shall call an *impersonal collective*.

## The results of substitution: Terror and the citizen-soldier

*All the French are soldiers...*

Constitution of 1793

The Terror emerged from the intense frictions generated in this attempt to institutionalize an impersonalized political space through combining individual rights and collective duties regarding social reproduction. True, capitalist Britain had experienced its own terror regime back in the first half of the eighteenth century when the Black Acts helped to establish the primacy of the rights of private property and legitimize the separation of the political and the economic. Nevertheless, the French Terror was a historically unique politics of constructing an impersonalized political space in the absence of successful capitalist expropriation and the individualization of rights according to social reproduction. For, unlike the conditions that held within British civil society, the institution of private property in revolutionary France could not underpin the requirements for the impersonalization of political space, namely, a universal reach to all members of the body politic and a unanimous constitution regarding the homogeneity of the political standing of each member.

By skipping over the moment of mass expropriation of the means of production the Revolution had denied the impersonalized French body politic any substantive socio-economic referent with which to define its conditions of enfranchisement, nor indeed had it allowed any coherent structure of social reproduction through which to form the tax basis of the political apparatus of revolutionary rule. Robespierre attempted to remedy this acute problem by proposing a referent that was itself abstracted from social reproduction: virtue. Virtue as a positive value had arisen in French political discourse with the classical Republican turn brought about by the American Revolution. In this way, virtue was deployed by Robespierre as the opposite to the noble value of honor, and this meant that virtuousness could be possessed only negatively by performing actions that resisted the *ancien* forces of personalized corporate political subjectivity, namely privilege and particular interest (see Hampson 1973; Fehér 1987: 52, 60).

However, by this definition of inclusion into the body politic, those institutions that had initially been classified as the outlets of expression for the general will – the communes, the Parisian sections of the sans-culottes, artisan corporations etc. – now came to be progressively re-categorized as factional (Sewell 1980: 88–90; Singer 1986: 184–193;

Fehér 1987: 93–96). Faction was anathema to natural rights as it was suspiciously reminiscent of the privilege and particularity of the *ancien régime*; and in this respect, *Monsieur Guillotine* was the new leveler. But in leveling faction the Jacobins effectively shut down the actually-existing institutions that *were* providing for the social welfare of the ‘useful’ by regulating production, distribution and exchange. And by denying the general will on behalf of the general will, the Republic of Virtue began to destroy the very impersonalized political space it sought to construct, not to mention its basis of support among the ruling classes.

Furthermore, if the Terror was the practical expression of the problems of finding a viable social basis for reproducing a non-capitalist impersonalized body politic, then Robespierre’s religion of virtue was its purely ideological expression. In this respect, the Supreme Being marked no return to pre-enlightenment superstition on Robespierre’s part (Cobban 1968b: 178–180; Blum 1986: 240). Rather, if the invisible hand was Adam Smith’s abstraction of the impersonal workings of the market, then the Supreme Being was Robespierre’s abstraction of the impersonal workings of virtue. It was, therefore, the festival, rather than the market, through which the impersonal social bonds of the general will could materialize in front of the citizen’s eyes.<sup>45</sup>

The dynamic of Terror, then, cannot be attributed to the exigencies of the impersonalized individual, or as an effect of the impersonalization of social relations in general. Rather, the Terror was an effect of the international dimension of revolutionary transformation: the substitution of the Third Estate for civil society was achieved at the price of impersonalizing political space through an effectively irresolvable antinomy between the individual rights and collective duties of social reproduction. In fine, the French Terror was peculiar to the political subjectivity of the impersonal collective. And although this might seem an obvious point to make in terms of the above discussion, its importance will become clear when we investigate how German intellectuals explained the Terror as a phenomenon to be avoided in reforms across the Rhine.

Yet one policy, forged in the crucible of the Jacobin Republic, did manage to direct the labor of the citizen toward securing the general will while not immediately undermining the precarious institutions of social reproduction. This was the building of a ‘nation in arms’, which reached its apogee with Napoleon. The *Montagnards*, faced with *la patrie en danger*, had originally combined defense of the revolution with welfare of the *menu peuple*. But it was the 1793 Jacobin constitution that first explicitly bound the duty to provide social welfare to the military duty



to secure the nation. Through this the Revolutionary political subject became a *citizen-soldier* (Forrest 1993: 156).<sup>46</sup>

The new military was organized along the lines of universal equality more thoroughly than any other institution of government in revolutionary France. As a citizen's army rather than a king's army<sup>47</sup> the officer-soldier relationship, previously cemented in political hierarchy and privilege, began to re-form around an axis of technical differentiation (Forrest 1993: 156). Indeed, it was only through this radical leveling of the privileges of defending the *patrie* that a *levée en masse* could be embarked upon. The *levée* was unprecedented in late-eighteenth-century Europe: it attempted to strengthen the military through involving *directly* – in an unmediated fashion and not through the proxy of aristocratic honor or noble privilege – the *entire* social order. Witness the Decree:

The young men shall go to battle; the married men shall forge arms and transport provisions; the women shall make tents and clothing and shall serve in the hospitals; the children shall turn old linen into lint; the aged shall betake themselves to the public places in order to arouse the courage of the warriors and preach the hatred of kings and the unity of the Republic.<sup>48</sup>

For the first time, then, and in diametrical opposition to the privilege of honor that underpinned the political authority of the *ancien régime*, the *menu peuple*, in taking up arms, were as enfranchised as any other social strata and, more so, were defending their *own* enfranchisement.

In this respect, the *levée* was the ultimate Jacobin substitute for capitalist enclosure and the concomitant development of civil society: conscription was a substitute conduit to enclosure through which peasants turned into citizens and political subjectivity transformed, however imperfectly, from personal corporate ties to inclusion in an impersonal collective. And even though the *levée* did not automatically produce a revolutionary fervor in conscripts, the appointment by the Committee of Public Safety of propaganda deputies in the ranks that outranked officers ensured that the rank and file were indoctrinated into their position as the revolutionary fighting arm of the general will (Rothenberg 1977: 111–112). The novelty of this situation should not be forgotten. The British navy, for example, never required such a *direct* social inclusion of the 'people', propertied or not, in the upholding of political authority: no general will was required to command the world's oceans.<sup>49</sup>

None of this momentum dissipated with the fall of Robespierre. In fact, the rise of the Directory saw a continuation, and not arresting, of the problem of reconciling the conflicting rights and duties of the Jacobin subject. True, the 'Constitution of Year III' re-introduced the propertied franchise and clearly associated the choice of deputies with the interests of the propertied strata. Indeed, Boissy d'Anglas, a key architect of the new constitution, proclaimed, in a Lockean idiom, that 'a country governed by property-owners is in the social order; one where the property-less govern is in a state of nature' (cited in Crook 1998: 18). Yet, the new constitution actually allowed for political enfranchisement through military service. And in fact it stated far more: one could not become a citizen, regardless of the possession of property, unless registered upon the roll of the reserve national guard.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, what *did* qualitatively change with Thermidor was this: the attempt to balance the contradictions in the revolutionary social structure between the rights of property and duties toward social welfare turned definitively toward the external metabolism of war, led by a predatory foreign policy.<sup>51</sup> This is a crucial point, because it exemplifies the growing militarization of the general will – the transformation of the citizen into a citizen-soldier.

Indeed, the Directory, by now, had little choice over this martial turn. It was not possible simply to come down upon the side of private property rights in order to secure the tax revenues with which to continue powering the revolutionary state. The Directory still had to concede that the duties toward social welfare were valid in order to stave off both neo-Jacobinist and Royalist/Catholic 'extremes'.<sup>52</sup> In this sense, the Directory inherited Robespierre's paralysis regarding the re-structuring of social reproduction beyond its current antonymic state. To secure the human and fiscal resources needed to support political authority while not radically transforming and thus destabilizing the tenuous and fractious structures of social reproduction in the French countryside and town, the Directory, and then Napoleon, turned outward, toward a strategy of geo-political accumulation (see Furet 1996: 254–255). In this sense, the *Grande Armée* was the ultimate geo-political expression of the Jacobin process of substitution.

In the following years the functions of political authority became increasingly militarized, and by 1798 military courts were also dealing with civil offences. But at the same time, while most of the Jacobin rural policies were dismantled post-Thermidor, no attempt was made to reverse those transformations in ownership that had been accomplished (Jones 1991: 126). In short, Thermidor did not allow the French

bourgeoisie to unleash enclosure on the agrarian milieu. Therefore, unwilling and unable for the sake of stability to make any definitive choice domestically between the rights of private property and the duties toward social welfare, the Directory's budget increasingly relied upon funds extracted from conquered lands (Blanning 1983: 76–77).<sup>53</sup> By the turn of the century, a quarter of government revenues were obtained in this fashion (Cassels 1996: 32) and the *Armée Révolutionnaire* itself systematically lived off the resources of invaded lands (see Stone 2002: 219). With the war economy now established as the revolutionary mode of production, the French nation became locked into a logic of geo-political accumulation to secure its very survival.<sup>54</sup> Thus, even when Europe was pacified, the structural requirements of reproducing Revolutionary political authority propelled the army further afield, into the Middle East (Stone 2002: 222).

With Napoleon finally crowning himself Emperor it might seem that the Revolution had returned France full circle back to the days of absolutist foreign policies of geo-political accumulation. Indeed, those at the apex of the military were accorded kingdoms and resources by Napoleon in a manner not dissimilar to Bourbon patronage.<sup>55</sup> In any case, myths of Valmy aside, conscription had not been easily established in Revolutionary France. Initially administered at the commune level, many rural communities attempted to sabotage the process: whom, the villagers asked, were their sons fighting and dying for? (Woloch 1986: 105–106; Forrest 1993: 159–160) Nevertheless, even under the Empire, (excluding Napoleon's immediate small clique of advisors), the military remained in general an institution that operated not on the principle of personalized privilege, but impersonal meritocracy: military honor, as Norman Hampson remarks, 'was now national rather than personal' (Hampson 1973: 212). The war economy even under the empire was still understood by the bureaucracy to nourish not just Napoleon's personal rule, but more so, a higher impersonalized duty – that of the general will (see Rothenberg 1977: 132–134; Furet 1996: 250–251; Crook 1998: 280).

Moreover, Napoleon himself took the guarantee of civil liberty most seriously. And it must be remembered that no *biens nationaux* was returned to the clergy or *émigrés* under his reign (Furet 1996: 249–250). Furthermore, though the first *levée* was a one-off event, by 1798 conscription had become routine through the Jourdan Law, and by 1806 it had become fully rationalized and bureaucratized, breaking rural particularism and its mechanisms of draft resistance (Rothenberg 1977: 101; Woloch 1986: 107, 123). In fact, over the course of ten years, 1 million citizen-soldiers were incorporated into the army (Forrest 1993: 164; see

also Woloch 1986: 110), and with it their sense of political self was partially impersonalized. It was in these ways that Napoleonic geo-political accumulation now institutionalized and quickened the revolutionary transformation of French society.

However, just as the pursuit of virtue had depleted its stock of human matter, so too, ultimately, did the pursuit of geo-political accumulation. Napoleon, following the same compulsions experienced by the Directory, could only mediate the friction embedded in the citizen – the rights of property and duties of social welfare – by recourse to war. Thus war was a standard feature of French foreign policy – always total, never limited (Paret 1986: 129).<sup>56</sup> And not only did this ‘irrational’ drive produce, as a reaction, a coalition that combined both *ancien* and modern (for Britain could not allow French supremacy in Europe nor in the Near East), but just as importantly, the total war effort quickened the social metabolic rate of the nation in arms to the point where, again, it started to eat itself from within. With sustained high levels of conscription needed to meet the sea and land struggles of both capitalist state and *ancien régime* (especially Russia) the structure of social reproduction began to break down at the familial and communal level. Furthermore, such levels of conscription started to overwhelm the logistical capacity of the bureaucracy itself (Woloch 1986: 101, 126–127).

What then can be said, in summary, about the results of this revolution of backwardness? On balance, the degree to which Napoleon’s defeat can count, in world-historical terms, as the defeat of the substitute project to counter-pose a general will to both monarchism and capitalism is mixed. On the one hand, historically, the citizen-soldier was found comparatively wanting. For, British fiscal and military resources enjoyed an expansionary potential based also upon the *intensive* social metabolic rate of ‘improvement’, while French revolutionary resources ultimately relied on an *extensive* social metabolic rate powered by geo-political accumulation.<sup>57</sup> True, the latter burnt its social stock faster and more brilliantly; but the former consumed in a relatively more stable and sustained manner. Moreover, war and blockade had led to a protectionist policy for French industry that, once lifted, revealed its utter backwardness compared to the British juggernaut, with some parts of France even witnessing de-industrialization over the Napoleonic years. Thus, once the French general will had exhausted itself with the defeat of the *Grande Armée*, the axis of the continental economy proceeded to move from the Atlantic to the Rhine (Crouzet 1990a: 301–315).

On the other hand, though the original Jacobins exited the stage of world history after a few short years, and though the novel militaristic

passages of modernity fell into disuse in France after 1815, the spirit of the citizen-soldier continued to animate the development of nineteenth-century Europe. And there are a number of concrete reasons for this 'unnatural' longevity.

First, the type of conscription that fed Napoleon's war machine was anathema to the existent *ancien régime*. This was because it required an encoding of rights and duties of the political subject toward the defense of the political community *unmediated* by particularistic corporate interest. This inevitably required a collapsing of multiple political subjects into one unanimous one, sharing the same rights and duties. And this required a leveling of privilege and ultimately a transformation in absolutist and monarchical forms of political authority. Compelled, for their own survival, to entertain such damaging reforms, the Jacobin citizen-soldier haunted the halls of European power for the rest of the century.

Second, from 1804 onward a blueprint was available from which to effect this uncomfortable transformation that did not invoke the idiosyncrasies of British history as a prerequisite. Napoleon's permanent legacy, as he himself acknowledged, was his Civil Code and not his conquests. The Code, it must be said, was *not* a proclamation of the rights of property in the English common-law sense (although its laws were not unkind to the concerns of private property).<sup>58</sup> Essentially, the Code cast the rights and duties of the political subject in singular, universal and impersonalized terms, backed up by a sufficiently centralized and impersonalized rule of law. Political authority, under the code, could no longer abide the extraction of surplus through personalized, particularized and hierarchically mediated social relations of production.<sup>59</sup>

Third, this meant that the Jacobin project of social transformation appealed greatly to various ruling strata of *ancien régime* Europe, intellectual and otherwise. One did not have to bow down to tradition and custom when one could invoke the natural rights of the republican general will; or more accurately, tradition and custom could now be represented as the historical expression of the general will. In short, a history brimming with personalized corporate hierarchies could be re-read as the voyages of the impersonal collective. For those involved, or with stakes, in the struggles to compete with capitalism and/or the legacy of Napoleon, the general will could be wielded toward a multitude of political projects.

But fourth, this universal appeal necessarily extended beyond the limits that the ruling strata might want to place on liberty, equality and fraternity. For, however contradictory, and however unstable,

Jacobinism had nevertheless encoded impersonalized rights and duties of the political subject not only in a formal political sense, *but also in direct relation to the structure of social reproduction* (through the *maximum*, for example). In short, the Jacobin sense of equality among free individuals reached down, however contradictorily, to the substantive socio-economic realm. The freedom and equality of the general will did not speak exclusively to the European propertied or professional stratum, but to *all* strata. Indeed, French Jacobinism animated even sectors of the *British* working class; and the conservative backlash in Britain was in no small sense an attempt to stamp out this enemy within.<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have documented how the international dimension of the French revolution produced a political subject the rights and duties of which cannot be captured by a singular reference to *either* the personalized collective of the *ancien régime* or the impersonalized individual of Anglo-American common law. I have termed this subject at the most abstract level the *impersonal collective*, although I have shown how it was manifested most forcefully as the Jacobin citizen-soldier. Jacobinism, as I have suggested, could mean many things to many different people. But all meanings forthwith invoked the notion of the militarized masses. As the citizen-soldier, the Jacobin subject introduced the directly enfranchised armed masses as a social factor in geo-political contestation, and as such, informed a new comparative standard against which other political authorities would be judged, and judge themselves, as 'backward'. In sum, for the rest of the nineteenth century and up until the Bolshevik revolution, behind all invocations of Napoleon or the crowing of the Gallic cock lurked the fear and fascination of the Jacobin subject – that firebrand character of the citizen-soldier, leveler of privilege, and harbinger of anarchy.

It should be clear by now that the Jacobin political subject should in no way be considered simply as a bad copy of the British original. For, as a result of the centralizing project begun by the Jacobins to mobilize the general will in order to defend the Republic of Virtue, national conscription and the development of the first modern war economy produced a militarized society that geo-politically challenged both *ancien régime* and the 'empire of civil society'.<sup>61</sup> The Jacobin subject was, however, still a *substitute* to the extent that it was borne of an attempt to match and compensate for the political agency of the British original. It is a matter of some historical irony that it was the substitute that

*directly* introduced the majority of the rest of the world to the modern life of impersonalized social relations. But the Jacobin subject never world-historically *replaced* its sire, the capitalist subject. Rather, these two meta-subjects – both impersonal, yet promoting radically different rights and duties over social reproduction – existed in frictional relation to each other regularly producing, through this friction, new articulations of modern subjects. Both shed comparative light on non-capitalist, non-Jacobin political authorities; both pressured these polities to reform or be swept under the conflicting tides of modernity.

To conclude, then, and to set the stage for my investigation into the long nineteenth century of Prussia-German political development, it is instructive to outline the different ways in which these meta-subjects impinged upon existing political authorities within Europe. For the British capitalist subject, the impersonalized individual, the nature of its external pressure on polities would operate principally and in the first instance in an indirect fashion securing market access through naval force if necessary and pressuring existing polities toward agricultural reform. The Jacobin subject, the impersonal collective, would operate principally and in the first instance in a direct fashion through army incursions that would push existing polities toward military reform. These two pressures would for the most part be experienced simultaneously, and an adequate understanding of their similarity and differences, and more importantly the way in which the international dimension of social transformation had generated these similarities and differences, would consistently elude the set of German intellectuals to which I now turn.

## Part II



# 3

## Kant's Corporate Enlightenment

### Introduction

Kant's political thought has experienced a resurgence in the English-speaking academic world. Spurred on by John Rawls' *Theory of Justice* (Schmidt 2003: 148),<sup>1</sup> Kant was resurrected in the most general sense in order to combat the behavioralist turn and re-introduce the question of the *moral authority* of the rational individual (see, for example, Booth 1986). However, a further radicalization of Kant proceeded by interpreting his enterprise as an exegesis of the philosophical and practical limitations of individual Reason (Shell 1980; Hutchings 1995; Flikschuh 2000). A number of authors have even used Kant to highlight the imperialistic undertones (both political and economic) in approaches that, through a reading of Kant, assume the universality of the liberal subject (O'Neill 1992; Beck 1999; Williams 2001; Jahn 2005).

Increasingly, the problem of international relations has formed the backdrop for assessing the nature of Kant's liberalism (Beitz 1979: 179; Linklater 1990: 120; Brown 1992: 39–40). Kenneth Waltz (1962: 339) noted back in the early 1960s that Kant viewed war not as an accident, but as something to be expected as a structural aspect of international politics. And since then, a number of authors have attempted to re-cast Kant as a systemic thinker of the third image of international relations – a proto-structural realist (Huntley 1996; Harrison 2002). Counterpoised to this interpretation is Michael Doyle's (1983, 1993) influential reading of Kant's tract, *Perpetual Peace*, that posits a real-world universalization of the peaceful liberal state in world affairs. However, against Doyle's empirical reading of *Perpetual Peace*, a number of authors have charged Doyle *et al.* with lifting Kant's historical-empirical claims out of their philosophical framework of meaning (Franke 1995; Cavallar 2001; Jahn

2005). By ignoring Kant's Categorical Imperative to do unto others as you would do unto yourself these critics charge advocates of the Democratic Peace Thesis with privileging liberal states over non-liberal states, thus implicitly justifying imperialist policies that would be anathema to Kant's moral sensibilities (Macmillan 1995; Jahn 2005).

Overall, then, the debate over Kant in IR concerns his status as a thinker critical of the putative universality of liberal claims. In these interpretations, for Kant, either international relations remain an arena wherein liberal values, if ethically superior, cannot be practically realized owing to the prior fracturing of humanity into different political communities or the 'international' represents the political-philosophical limit to universalizing liberal ethics by their own standards. It is, of course, undeniable that Kant *can* be read, in these ways, as a critical voice on the universalist assumptions of liberalism in light of political realities. But Kant *cannot* be read in this way if we are to make sense of him in the context of Prussia-German backwardness. Re-reading Kant in this context *exposes the limits of his own engagement* with the limits of the liberal project of universalizing individual freedom. Specifically, I claim that Kant's texts on international politics formed part of an attempt to deny the real-world effects of the French Revolution. And because of this, Kant's philosophy provides no window into the historically substantive limit of the expansion of the impersonalized individual as a political subject across a world of inter-societal difference set by the international dimension of social transformation.

In this chapter I re-interpret Kant's critical engagement with the relationship between ethics of individual freedom and political realities in the following way. Prior to the French Revolution, Kant's political philosophy promoted a non-modern reform of the Prussian estates system. Kant placed the Reason of the free individual firmly within the noumenal realm, and between this realm and the phenomenal realm of politics there existed a chasm. It was the intellectual's task to guide progressive reform of the corporate political order by reference to a universal history that, in telling the story of the coming to being of individual freedom, acted as a regulator of political action. By posing this regulative history, the intellectual was exercising *Bildung*. Yet because of the incommensurability of Reason and experience, the exercise of *Bildung* was not supposed to lead to a radical transformation of the corporate political world toward one that encoded the equality and freedom of the individual. The French Revolution threatened all this by manifesting the bearer of Reason – the impersonalized individual – within a political constitution. Moreover, the Constitution produced in

Kant a consciousness of backwardness regarding the (minimal) tangible results of his own corporate enlightenment within Prussia. Thus Kant attempted to save the legitimacy of his existing corporate reform project for revolutionary times. And this required reading the effect of the Revolution in such a way that it could be said to prove only the noumenal existence of the ethics of individual Reason but *not* the manifestation of the free and equal individual in the phenomenal world of politics. Kant approached this task by exploring the ethical and political relationship between the individual, the state and humanity.

In sum, Kant's political philosophy constructed both the particular possibility for German development out of backwardness – a continuation of the corporate enlightenment – and the universal archetype of liberal agency against which such possibilities were measured and illuminated – a resolutely noumenal (and not phenomenal) Reason. And in this way a consciousness of backwardness structured Kant's most famous writings on international relations by denying the Revolution any substantive effect on the political world. If we consider the historical–sociological importance of the Revolution to lie in its production of a multi-linear modernity owing to its creation – through the international dimension of social transformation – of a novel Jacobin subject, then we can judge Kant's philosophy of the limits of individual Reason to be, itself, drastically limited. Indeed, from this limitation arises the tension that defines Kant's mature understanding of the relationship between the ethics of individual freedom and a world of illiberal politics.

In order to contextualize the development of Kant's political philosophy around the impact of the French Revolution, I spend some time outlining the nature of Prussian political authority as an estates system. I detail how the corporate hierarchy of political subjects through which the rights and duties of social reproduction were delineated set firm limits on the ability of the administrative structures to raise taxation and military service adequate to survive the contestations of absolutist geo-politics. I place the *Aufklärung* within this context as a non-modern intellectual response to the frictions within Prussian political authority created by absolutist geo-politics. I take the *Aufklärung* project to be one of reform, a 'corporate enlightenment', and I contextualize Kant's mature political philosophy as part of this project. I then show how this project was threatened by the Revolution and how Kant, acting within a consciousness of German backwardness, attempted to assimilate the novel political subject of the French Constitution into the analytics and prescriptions of his existing political philosophy. I end with the lead-up

to 1806, when the Napoleonic army proved its qualitative superiority over the military forces mustered through the Prussian estates system.

### Frederick the Great's enlightened absolutism

*You must let yourselves be governed obediently and not govern!*

Frederick the Great<sup>2</sup>

The Prussia of Frederick the Great existed as a *Ständestaat*, a hierarchical set of *Stände* or 'estates', each composed of a further hierarchical sub-system of corporate bodies. Within Prussia there existed a distinction between the upper nobility who received their sovereign titles directly from the German Emperor and the lower nobility – the *Junkers* – who had to bow to Frederick (Simms 1998: 8–9). Likewise, the peasantry also professed an array of politically differentiated occupations (Berdahl 1988: 86; Melton 1995: 106) as did the *Bürger* estate with its dizzying mosaic of interior differentiation. Especially important is the fact that within the *Bürger* estate, those individuals who were servants of the state – e.g., administrators and bureaucrats – enjoyed higher privileges than those engaged in industry and commerce (Behrens 1985: 64).<sup>3</sup>

Two-thirds of the Prussian population were directly involved in agriculture (Gray 1990: 26), and because of this social reproduction was, in the main, pursued within the agrarian system of the *Junker* estate – *Gutsherrschaft*. *Gutsherrschaft* institutionalized the local-level paternalistic jurisdiction of the *Junkers* and encompassed a multitude of political regulations including permission to marry, manorial rights and compulsory labor services (Schissler 1991: 101).<sup>4</sup> Paternalism, it should be noted, was not an ideological ruse on the *Junkers'* behalf, for the quasi-medieval agronomic practices on the estate did indeed tie both lord and peasant together in a community of natural fate (see Berdahl 1988: 85). Moreover, paternal authority also extended downward into the peasantry. Peasants who held farmsteads within the larger estate never themselves worked on the *Junkers'* demesne, but rather operated as mid-point stewards of surplus extraction (Melton 1995: 337).

The political subjects of the *Ständestaat* were therefore defined hierarchically through concentric circles of corporate bodies glued together by relations of personal and paternal dependency. And the principle around which these corporate subjects were arranged hierarchically was to be found in the relative importance of the duties that each was allocated in defending the Hohenzollern crown. Corporate rights and duties were constituted in the 'military–agrarian' complex,<sup>5</sup> wherein the *Junker*

fulfilled a dual role as the paternal head of the *Gutsherrschaft* system, organizing the extraction of surplus from the peasantry, and as an officer in the Prussian army, defending and possibly expanding the terrain of the *Ständestaat*. By the same token, the peasantry also fulfilled a dual role as producers of surplus and as foot soldiers.

Frederick was adamant that a strong power base in taxation and military service could be achieved only if these duties were correctly balanced and the rights accorded to these duties clearly defended. In this respect, the pivotal corporate body was the *Junkers*, whom Frederick protected both positively and negatively by forbidding them to take up *Bürger* occupations (especially mercantile enterprises) and likewise forbidding the *Bürger* to buy *Junker* estates (Carsten 1989: 43–44; Blanning 1990: 269). In fact, Frederick deemed the merchant trade (and in no way contradicting the mainstream opinion in France and also, to a lesser extent, England) to be diametrically opposed to a *metier d'honneur*. Honor was the foundational quality of a good officer and a strong army (Carsten 1989: 43–44).<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, this favoritism did not blind Frederick to the fact that the lowly peasantry were the precious life matter that constituted the foundation of the *Ständestaat*. Frederick deemed it crucial that peasants were not overburdened in their duties, especially military ones that could erode agricultural production, and so he set tight limits: a maximum of 3% of the peasant body were to be engaged in military duties at any one time, and even those on active duty remained so for no more than two months of the year (Craig 1964: 22; Showalter 1994: 309). In addition, Frederick made it a principle never to increase the land tax that most directly affected the peasantry – the *Kontribution* – even in times of war, and to this principle he largely held (Behrens 1985: 81).

Military–agrarian rights and duties were regulated through the *Landrat*, the local administrative office, which also organized the *Kontribution* and discharged military obligations (Berdahl 1988: 92–93; Melton 1995: 100–102). Usually occupied by a *Junker*, the *Landrat* distributed the burden of political duties on the basis of patronage networks occupied by friends and relatives all of whom, of course, sought a minimal due (Melton 1995: 101). In effect, the *Landrat* acted as the local node of political authority in a military–agrarian complex that extended to the regional War and Domains Chambers, the *Staatsrat* (Council of State) in Berlin, and ultimately to Frederick and his personal cabinet at Potsdam (Behrens 1985: 148). In this way, the offices of the *Staatsrat*, rather than being organized according to technical function, cleaved instead to geographical regions (Ritter 1968: 150), and this organization

reflected the *mediated* transmission of political authority through a personalized and corporate array of political subjects. It is this mediated character of political authority that would be tested come the French Revolutionary wars.

Crucial to note, however, is that the bureaucracy enjoyed no distinct corporate identity.<sup>7</sup> Frederick, in fact, had even revoked the limited independence that his father had bestowed on bureaucratic personnel (Ritter 1968: 149). Rather, administrative personnel and offices were spread over a number of existing corporate bodies organized, again, in a hierarchical fashion according to their function. The (noble) offices of war therefore enjoyed paramount privilege (Behrens 1985: 64), and under the nobility came the remainder of administrative personnel, drawn mainly from the lower *Bürger* estate. This sub-stratum can be defined as the *Bildungsbürgertum*<sup>8</sup> a term most easily, but precariously, translated as 'educated middle class' in contra-distinction to their mercantilist brethren. Ultimately, however, all administrators were subservient to Frederick who believed that expertise could be utilized without encouraging initiative (Hubatsch 1975: 224). True, Frederick's legislative legacy finally enacted in 1794 – the *Allgemeines Landrecht* (ALR) – was a comprehensive set of laws of the land that recast the royal servants in a functional capacity as servants of the state (ibid.: 190–191). But even at this late date, though the servants of the state received some legal protection, they were still entirely subservient to the royal will.<sup>9</sup>

In sum, Frederick's 'enlightened absolutism' was enlightened only because it was not directly despotic in character (Tribe 1984: 271). Frederick recognized the importance of providing some sustenance to the peasantry; and he supposed an equitable relation between corporate bodies to the extent that all possessed specific duties regarding the reproduction of his *Ständestaat* through the military–agrarian complex (see Behrens 1985: 83). To these obligations Frederick even committed himself as the first 'servant of the state'. Yet in truth he served as the father of an extended family. Two conditions of the governance of the *Ständestaat* have crucial importance for the argument made in this chapter. First, for fear of destabilizing the military–agrarian complex, both materially and ideologically, there were, in principle, definite limits set to the exploitation of the peasantry. And second, the intellectual stratum, the administrators and academics who had to negotiate this limit, did so from a position in the ruling strata that was ill-defined and ill-secured. It is to this stratum, and an investigation of its Cameralist mandate, that I now turn.

## Cameralism and the limits of corporate governance

*The despot says: 'Do not think'. The sovereign says: 'You may think, only obey'.*

Carl Gottlieb Svarez<sup>10</sup>

Formalized by Frederick William I with the creation of a chair at Halle, Cameralism was a science of organizing the body politic in order to restore the agricultural base in the wake of the massive de-population and physical destruction incurred during the Thirty Years War (Gagliardo 1969: 32; Vierhaus 1988: 30). Essentially, the mandate of the Cameralist was to find ways to engineer an increase in agricultural surplus and to a lesser extent in military service, at the same time avoiding peasant impoverishment and with that the disintegration of paternal authority (Gagliardo 1969: 33). One might say that Cameralism was a 'development' project, but one framed by the corporate social universe of the Estates system.

The ability of Cameralism to provide fiscal and human resources to power the *Ständestaat* in a hostile geo-political milieu was put to the test in the Seven Years War (Walker 1978: 237; Scott 1990: 17). Surrounded and attacked by Sweden, Russia, France and Austria, Frederick lost 400,000 of his 'children', 180,000 of whom were soldiers, with entire provinces being physically devastated. This devastation disrupted social reproduction at ground level to a degree reminiscent of the Thirty Years War (Hubatsch 1975: 148; Showalter 1994: 308–311), and Frederick's political authority was saved only through British subsidies (with the help of some Russian hesitation) (Behrens 1985: 80). However, the end of the war in no way eased such geo-political tensions: the German dualism that pitted Austria as the governing center point versus Prussia as the rising military powerhouse had been aggravated further, and Russia continued to impinge upon the eastern flank.<sup>11</sup> Hence Cameralism became an even more important science after the Seven Years War, enjoying professional regulation whereby all administrators were required to take competitive exams in the universities of Halle and Königsberg (Rosenberg 1958: 179–181). The symbiosis between administration and academia had increased drastically.

After the Seven Years War many estates were on the verge of financial collapse, and in order to save the *Junker* class Frederick created rural credit institutions. Through the *Landschaften* Junkers could receive cheap mortgages on their estates (Carsten 1989: 41). However, in order to pay mortgage dues, they were compelled to demand more surplus

from the peasant farmstead *and* more labor dues from the farmhands, in turn taking advantage of the high grain prices (Melton 1994: 341). The problem was that to fulfill these intensified duties the landholding peasantry had to employ more farmhands than was viable for the size of their farmsteads, and so their output proceeded to flatline (Harnisch 1986: 53–54). Furthermore, to overcome this limit to surplus extraction, landlords started to directly employ farmhands on their *demesnes*. In this way, increased production started to dissolve the social glue of the *Gutsherrschaft* by breaking down its mediated structure of surplus extraction. And at the same time a significant amount of property-holding peasants became disenfranchised and thus fell out of the military–agrarian complex altogether.

In these circumstances, and as was the case with the French agronomists, it was the English agricultural revolution that captured the imagination of Frederick and his administrators (Gagliardo 1969: 34; Brakensiek 1994: 138, 170). Britain, after all, had roundly defeated the predominant absolutist European power – France – in the recent Seven Years War. So what better proven forces of production than those utilized in Britain to help quicken Prussia's agricultural output for its Central European geo-political contest? Frederick himself eagerly investigated this new agronomic world. His Berlin Academy of Science now offered prizes for solutions to urgent agrarian problems (Wunder 1996: 90). The Cameralists too engaged in debate over the partition of the commons, focusing on the ability of smallholdings to increase the number of viable peasant households. And Frederick even installed English agricultural experts on his own estates, experimented with partitioning the commons and consolidating strip farming, and forbade some leasers from demanding traditional services from their peasants (Gagliardo 1969: 8–9, 15; Berdahl 1988: 85). This experimental domain was by no means an insignificant corner of the Prussian agrarian milieu; the revenues for Frederick's lands contributed up to 30% of the state whole (Behrens 1985: 79).

Nevertheless, what was never at issue was a sublation of the peasant mode of life itself (see Tribe 1984). For example, the ancient Greek meaning of Economy as the paternal household unit remained the preferred definition of Christian Friedrich Germershausen, most prominent Cameralist publisher on the science of agriculture (Gray 1990). In any case, many of the attempts at reform failed due to both peasant and *Junker* resistance (passive or otherwise) (Gagliardo 1969: 16). For, at issue was not only the *Junkers'* privileged corporate position but also the peasantry's rights of social welfare. Faced with such contestations



presented in the reasoning of his own enlightened absolutism, Frederick had no choice but to curtail these experimentations (Blanning 1990: 274).

However, these failures to emulate British agriculture were not as serious to the integrity of Prussian political authority as they had been to contemporaneous France because there existed in Prussia no present and direct geo-political pressure to radically transform the social relations of reproduction underwriting the *Ständestaat*. The nature of the geo-political pressure exerted onto Frederick's *Ständestaat* differed significantly from that contemporaneously experienced by Bourbon France in that, apart from a minor colonial adventure in India quickly arrested by the French and the British, the Reich by and large stood as a spectator to the Anglo-French colonial contest. Rather, the Reich competed primarily in the continental game, the rules of which accorded with traditional absolutist and monarchical standards.

This, then, was the environment within which the Cameralist developmental framework operated: it was charged with quickening the social metabolic rate by various techniques, some even imported from Britain. But reform could not, and was not intended to, escape the strictures of the *Gutsherrschaft* mode of production and concomitant form of political authority extant in the *Ständestaat*. Yet, as the ruling strata were to find out, Prussia's development project still had inescapable limits, and these limits in their own way threatened the continued viability of the agrarian-military complex.

Telling, in this respect, was Frederick's alternative attempt to increase the royal coffers by bypassing the mediating chain of surplus extraction that flowed through the *Junkers'* local institution, the *Landrat*. Frederick invested directly in manufacturing activities, the products of which could be sold abroad to augment his war chest or used internally to directly bolster the military arm. To this effect Frederick introduced new departments defined by functional activity (e.g., metallurgy) rather than by region (controlled by the *Junkers* through the *Landrat*). But because he had allowed new departments to be added *ad hoc* (Ritter 1968: 150; Hubatsch 1975: 150–153), the execution of political authority through the *Staatsrat* became a chaotic mix of regional and functional principles. Crucially, to compensate for this chaos, Frederick concentrated executive political authority more and more into his own person, assigning special tasks to ministers regardless of their regional status in the General Directory (Hubatsch 1975: 224). After 1775, Frederick abolished the review of ministers: thereafter, the personal cabinet exclusively regulated access to the king's person.<sup>12</sup>

## The *Aufklärung* – a corporate affair

*They join the greatest boldness in thought to the most obedient character*  
Madame de Staël<sup>13</sup>

What of the accompanying philosophical efforts to negotiate these political and geo-political hurdles of corporate governance in an absolutist geo-political milieu? Belonging overwhelmingly to the *Bildungsbürgertum*, the German luminaries of the mid to late eighteenth century were, owing to the Cameralist system, both officials and academics (Beiser 1992: 5, 73).<sup>14</sup> At its core, then, the *Aufklärung* was a philosophical and ethical investigation into the Cameralist attempt to bolster the Reich against absolutist and monarchical geo-political incursions, while avoiding the growth of despotism (at home and abroad) and thus maintaining continuity with the traditional constitutional bodies of the Reich (Reill 1975: 4).<sup>15</sup> But the pursuit of *Aufklärung* – autonomy over despotism – necessarily involved the *Aufklärer* in philosophical questions that pertained to their *own* corporate position, as *Bildungsbürgertum*, within the ruling strata. This was especially the case in Prussia where the ill-defined standing of those who engaged in knowledge production seemed more and more archaic after the Seven Years War. So practically speaking, the immediate task of *Aufklärung*, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, was to secure the *Bildungsbürgertum* as a counter-weight to the noble court (Elias 1994: 20).

The *Aufklärer* perceived themselves in the main as servants of the crown and guardians of the science of government; and holding such crucial political duties they charged that their intellectual rights should be defended against the potentially despotic incursions of a home-grown nobility. Yet the very act of enlightened discourse itself provided a subtle challenge to the structure of Prussian political authority. This is because, due to their non-corporate status, the *Aufklärer* were compelled to invent communicative tools and associational structures that actually bypassed the established hierarchy of corporate bodies.<sup>16</sup> Inevitably, in attempting to fulfill their Cameralist duties, the *Aufklärer* unavoidably strained the wider array of political subjects in the *Ständestaat* through which they were constituted.

*Aufklärung* in Prussia therefore spoke to a three-fold political-philosophical project: (a) the valorization of Prussian power through the practice of Cameralism; (b) the upholding, at the same time, of the internal balance of order by avoiding a French-like turn to despotism (and this concern extended upward to the corporate structure of the Reich

itself) and (c) the promotion of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, necessitated by both of the above, as a distinct corporate body with specific rights and duties in the political hierarchy of Prussia and the Reich at large. In this respect, the *Aufklärer* did not practice a liberalism that took the source of autonomy to be individual rights embedded in the ownership of privatized property. Rather, they aspired to a 'corporate individualism', a reform that would create a relatively autonomous intellectual corporate body with its own specific set of rights and duties of knowledge production that were to be accepted as equally valid (although not politically equal) within the harmonious array of corporate bodies that composed the ruling strata. This anti-despotic project pursued a corporate interest at the same time as it promoted a more civilized humanity; and central to this pursuit was the luminaries' special agency of thought: *Bildung*.

On the surface, *Bildung* denoted the internal cultivation of virtuous character to its full potential and was based largely upon an education that stressed order, thrift, industriousness and politeness.<sup>17</sup> But more importantly, *Bildung* promoted a virtue of moral autonomy that could be made possible only by casting off the political and corporate shackles of the church (with its promotion of unthinking faith) and the nobility (with its emphasis on unthinking tradition) that heretofore chained the intellectual's freedom to think. In short, what honor was to the *Junkers'* traditional legitimacy, and what faith was to the hierocracy's mystical legitimacy, so was *Bildung* to the new corporate claims of the *Bildungsbürgertum*. *Bildung* was the agency of corporate individualism, an ethical project that sought to guard against the despotic noble and hierocratic shackles that chained the intellectual's freedom to think for himself.

The geo-political milieu influenced the *Aufklärung* as an extension of the concerns already encountered in Cameralism. First there was the Bourbon problem. Against the spread of French centralist despotism into the Reich, many *Aufklärer* sought to escape the discourse of the *philosophes*. In fact the most popular French thinkers in Germany by mid century, namely Voltaire, and especially Montesquieu, were already the most Anglophile (McClelland 1971: 13, 21; Oz-Salzberger 1995: 59). Second, and more importantly, after the Seven Years War there was the turn to Britain for philosophical assistance against the French as part of the same attention paid by Cameralism to British trade and colonial foreign policy (McClelland 1971: 21).

Britain, and its philosophers, became, in the eyes of the *Aufklärer*, a fellow traveler rather than an alien threat: a model for a successful and viable reformed corporate state with which to battle the influence (within and outside) of Gallic despotic absolutism. Overwhelmingly, the

philosophical hue that rendered this geo-political image derived from Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, which, once translated into German in 1753 quickly achieved fame (Reill 1975: 37; Oz-Salzberger 1995: 64, 81). Also appealing was Montesquieu's understanding that the origins of the Anglo-Saxon spirit were to be found in the Forests of Germany (Vazsonyi 1999) as well as his claim that England had apparently managed to produce a commercial state without sacrificing its traditional noble order. All this sat especially well with the *Aufklärer* as it accorded with the mandate of mid-eighteenth-century Cameralism (Reill 1975: 4).<sup>18</sup>

Two important intellectual developments reflect the way in which the thought and society of Britain could be assimilated owing to its imagined status as a purported fellow traveler.

First, there was the nature of the reception in the Reich of the pre-eminent British philosopher of the age, David Hume. The claims Hume's sensationalism made concerning the relationship between the social and natural world were of immediate importance to the Cameralist project in its attempt to increase (in a sustainable manner) the rate of agricultural production in the *Gutsherrschaft*. As a representative of Britain, Hume was discussed seriously in that pre-eminent Cameralist institution, the Berlin Academy of Science (Kuehn 1983: 178fn). Nevertheless, the *Aufklärer* believed that Hume's radical skeptical empiricism could be ordered and explained through Leibnizian-Wolffian meta-physics: '[o]ur neighbours, especially the English', wrote Moses Mendelssohn, 'precede us with philosophical observations of nature, and we follow them with our rational inferences' (cited in Kuehn 2001: 184).

Second, the *Sturm und Drang* movement sought an intellectual break from the French yoke. In order to stave off any encroachment of the despotic form of French governance Justus Möser promoted the idea of a traditional *Kleinstaat* (small state). This authentic political authority – embodying the *Volk* – exercised autonomy through its personalized communal life, and as such was counter-posed to the unauthentic and 'dead' mechanism of despotic centralized control (Beiser 1992: 288, 297). In this sense, it is no wonder that *Sturm und Drang* struck politically as a literary movement, for that pre-eminent philosopher king, Frederick the Great himself, preferred to govern through the dead French tongue.<sup>19</sup> Arising out of this anti-Bourbon tradition *Sturm und Drang* attempted to reposition the German cultural focus across the channel. Here, an authentic *Volk* could be gleaned from the works of Shakespeare, Milton and especially (and ironically, owing to its fraudulent character) James MacPherson's *Ossian* (McClelland 1971: 14; Oz-Salzberger

1995: 68–70). Britain was henceforth deemed to be Germanic to the extent that it possessed the spirit of the *Kleinstaat*.

Thus, British cultural resources were consistently assimilated in order to battle a non-capitalist enemy, real and ideal. No doubt, in looking toward eighteenth-century British philosophy the discourse of the impersonalized individual gained in popularity among the *Aufklärer* in the years following the Seven Years War (Giovanni 1998: 23–24). Nevertheless, it is by no means the case that without the French Revolution, the *Aufklärung* would have been progressively Anglicized, and the Reich, through the power of English philosophy alone, transformed into a modern state. In other words, the paternal corporate context of *Aufklärung* thought must be taken seriously rather than perceived as a relic due for sublation by modern philosophical discourse. And this, I would assert, is the appropriate context in which to encounter the ‘sage of Königsberg’.

### Kant's corporate Enlightenment

*... there will always be a few who think for themselves, even among those appointed as guardians of the common mass. Such guardians, once they have themselves thrown off the yoke of immaturity, will disseminate the spirit of rational respect for personal value and for the duty of all men to think for themselves.*

Kant<sup>20</sup>

As is the case when discussing most *Aufklärer*, it is first necessary to dispense with the popular mythology of Kant as an other-worldly and distant thinker. Though Kant lived provincially, Königsberg was, nevertheless, the capital of East Prussia and a major seaport for international trade.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, if Königsberg was too far east of the Elbe to feel the heat of the Anglo–French colonial contest, it nevertheless was positioned firmly within the blast zone of Central European absolutist geo-politics. And though an *Aufklärer*, Kant at the same time pursued knowledge production as a Cameralist: he lectured on a variety of topics from meta-physics to geography, and in fact attracted praise from Berlin for teaching ‘truly useful concepts’ (Kuehn 2001: 214–215).<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Kant was directly involved in the reproduction of the Prussian military–agrarian complex, regularly contributing his teaching skills to Frederick’s project of building a more educated officer cadre (ibid.: 127–128). Not much initially distinguished Kant’s engagement with all things British from the general Cameralist enterprise. Nevertheless, once woken from his ‘dogmatic slumbers’ by David Hume’s skeptical empiricism

(Beiser 1998: 54–55),<sup>23</sup> Kant mobilized its philosophical implications to inform the German Enlightenment more effectively than any other *Aufklärer*.<sup>24</sup>

Famously, Kant embraced Hume's claim to a discontinuity – what would later be termed a *hiatus irrationalis* – between Reason and experience. It is important to note, here, that Hume's skepticism was part of the Scottish philosophical tradition that sought to interrogate the political subject of English commercial society in order to secure Scotland's practically orderly and morally justified entry into such a capitalist world.<sup>25</sup> In this tradition, Hume enquired into the impersonalized individual as the human subject, universal in time and space, and one that could count on no guidance to his actions from the world at large save the utilitarian principles of his own internal sense perception: the embrace of pleasure and avoidance of pain (Hume 1978; see also Berry 1982: 238–241). The question is, to what extent did Kant directly internalize the impersonalized individual, and its specific political rights, and thus transform his political philosophy. This question is important to answer if we are not to fall into the trap of assigning to eighteenth-century Europe a homogenous context of Enlightenment project along with a singular and uni-linear developmental trajectory.

Kant agreed with Hume that it was impossible to know the phenomenal world – the objects of experience in and of themselves. But he further claimed that it was eminently possible to produce secure knowledge of the noumenal world if one accepted the claim that experience was made sensible through universally held mental categories. Therefore Kant claimed that the reasoning of Hume's subject was universal in humanity and autonomous from particular experience. In other words, from Hume's investigations of the impersonalized individual Kant effectively derived the notion of Pure Reason. Yet as an *Aufklärer* already implicated in the Cameralist project, Kant could not accept the passivity implicit in Hume's sensory philosophy. In fact, a few years before Kant's wholehearted turn to Hume he had courted Rousseau; and Rousseau had taught him that Reason was not simply a meta-physical riddle, but a *moral* guide with which humanity should actively shape its world (Reiss 1991: 4; Kant 1991a: 227; Beiser 1998: 43–44). Read in the Prussian context, however, Rousseau conformed to and valorized within Kant his existing corporate duty to take an active and reformist stance toward the world so as to be on guard against despotism.<sup>26</sup>

Kant's marriage of Hume and Rousseau could not but radically upset the meta-physical grounding of the *Aufklärung*, especially the putative *Telos* of natural law. Breaking with Grotius, Pufendorf and Wolff, Kant

asserted that it was from abstract individualized Reason that the grounds for action should be developed, rather than from Providence or nature.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, even commerce – that *bête noire* of *ancien* privilege – was re-valORIZED in Kant's political philosophy as a conduit of such Reason (Kant 1991c: 50). Not only did this courting of individualism implicitly question the superior position of the nobility in the *Ständestaat*; but it played a dangerous game with the church, too. During the Mendelssohn Controversy, which essentially raised the politically loaded question of whether *Aufklärung* led to atheism, Kant defended his enlightened philosophy (see Kuehn 2001: 305–311): Pure Reason was the best signpost to orient thinking and moral action, not faith (Kant 1991g).

Nevertheless, if verging on heretical, Kant's political philosophy was not revolutionary. True, the overarching guide to action, the Categorical Imperative, seemed radical enough: 'act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle establishing universal law' (Kant 1956: 30). And true, this command of Practical Reason demanded that even if the autonomy and freedom of Pure Reason could not be directly mapped onto the phenomenal world of political subjects, human agency should aim to work *as if* this were possible.<sup>28</sup> But from this radical incommensurability between ethics and politics Kant could claim that the *actual* organization of government did not matter as much as the *spirit* of government: an autocratic ruler could rightfully govern *as if* his state were a republic (Kant 1991: 58–59). Again, then, and as part of the wider trend among the *Bildungsbürgertum*, even though British philosophy necessarily tended toward being a disturbing influence, the lack of direct geo-political impingement by Britain allowed Kant to assimilate Hume within the existing corporate enlightenment. In other words, Pure Reason could become ethically associated with *Bildung* without its underlying reference to the rights of the impersonalized individual posing a radical challenge to the actual corporate political framework of Prussia.

This assimilation informed the basic normative stance of Kant's mature political philosophy, namely the claim that the chasm between abstract Reason and substantive political experience could only be virtually bridged by way of a universal history. To conjecture on the development of humanity was to prescribe the course of actions that would allow Pure Reason to be approximated in the phenomenal realm (Kant 1991a, 1991c). For Kant, the means of this enlightened development was the 'unsocial sociability' of men: it was only through social interaction that man's talents could be cultivated toward their ends, even if such activity was, pathologically, self-serving. Through this sociability

humanity would condense into a set of civil states, wherein a balance between political mastery and individual autonomy would be achieved. Moreover, the republican spirit of such polities would cultivate a project for a peaceful federation, solving the most generally disruptive political problem of war. In this way, Kant's regulative narrative of universal history provided guidelines for humanity to approximate Pure Reason in the phenomenal realm of politics, history and nature and thus to infinitely travel away from despotism even if never to arrive, phenomenally, in the land of Reason. In sum, Kant's *Bildung* was an agency of corporate reform to the extent that it drove experiments in thought on the virtual bridging of ethics and politics.

How, then, did Kant apply this experiment to guide the Prussian *Ständestaat* through the challenges of reform? Prioritizing the geo-political dimension of these challenges, Kant claimed that the challenge of establishing a civil constitution, expressed in his universal history, should be subordinated to that of building law-governed relations with other political communities (Kant 1991a: 232). Although judging war to have a negative draining effect on the resources and culture of society (*ibid.*), Kant also believed that the threat of war could bring about a closer association of corporate groups within the commonwealth under the banner of promoting the well-being of all. The marshal spirit, unlike the selfish and cowardly commercial spirit, forced Reason to act upon the natural world rather than allowing the capriciousness of human nature to act upon Reason (*ibid.*; Kant 1987: 122–123).<sup>29</sup> Again, in the absolutist era this conjecture was not unfounded: Frederick the Great's 'enlightened' rule, for example, granted all corporate groups from peasants to nobility various rights and duties *through* their contributions to the war machine. Viewed in this way, the *Ständestaat* had the capacity to take part in the human progress detailed in Kant's universal history.

As I have noted, the project of corporate enlightenment took the Absolutist threat of despotism to operate along a continuum of geo-political and domestic issues. And Kant addressed the latter pole through his most famous pre-1789 text: *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?* Kant began by famously proclaiming the virtuous agency of *Bildung*: have courage to use your *own* understanding (Kant 1991: 54). But such a freedom was to be qualified in a specific way. Yes, one should have freedom to think in one's 'public' capacity as a learned man addressing a reading public (although this right to argue did not displace the duty to obey the paternal authority of Frederick). However, when acting in a 'private' capacity as a functionary of the *Ständestaat* – as a tax



collector, military officer, or even as a man of the clergy – one had no right to argue against hierarchical authority (ibid.: 55–56).

Why this strange use of public and private? It must be remembered that the *Aufklärer* claimed a political duty and right, in their functionary capacity as Cameralists, to debate the reform of the state in a public sphere. But this sphere was not public in the modern sense; rather it resolved to be the *corporate* arena of the *Bildungsbürgertum* – an arena *inside of which* they could and should exercise their specific rights and duties to debate, as free individuals, the reform of the state. In other words, to be able to enter into the public arena of social intercourse occupied by the corporate body of *Aufklärer* was a necessary right in order to perform a necessary duty. Indeed, in the essay Kant enthusiastically celebrated the age of Frederick as the age of Enlightenment in no small part owing to the fact that the philosopher king had recently allowed a public debate over the formation of the ALR (Cavallar 1993: 111–112). If Kant did not paint this corporate sphere of public Reason in precise colors, it was because *Bildungsbürgertum* rights and duties had not been formalized into a distinctive corporate body in the hierarchy of the *Ständestaat*. Of course, this was the very end for which the text of *What is Enlightenment?* was the means.

Thus *Sapere aude!* was the battle cry of the *Bildungsbürgertum* to realize their interest *and* a more civilized humanity within the specific context of a paternal hierarchy of corporate bodies presided over by a philosopher king. Kant's mature political philosophy, a philosophy that he had struggled to produce for many years up to the French Revolution, remained resolutely a project of 'corporate enlightenment'. In 1784 Kant asked rhetorically whether there was any phenomenal sign to indicate that his narrative of universal history, where ethics and politics virtually met, was worth taking seriously in its virtuality. His answer was tentative but affirmative, pointing to the freedom of religious thought in his home state of Prussia, as well as the increased interdependency that trade and commerce produced between nations (Kant 1991c: 50). His answer by 1798, as I shall now discuss, was to be very different.

## Kant and the post-revolutionary world

*During the past ten years there has occurred a revolution in Germany which has achieved as much for humanity by theory as France has by practice – and by that I mean the reformation of philosophy carried out by Kant.*

Joseph von Görres<sup>30</sup>

Not only did the announcement from across the Rhine of the Rights of Man appear to herald, for the *Aufklärer*, the destruction of old French despotism, but the Declaration and the following Constitution also proceeded to undermine the rationale for treating Britain as a kindred spirit in the face of the old Bourbon enemy. In this way the French Revolution prompted a *comparison* of two liberties: the 'mixed constitution' of the Anglo-Germanic *Volk* versus the clearly delineated and rationally codified obelisk of the French Constitution (McClelland 1971: 30–33). With this, the comfortable fiction of Anglo-Germanic Enlightenment versus French despotism was uprooted. Come the Terror, and Herder, for one, still left the question open: had the Revolution advanced *Humanität*, or increased *Bestialität*? (Koeke 1987: 87) Nevertheless, with the turn toward militarism in the early Jacobin years, fear of French despotism re-surfaced and, moreover, intensified.<sup>31</sup> And come the Revolutionary Wars, the *Aufklärer* became infatuated with an Albion which they now portrayed as the re-balancer of the scales of European geopolitics (McClelland 1971: 44). Concomitantly, the new Republic was pushed into an ill-fitting absolutist category of a 'mechanical state' with the Rights of Man re-interpreted as the new mechanical instrument of political rule.

The meaning of the Revolution for German Enlightenment was therefore undecided and paradoxical from the beginning, and nowhere was this ambiguity more concentrated than in debates over the nature of the French Constitution. It may be remembered that in the previous chapter I documented how the international dimension of the Revolution produced not a carbon copy of the impersonalized individual of the British type, but a novel political subject, the impersonal collective. However, it was the rights of the impersonalized individual encoded (selectively) in the Constitution that the French deputies initially proclaimed most enthusiastically (rather than the concomitant duties toward the *menu peuple*). This emphasis is unsurprising as the Declaration and the Constitution seemed to have manifested Kant's Pure Reason *directly in the phenomenal world of politics*; and at this point Kant's philosophy was *the* philosophy of enlightenment in Germany.

For all these reasons, the *Aufklärer* related to the French revolutionaries as potential friends, possible superiors and definite enemies all at the same time: friend, because the French bourgeoisie had apparently launched a revolution of Reason sweeping away Bourbon despotism and the ill-deserved supremacy of the nobility; superior because the Revolution had shed light on the comparatively unclear political freedom of British monarchical constitutionalism, a political form that the *Aufklärer*

associated with Prussian enlightened absolutism; and enemy, because at the same time the Revolution's regicidal excesses and mobilization of the lower ranks would turn many Prussian nobility further against a corporate reform led by Reason. So did the comparative vista on non-noble enlightened reform afforded by the Revolution create in German minds a consciousness of the backwardness of *Aufklärung* when compared to the French Constitution.

Crucially, however, this consciousness developed in reaction to another recent and just as significant event for the *Aufklärer* – the death in 1786 of the philosopher king Frederick the Great. The successor, Frederick William II, inherited a *Ständestaat* wherein, it will be recalled, political authority had increasingly concentrated into the person of the king. From the dead hands of his enlightened uncle, Frederick William grasped this concentrated executive power and with it promoted his own living source of morality and patrimony – Rosicrucian Christianity. Therefore, even before the Revolution, the return of religion as the preferred personal glue of political authority threatened to undermine the very heart of the *Aufklärer's* project of corporate reform – the carving out of a relatively autonomous corporate public arena wherein *Bildung* could be cultivated absent of faith, mysticism or tradition. Caught between a de-enlightenment in Prussia and a revolution of Reason in France, the *Aufklärer* attempted to re-legitimize their enlightenment project by noting that the Terror had occurred precisely because the mechanical re-alignment of political forces in France had lacked the directional agency of *Bildung* (see Blanning 1989: 136–137). Indeed, when the Abbé Grégoire, the first priest to take the oath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, enquired into Kant's (1960) book, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*,<sup>32</sup> the *Aufklärer* capitalized upon this revolutionary request for intellectual assistance (see Blanning 1989: 141).

Along with the majority of the *Aufklärer*, Kant had also developed a consciousness of backwardness through the comparative vista opened up by the Revolution: the French triumph of Reason over the imperialism of religion and nobility he judged to be a good thing; the shadow cast on the (small) tangible results of Kant's own corporate reform, compared to the actual encoding of Reason in a political constitution, was disconcerting; but the Revolution's seditious nature was disastrous to the extent that it threatened to undermine even the fragile gains of Kant's corporate reform.

For Kant, the core challenge lay in the nature of the French Constitution, specifically the way in which it manifested the rights of the impersonalized individual directly within the phenomenal realm thus

undermining the delicate virtual relationship between Reason and experience, ethics and politics that his corporate reform project depended upon. In fact, it even undermined the legitimate standing of the *Aufklärer* within the Prussian political strata. After all, the case that the *Aufklärer* themselves made for being granted a special corporate space was that their special intellectual agency, *Bildung*, was the best guide to reform of the polity. Yet this guidance derived from a regulative universal history that was nonsensical if it could be proved that Reason and experience could be united on earth. And at the same time as de-enlightenment progressed in Prussia, the French political constitutions seemed to have overcome the *hiatus irrationalis* of Kant's enlightenment philosophy.

To save his now comparatively backward enlightenment project, Kant had, therefore, to engage with the Revolution, but in a way that would contribute to re-kindling his corporate enlightenment project in Prussia rather than manifesting a brave new world of impersonalized individualism. In other words, Kant had to attempt to retain the ethical association of Pure Reason with the value of *Bildung* without attaching this value to the political agency of the intellectual to pursue the rights of the impersonalized individual on earth (thereby posing a radical challenge to the corporate political framework of Prussia). This re-arrangement should not be understood in narrow terms as strategic or opportunist; rather, Kant was struggling to make sense of the radically new inter-societal difference inaugurated by the Revolution through his existing (and mature) political philosophy. In the remainder of this section I chart how Kant, driven by this consciousness of backwardness, rose to these challenges by consistently re-arranging the ethical nature of the relation between the individual, the political realm and humanity that constituted his regulative universal history. And in working through this challenge Kant produced his famous scripts on international politics.

The starting point can be found in Kant's response, in 1793, to Burke's conservative attempt to de-legitimize rationalism and regicide by calling for a return to tradition (Beiser 1992: 50). In *On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, but It Does Not Apply in Practice'*, theory, re-asserted Kant (1991e), was related to practice as a regulative principle: Reason, being noumenal and thus universal, was a more secure signpost to regulate action than the results of action, being phenomenal and thus contingent. In this statement Kant was implicitly defending the universally applicable form in which the Declaration of Rights had been presented, a form concordant to the universal reach of Pure Reason.

To make this case, Kant structured *Theory and Practice* in terms of an inquiry into the concept of political duty in order to prove that his universal history might still, in revolutionary times, extend in practice to ethically regulate the tripartite relationship between the individual, political realm and humanity (Kant 1991e: 62–63). In his discussion of the individual, Kant essentially summarized his existing Critique of Practical Reason – the categorical imperative to act only upon universally applicable tenets; and in his discussion on humanity, he recounted his existing narrative of human progress. But it is Kant's investigation of the political realm – the state – which is most interesting for our purposes. For it is here that an explicit encoding of the rights of the impersonalized individual now appears to constitute the bridge between Reason and experience. In other words, unlike his pre-Revolution writings, Kant now presented a 'really existing' civil constitution as a regulative tool *itself*, based, as it was, on the universal principles of freedom, equality and independence.

In doing so, Kant was mobilizing the political settlement of the French Revolution to directly criticize the post-enlightenment Prussian Rosicrucian order: the freedom for all to directly protect the commonwealth usurped the hierarchical nature of the military–agrarian complex; the equality of all subjects before the law regardless of birth usurped the birth privilege of the *Junker*; and the independence of all citizens as co-legislators, an independence underwritten by trade or the possession of property, placed the *Bürgertum* on equal footing with the nobility (Kant 1991e: 73–79). Nevertheless, Kant proceeded immediately to explicitly forbid any revolution or resistance against the supreme holder of political authority as a means to reach the principles of the constitution. For, this act would undermine the principle that for each individual to have formal equality and freedom required coercion to be exercised only by the ruler. Indeed, rebellion would only encourage the King to fear that such freedom and equality bred anarchic license. Instead, freedom of the pen – *Bildung* – remained the prime safeguard of the rights of the people (*ibid.*: 84–85). In this sense, Kant's attitude toward revolution was not strictly conservative.<sup>33</sup> Rather, he was attempting to delicately mobilize the impersonalized individualized rights found in the revolutionary constitution for the purpose of overcoming the de-enlightenment in Prussia but only so far as the reforms of his corporate enlightenment could re-commence.

Ironically, it was not so much the talk of a constitution that led Kant into direct confrontation with Frederick William, but the very essay that had been requested by the French revolutionaries – *Religion within the*

*Limits of Reason.* Upon its publication, Johann Christ of Wöllner, closest personal advisor to the new Christian king, wrote to Kant expressing dissatisfaction and disappointment. The depth of the threat to the *Aufklärer* project can be gleaned from the following comment made by Wöllner:

We expected better things of you as you yourself must realize, how irresponsibly you have acted against your duty as a teacher of the youth *against our paternal purpose* [italics added], which you know very well.

(cited in Kuehn 2001: 379)

The Rosicrucianists were thus set on subsuming the autonomous moral agency of *Bildung* under an all-encompassing Christian morality; and faced with such a mortal threat to *Aufklärung* from *inside* Prussia, Kant had no recourse but to bow to the censor by voluntarily curtailing expression of his free thought. It was this technical obedience,<sup>34</sup> more than anything else, which narrowed down Kant's political options and thus re-affirmed in him a consciousness of, now even anxiety over, the backward turn of the Prussian state especially in comparison to the secularized French state (Gooch 1965: 267). In effect, all that the sage of Königsberg could offer now was a passive hope for a resurrection of the paternalism of a philosopher king.

Nothing in the revolutionary decade remained still for long. And during 1795, Frederick William signed the Treaty of Basle with France, ensuring Prussian neutrality in the Revolutionary Wars until 1806. Here, Kant saw a glimmer of hope to push for a reform out of Rosicrucian backwardness, a hope, however, overshadowed by Frederick William's collusion with Catherine II over the forcible partition of Poland (thus offending Kant's Categorical Imperative). In effect, the Prussian army was now being used to drive forward a Rosicrucian counter-enlightenment. Therefore Kant's judgment on the ethical character of war needed to reflect these new realities. The peace presented him with a slim opportunity to re-make the case for an enlightened rather than despotic geo-politics.

This plea, of course, was *On Perpetual Peace*, a pretend treaty structured around Kant's tripartite ethical relationship of the individual, state and humanity. In this work, Kant's ethical discussion of the state that in *Theory and Practice* had been presented in terms of an actually existing constitution now took the form of an investigation of a *federation* of such civic states. All the rest of his political philosophy remained as it had been in *Theory and Practice*. Especially, Kant continued to plead

the case for the corporate right of luminaries to 'publicly' discourse on the maxims of warfare and peacemaking (Kant 1991f: 93, 115); using his regulative narrative of universal history the philosopher would help guide the King through international relations so that actions in the political realm might accord to Practical Reason.<sup>35</sup>

Yet even though the *Perpetual Peace* is Kant's most famous statement on his political philosophy (at least in IR), there is another text that exposes the final resolution that his consciousness of backwardness gave to the tripartite ethical relationship between individual, political realm and humanity. In November 1797, Frederick William died, and his replacement, Frederick William III, though no great philosopher king, nevertheless immediately proceeded to dismantle the overarching influence of Rosicrucian Christianity. Kant's nemesis, Wöllner, was dismissed and his various commissions closed. Kant immediately proceeded to press the advantage of a possible return to enlightenment and release from backwardness, and in 1798 published *Contest of the Faculties* (Kuehn 2001: 404).

The *Contest* included a statement on the relationship between the philosophical and theological faculties, and, most importantly for our purposes, a re-visitation of his universal history. Back in 1784 Kant had assured the reader that his universal history was not simply a fantasy narrative by tentatively pointing to Prussia's freedom of religious thought and the increased interdependency that trade and commerce produced between nations (Kant 1991c: 50). Now, however, he took the sign of human progress to be *revolution itself*. However, this sign, Kant warned, was in no way to be confused with the phenomenal transformation of political authority itself. Rather it was to be found in the attitude of the onlookers: disinterested sympathy from non-French onlookers proved the progression of the moral capacity of the human race (Kant 1991b: 182–183).

To Kant, such disinterested onlookers were 'primitive philosophical historians' who could detach Reason from experience. For Kant, the Revolution proved that it was possible to hone a human faculty through which political action could be judged by the criteria of a regulative universal history. By this reasoning, he rendered the Revolution as a process driven by *Bildung* rather than one that had transformed the very social structure upon which *Bildung*, as an agency of intellectual thought, depended upon. In other words, the Revolution now spoke to a continued reform of corporate bodies under the Prussian king's personal rule, and not to a transformation of this rule by constituting the impersonalized individual as a political subject.

It is instructive at this point to recapitulate this slow incorporation and absorption of the Revolution into Kant's existing narrative of universal history. In Kant's pre-Revolution writings, this narrative made no substantive claim to the historical process: the progress of humanity through Reason was a guide, not an unfolding fact, and it was this regulative nature of the narrative that formed the only bridge between Reason and experience and organized the ethical relation between individual, political community and humanity. However, after 1789 Kant mobilized the Revolution more and more as a sign of progress against the de-enlightenment in Prussia: Kant introduced the actually existing civic constitution into this ethical relation. And by 1798 Kant had gone further and replaced this phenomenal *artifact* with a phenomenal *historical process* – revolution itself. Therefore, in his post-revolutionary writings, Kant made Practical Reason depend far more immediately upon the phenomenal-historical organization of political authority than on a general condition of human nature (e.g., unsocial sociability). But crucially, at the same time, he had to somehow maintain that the machinations of the political realm were a fiction of a regulative universal history, and not a reality to be directly copied on earth. The final moment of this incorporation came in *Contest of the Faculties* when Kant made the sign of progress the revolutionary process itself, but at the same time derived the meaning of that process not from its substantive transformations of political authority, but from the sympathy of its onlookers.

So did a consciousness of backwardness compel Kant to contain the threat that the French Revolution had created in manifesting impersonalized rights across the virtual bridge of Reason and experience.<sup>36</sup> But there was a price to pay for this containment of revolutionary energies: an inability to provide practical prescriptions for reform of the military–agricultural complex to see off, precisely, this French threat. For, if states should not be personal possessions, Kant still seemed compelled to discuss the morality of war tax in terms of its equal spread within traditional corporate bodies. Even the possibility of raising a national debt, the device of the 'commercial people', was ruled out<sup>37</sup> because Kant conceived of this novel capitalist device in traditional absolutist terms: there was a finite sum of money that could be borrowed before the sources of taxation would exhaust themselves.<sup>38</sup> Thus, even if a return to the halcyon days of the philosopher king might be conjectured as possible, the old military–agrarian complex, upon which the whole integrity of personalized corporate political life rested, had proved insufficient to mobilize the social energy needed to match the new French despotism: the nation in arms. Ultimately, Kant could not perform his Cameralist



duty of protecting the *Ständestaat* thereby saving the corporate social basis of his Enlightenment project.

## Toward the French deluge

*Above all, [Robespierre and Kant] were both petty bourgeois, whom Nature designed to measure out coffee and sugar; but destiny ruled that they should weigh far different articles, and placed a King in the scales of one and a God in the scales of the other. We had our revolts in the world of mind, and the French in the world of matter, and we were as excited over the destruction of the old dogmatism as they over the storming of the Bastille.*

Heinrich Heine<sup>39</sup>

Kant's inadequacy was shared at large amongst the Cameralists and compounded by the fact that Prussia had lost its most capable executive. The foreign policies of Frederick the Great's nephew and then grandnephew were effectively vacant of any geo-political strategy; or at the very least, the epigones turned the tactic of posturing into a tactic of avoidance of the geo-political moment whenever possible (see Ritter 1968: 154; Showalter 1994: 314; Simms 1997: 42–52). And all this at a time when the *Ständestaat* faced a twin threat: an increasing absolutist competition in the east and south plus impingement from the west in the form of the new nation-in-arms. Reformers in the 1790s concentrated on widening the executive in order to mitigate the worst excesses of Frederick William II's directionless politics. However this strategy avoided rather than faced the need for a qualitative transformation of the social structure of the military–agrarian complex. Meanwhile the wars of the First Coalition had already started to deplete the royal coffers.

The dead-end nature of Prussian reform was expressed through the growing reliance in the 1790s on geo-political accumulation to finance the *Ständestaat*. With the partition of Poland, Frederick William had managed to provide ongoing patronage to the *Junker* officers by looting Poland (see Carsten 1989: 69–70). Indeed, the geo-political accumulation of Polish territory was perhaps the most pivotal concern of Prussian foreign policy in the first years of the new age. Right up until the formation of a Second Coalition in 1799, the governing classes of Prussia still assumed the French Revolution to be ultimately an issue that could be treated in the same way as other absolutist geo-political concerns. The chief purpose of the Declaration at Pillnitz, it should be remembered, was to endorse a balancing of gains made by Prussia and Austria

in Poland and the Ottoman Empire; counter-revolutionary rhetoric was an appendage to the absolutist balancing game (Sheehan 1989: 219).

However, the challenge now presented by Napoleon for the Prussian ruling classes was not simply one of quantitatively matching French military capacity, but at the same time one of transforming the whole basis of rights and duties on which the political authority of the *Ständestaat* stood. This is why a French-style *levée en masse* was so difficult to harvest from Prussian soil. Traditional military honor could not be downgraded without collapsing the whole hierarchical array of privileges that formed the *Ständestaat* itself (see Gagliardo 1969: 165; Simms 1997: 125). And when at the turn of the century an attempt to match French conscription was finally initiated by emancipating the peasantry on crown land, reform was categorically blocked on *Junker* estates (Simms 1997: 123, 127). Even such apparently technical domains as military strategy could not escape this inherently political challenge. War, asserted the Duke of Brunswick, should be treated as an extended drill field: if the new revolutionary tempo was of a different energy to that of the drill, then so be it; for, the patrimonial relation between noble officer and peasant soldier would be broken if the former asked the latter to display initiative (Sheehan 1989: 228; Showalter 1994: 327). Thus, even though in 1799 two million cantonists were technically available for military service, after the various corporate exemptions 300,000 remained. As late as 1804, half of the Prussian army still consisted of mercenaries rather than citizens fighting for their own freedom (Showalter 1994: 324; Craig 1964: 23).

Yet even this did not exhaust the geo-political challenge presented to Frederick William II and, in 1798, his son. By the turn of the century, that kindred British spirit began to cut off any diplomatic escape from the French fate. In an effort to block trade with France and to ensure a continual supply of necessary materials for domestic and naval use, the British patrolling of the Baltic had begun to devastate Prussian commerce. The Armed Neutrality in which Prussia joined Denmark, Sweden and Russia was an attempt to counter the deleterious effects of the British blue-water policy without declaring war on yet another great power. In effect, the Neutrality was an attempt to forge a non-aligned movement that might avoid the exigencies of the Anglo-French conflict. But such an attempt at independence evaporated along with the Danish fleet after a British ultimatum to withdraw from the Neutrality was ignored.

From this moment on, the integrity of Prussian political authority was put under pressure by two different geo-political strategies: the (as a rule)

indirect British blue-water policy predicated upon the defense of capitalist wheels of commerce and the direct assault of land-based French geo-political accumulation predicated upon the need to feed the nation-in-arms. In short, France was the imminent threat, although Britain, in the background, effectively denied Prussia an escape route via the establishment of a collective third geo-political force. Friedrich Schiller, for one, could only look on with trepidation at the shrinking chances of German autonomy in 1800:

Two powerful nations wrestle  
For the sole possession of the world,  
To swallow all countries' liberty  
They brandish the trident and the thunderbolt

(cited in McLelland 1971: 31)

The final closure of an independent path occurred in 1803 when the Revolutionary Army occupied Hannover (still technically a British electorate). This movement inevitably shifted the elemental contest between Britain and France onto North German soil in the process destroying the Prussian policy of neutrality. With no wish to invade Hannover and risk a direct confrontation with Britain, Frederick William III could only wait powerlessly for an Anglo–Russian expedition to be formed. When the fateful day came, and even though many in Prussia now considered British rather than French supremacy to be the prime unsettling factor in Europe (Simms 1997: 279),<sup>40</sup> the King was compelled to break publicly with Napoleon. For fear of the trident, Frederick William III committed his political authority to its fateful appointment with the thunderbolt at Jena and Auerstadt. In July 1807 the grand-nephew of the philosopher king watched helplessly from the banks of the River Niemen, while on a barge Alexander and Napoleon negotiated Prussia's fragmentation in the Treaty of Tilsit.

## Conclusion

How, then, might we finally assess Kant's awareness of the limits of universalizing individual freedom in the face of the reality of international politics? To some commentators, by virtue of writing on the cusp of modernity, Kant occupied a historical liminality that allowed him a critical vista on the universalizing claims attributed to modern individual Reason. And it is because of this that Kant should be deployed as

a theorist of the philosophical and practical limits of liberal claims to individuality as a universal human condition. However, this appreciation of Kant's critical contribution replicates the lacunae within Kant's own work regarding the international dimension of social transformation that had already, with the French Revolution, *structurally* set the limits of the universalization of the liberal subject understood as the impersonalized individual.

Let us remember, first of all, that the 'liberal' nature of Kant's political philosophy resided first and foremost in a non-modern *corporate* individualism. It was in order to drive forward an enlightened corporate reform in Prussia that Kant attempted to regulate political action on earth by reference to the ethics derived from a heavenly individual Reason. In other words, in order to drive forward a corporate enlightenment, Kant gave *Bildung* a virtual modern agency of regulating the particular illiberality of politics through a narrative of universal history. On this basis, Kant's political philosophy constructed both the particular possibility for German development out of backwardness – a continuation of the corporate enlightenment – and the universal archetype of liberal agency against which such possibilities were measured and illuminated – a resolutely noumenal (and not phenomenal) Reason. Yet by attempting to save the corporate enlightenment project through this strategy, Kant denied himself an investigation of the phenomenal impact of the French Revolution.

What Kant's political philosophy does not investigate, then, and what his discussions on the tripartite relationship of the individual, the state and humanity cannot reveal, is that the political-philosophical limits of individual Reason are not produced only (or even fundamentally) from contradictions internal to this form of Reason, nor set by an external structural constraint derived from a humanity already fractured into a world of nations. The ultimate limit of individual Reason derives from the generative nature of the international dimension of social transformation, which had, in Kant's context – especially in his final years – through the French Revolution, *already* produced a multi-linear modernity rather than a uni-linear expansion of the impersonalized individual across the globe. In engaging with German backwardness, Kant did not so much make a *faux pas* into universalism; rather, he refused to step out of the noumenal realm of universal Reason into the phenomenal realm of multi-linear modern world development.

We have started our story of the rise and fall of *Bildung*, therefore, in a peculiar place with a quixotic author whose political philosophy refused to modernize the agency attributed to German Enlightenment. But one

should not be too unkind to Kant. He had, after all, already begun a terminal physical decline when Napoleon started to directly pressure the personalized and corporate political authorities of Germany with his militarized impersonal collective. And it was from here on that ruling classes across Germany (and none more so than in Prussia) would be forced to engage in the problems of modernity; although, as we shall see, British foreign policy and the capitalist heartland it defended would remain in the background, a constant subtle, though volatile, influence. Nevertheless, it remains the case that Kant deferred on the intellectual task of finding within Germany a phenomenal social force able to lift Germany out of its comparative backwardness through a substitute revolution for the French-type wherein impersonalized political subjectivity could be cultivated in an enlightened way. Yet this is precisely where his historical importance lies. For, Kant's deferral would motivate a whole generation of German intellectuals, Hegel especially, to devote their considerable talents to meeting this formidable challenge.

# 4

## Hegel's Revolution of Philosophy

### Introduction

Over the course of the twentieth century the reception of Hegel in English-speaking academia has experienced a profound shift. From irrationalist, romanticist, Prussian nationalist and all round enemy of the 'open society' (Popper 1966), Hegel has slowly but surely been rehabilitated as a defender, if a critical one, of liberal democratic society (see Kaufman 1970; Pippin 2004). Hegel has become especially popular as a critical resource to expose the tensions between individual freedom and social cohesion extant in the modern condition (Taylor 1979; Steinberger 1988; Dallmayr 1993).<sup>1</sup> As a correlative to these investigations, Hegel's related critique of Kant's formalistic ethics has been used to question liberal cosmopolitan theories of human rights (Brown 1992: 65; Hutchings 1995; Morrice 2000: 234). Instead of positing, as the cosmopolitans do, an abstract universal right, Hegel's constitutive approach posits the development and negotiation of rights through interactions between individuals within really existing societies (Honneth 1995; Frost 1996).<sup>2</sup> In this schema, freedom is not a pre-social value; rather, its value is dynamically created through frictional – although institutionalized – processes of social recognition (Shklar 1976; Smith 1989; Brod 1992). This idea of constitutive right has been extended to the arena of international law (Ringmar 1995); and it is with regards to the international reach of constitutive right where the dominant debate over Hegel in IR has taken place.

The crucial question in the IR debate has been whether the constitutive process of negotiating individuals' rights extends to the international realm to inform conduct between states. Most authors agree that Hegel cannot be contextualized as a text book Realist for whom might

makes right. Yet neither can Hegel be easily reconciled with Realism's putative opposite, Liberalism. This is because there are conflicting readings of Hegel's discussion on the ethical status of war. On the one hand, Hegel can be read as postulating that the constitution of rights requires institutions that can mediate conflict, but that this institutional realm finishes at the frontiers of the Ethical State. On the other hand, Hegel can also be read as attributing a certain ethical nature to war in terms of the (unintentional) impetus it gives to the world-historical progress of individual freedom (Vincent 1983; Walt 1989; Boucher 1998: 331–345; Jaeger 2002; Brooks 2004). In fine, if Hegel seems liberal to the extent that he deems the international arena to be an institutional domain of mediating different political interests, the mechanism of this mediation is not necessarily peaceful.

Herein lies the fascination with Hegel, because he seems to represent a fusion of both realist and liberal worldviews. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this chapter, Chris Brown can be seen to have laid down the core challenge: if one is to accept Hegel's argument that war is the 'world's court of judgment', making international relations a constitutive arena of social relations, then this requires a meta-physical belief in *Geist*. For it is the 'world spirit' that for Hegel drives humanity toward the institutionalization of individual freedom through mechanisms that might not be immediately observable or even recognizable as progressive (Brown 1992: 67–70). If we are to approach Hegel from a secular position, then we must question whether his political philosophy really can be mobilized to make constitutive sense of international relations.

What almost all these debates focus on is the way in which (and the degree to which) Hegel's constitutive theory constructs international relations as an *object* of enquiry. Alternatively, in this chapter I argue that Hegel's social theory itself was constituted through an international dimension of knowledge production. Specifically, I argue that the relationship he posed between the liberal ethics of individuality and the illiberal reality of politics was generated through a consciousness of German backwardness, and it is to this context of backwardness that his famous concepts of *Aufhebung* and *Geist* were addressed.

Unlike Kant, Hegel accepted and dwelled upon the radical and phenomenal difference between France and Germany as the Napoleonic imperialistic turn cast France as a direct threat to the integrity of the German Reich. With the comparative backwardness between the two societies sharpened, Hegel produced a remarkable political philosophy that sought to guide Germany out of backwardness through an international dimension of social transformation, a dimension he

conceptualized through the movement of *Aufhebung*. Specifically, Hegel sought to find a way to import French impersonalized individualism into a traditional German communal social base and through this process to secure the ethical promise of modern individual freedom as a socially responsible and aware mode of political subjectivity. As part of this movement, Hegel gave the intellectual's political agency of *Bildung* a radically new meaning and scope: the progressive dialectical *other* to the egoism of impersonalized individualism. The *Bildung* of the *Aufklärer* was raised, by Hegel, to become part of the dialectic of the universal becoming of individual freedom. This dialectic played out through the 'institution' of *Geist*, the liberal spirit that directed modern world development. In this way, the German intellectual stratum, in exercising *Bildung*, had become integral to the launching, in the German Reich, of a substitute revolution for the French variant – a revolution of Philosophy. In these ways, Hegel's political philosophy constructed both the particular possibility for German development out of backwardness, and the universal archetype of liberal agency against which such possibilities were measured and illuminated.

Nevertheless, Hegel's revolution of Philosophy depended upon an interpretation of the French Revolution, an interpretation exhausted by the machinations of impersonalized *individualism*. As I have shown, this was a fundamental misapprehension of the multi-linear character of modernity, wherein the Revolution had produced a novel subject, the impersonal collective. In fact, Hegel was opposed to the fledgling intellectual nationalist movement in Prussia because he believed that the pursuit of German-ness (*Deutschtum*) would essentialize and stratify political identity, thus leaving the German Reich backward by placing its political community outside of the dialectic of impersonalized individualism that drove *Geist*. Thus Hegel situated his dialectic of international social differentiation uncomfortably within a *uni-linear* philosophy of world history. This, ultimately, is why his stance on the constitution of the international domain is so contradictory, containing both Realist and Liberal elements: it is both a domain of radical difference, and an institution of universal rapprochement. And this is why I argue that *Geist*, ultimately, must be understood as a manifestation of Hegel's consciousness of backwardness.

To contextualize Hegel's political philosophy, I discuss a number of impacts of the French Revolution on Prussia (and more generally Germany), all of which focus on the reforms of the corporate military-agrarian complex. The reformers, for defensive purposes, attempted to introduce the Jacobin citizen-soldier into this complex, at the same time



as re-arranging social reproduction and surplus extraction around free trade so as to increase tax revenues. Both these reforms required a 'decoration'<sup>3</sup> of the mode of life in Prussia, a collapsing of the corporate distinction between political subjects and the universalizing, instead, of one political subject. This was an extremely contentious issue, not only for the nobility and crown, but for the reformers too. None wished to see the dissolution of corporate social ties lead to the creation of an urban rabble and/or citizen army that might inaugurate a French-like revolution in Germany. Reform, then, was a conundrum: the changes required to preserve an existing ruling stratum threatened to undermine, precisely, this ruling stratum. It is in relation to this conundrum that I contextualize the challenges experienced by the intellectual stratum and the way in which these gave rise to certain prescriptions for German development that mobilized an impersonal collective political subject, the *Volk*. This forms the background for Hegel's arrival in Berlin. Hegel, however, came to Berlin in 1818 well after he had matured his political philosophy. It is, therefore, to his prior intellectual development that I first of all turn.

### ***Aufhebung*: Social transformation with an international dimension?**

*[Philosophy] has sought refuge among the Germans and survived only among them; we have been given custody of this sacred light...*

Hegel's Inaugural Address at the University of Berlin<sup>4</sup>

Hegel's social origins were not so different to those of Kant. He was born in 1770 to a *Bildungsbürgertum* family and his father, a minor official in the court of the Duchy of Württemberg, furnished the household with the values of *Aufklärung* discussed in the previous chapter (see Harris 1972: 3–6, 17, 20–21; Schmidt 1981: 478; Pinkard 2000: 9, 15–16). In this respect, Hegel's political philosophy initially developed within the Cameralist tradition that I detailed in the last chapter, namely, taming the despotic absolutist state (inside and outside Germany) by engineering a harmonic balance and interdependency within an array of *Kleinstaaten* and associated corporate bodies. But shortly after Hegel had enrolled at the theological school at Tübingen University the French Revolution announced itself to the German world of *Aufklärung*. Indeed, Württemberg experienced a huge influx of French émigrés who started to form anti-revolution pressure groups at the same time as students – including Hegel and his friends Friedrich Schlegel

and Friedrich Hölderin – were setting up pro-revolution reading groups (Harris 1972: 63; Pinkard 2000: 23). The Revolution, then, was the first and the central challenge to Hegel's political–philosophical German heritage.<sup>5</sup> And he initially approached this problem in the company of the Romantics.

The reception of the Revolution by the Romantics was at the start measurelessly enthusiastic and then, following the regicide and the Terror, measurelessly damning (see, e.g., Kruse 1992). However, Romanticism did not seek to provide a systematic explanation of these strange and turbulent times; it sought the opposite (Brunschwig 1974: 227). Having accepted Kant's separation of noumenal Reason from phenomenal experience, the Romantics had little interest for the former in a world now racked by diremption and constant, unexpected change (ibid.). Taking the step that Kant would not, the Romantics eschewed the mechanical Reason of the French Revolution and proposed to answer its excesses with the German other: a revolution of experiential sensuousness that would produce an organically developed (rather than French mechanical) political community (Anderson 1941: 310).<sup>6</sup> Inspired, ironically, by Robespierre's short-lived Cult of Reason (perceived as a kind of Second Reformation) the Romantics sought to create a new religion of *Bildung* – an *emotive* self-cultivation of Reason (Beiser 1992: 240–242). But this strategy, just like Kant's, did not dare ask how the phenomenal meaning of the Revolution might upset the very idea of a separation of Reason and experience. And that is what makes Hegel's political philosophy notable.

Hegel shared much of the Romantic critique of the Revolution. The year 1789 initially appeared to him as the manifestation of Reason on earth and the inauguration of a new age and set of conditions through which to realize the enlightened vocation of mankind.<sup>7</sup> Hegel also understood the meaning of this new age through the importance that Kant's philosophy gave to the individual of Pure Reason and the surprising appearance of this individual on earth in the Constitution. Hegel also noticed that something in the encoding of this natural man was working to corrupt the promise of individual freedom and turn its expression into an arbitrary and particularistic execution of egoistic will: through the Constitution, individual freedom had turned into irreconcilable factionalism, and factionalism into the Terror.<sup>8</sup> With no sense of an ethical life that could relate the extreme particularism of the impersonalized individual back to the good of a social whole, Hegel believed that the new France was another expression of the mechanical despotic state (1999a: 22–25).

Thus a familiar paradox presented itself in Hegel as it did in many an *Aufklärer*. The encoding of individual freedom was a major triumph for Reason against noble and hierocratic despotism (ibid.: 34, 39–40, 66, 99; see also Avineri 1972: 58; Schmidt 1980: 140–142). Yet at the same time, the Terror had effectively produced a new form of despotism, the unrestrained will of the impersonalized individual. Moreover, by the turn of the century the war against France had highlighted to Hegel the impotence of the Reich's defensive capacity against French terrorists. And whereas Kant's consciousness of German backwardness was centered upon the reaction against *Aufklärung* within Prussia, Hegel's political philosophy was to be built around this geo-political challenge, and his consciousness of backwardness was to be formed around this direct incursion into Germany of the French Terror. In short, the stakes at play for the *Bildungsbürgertum* in addressing German backwardness had been raised; unlike Kant's, Hegel's founding context was a French imperialism that threatened to negatively transform – even dissolve – the very basis of social life that the *Aufklärung* had attempted to reform.

Hegel's first anxious thoughts, in this respect, were recorded in a text (1999a), *The German Constitution*, written over a period that saw a pressured Austria diplomatically kowtow to an expansionist France in the Rastatt Conference (1797) and Treaty of Lunéville (1801). For Hegel, these incidents exposed not only the technical fragility of the emperorship within the Reich, but more so, they had shown this *form* of German political unity to be utterly inadequate for the challenges of the new revolutionary era (ibid.: 7, 40, 62, 87, 92). Unlike Kant and even the Romantics, Hegel thus realized that a *return* to a classical archetype of ethical life was no longer a viable answer to Germany's problems. With this opinion, Hegel definitively broke from the Cameralist tradition: he judged the *Kleinstaat*, its localized constitutionalism and its corporate social structure based upon relations of personal dependency to be historically dead.

But even if Hegel started to accept the need to somehow solve the problem of German backwardness by incorporating the positive aspects of the French Constitution into German society itself, he was adamant that this should be done in a way that would not lead to a *new* despotism of the impersonalized individual. After all, the *Aufklärung* tradition still informed the basis of Hegel's philosophical thoughts on ethics and politics: the task of an enlightened intellectual stratum was to push forward a non-despotic interdependency between political subjects. For, the French system could not simply be imitated; yet neither could there

be a return to the corporate life of the old Reich. How, then, might one prescribe an ethical route out of backwardness?

By the turn of the century, Hegel – partly out of despair and partly out of irony – sought a quasi-mystical German Theseus, a personal authority that could unite the Germanic ‘tribes’ in order to secure their place in the new world (Hegel 1999a: 100–101; see also Avineri 1972: 60). Perhaps, Hegel mused, a future Austrian emperor might take on this role, holding sway over the one possible institution that might unify Germany: the Imperial Diet (see Harris 1972: 471–476). But with the 1803 Report of the Imperial Deputation (the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss*) sponsored by Napoleon, the Austrian emperor proceeded to sanction a reformation of the *Kleinstaaten* into French-like states.<sup>9</sup> And with this event, Hegel, for a while, gave up on any home-grown solution. By 1806 Hegel would describe Napoleon as the world soul (Hegel 1984: 114) traversing the German continent and teaching German princes ‘the concept of a free monarchy’ (cited in Avineri 1972: 66) through the dissemination of his Civil Code (Hegel 1999c: 220).<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, over the course of these years, and despite his awe of Napoleon, Hegel increasingly searched for some quality of German social life that might help withstand the imminent French onslaught of terroristic egoism. And he found this precious resource by mining into the social sub-stratum that had traditionally formed the ethical glue of the *Kleinstaat* – a Christian paternalism. The question of Hegel’s debt to religion is, of course, a central and complex one (see Taylor 1979; Dickey 1987). But for the purposes of this investigation a crucial distillation can be made. The religion that Hegel valorized was not to be confused with the ‘positivity’ of the established church – a series of rules and commandments made on high. Rather, it was a ‘civic theology’, founded in the religion of the folk – in the internalized communal love emanating from the people themselves (see Hegel 1975; Dickey 1987: 278–281; Pinkard 2000: 61–68). In making this qualification Hegel was actually reaching back, through Romanticism, and the general influence of *Sturm und Drang*, to recover a remnant of Ancient Greek ethical life that had, he believed, been preserved in the teachings of Jesus (Kroner 1975: 9–10). With this narrative, Hegel claimed that the Christian folk religion possessed, in the modern era, the only remaining social glue that might be applied to reconstitute the fragmented body of the new human.

Furthermore, Hegel’s search for routes out of German backwardness also included an attempt to find a science of the social world that could reveal the internal dynamics of the egoistic impersonalized individual.

Hegel initially turned to the British tradition of political economy which had become en vogue in Germany by the turn of the century (see Harris 1972: 435–436; Winfield 1984; Waszek 1988), and he not only read the Scottish philosophers but also followed British affairs in detail, especially the debates on the poor law (Plant 1977: 112). Yet, even though he took political economy to be *the* science of the modern age (Hegel 1991: 227 §189), this science only helped to *describe* the workings of the impersonalized individual encoded in the French Constitution (Waszek 1988: 20; Hegel 1999f: 143). A deeper comprehension was required in order to engineer a progressive entry of Germany into modernity.

With no foreign alternative available, Hegel again turned back to interrogate German resources, specifically the concept of *Bildung*. While the *Bildung* of old was mobilized to promote a non-despotic interdependency of interests within the same mode of life and political subjectivity, what was required now was a political philosophy that could adjudicate the clash between qualitatively different articulations of political rights and duties, namely, between impersonalized individualized rights and traditional communal duties. This is why Hegel's re-conceptualization of *Bildung* again broke with that of the previous *Aufklärung* tradition: now, it was through *qualitative* division, diremption and opposition that an awareness of a social whole was developed (see Schmidt 1981: 480).

This mixture of domestic old and foreign new in the development of social interdependency was represented in Hegel's philosophical vocabulary through a further concept, *Aufhebung*, the process of raising, preserving and abolishing. Hegel mobilized the concept of *Aufhebung* for the purpose of re-orienting the ruling strata in Germany toward the practical and ethical challenges of overcoming backwardness in the new world order. Effectively, Hegel wished to *preserve* the old – the *German* mode of life extant in the *Kleinstaat* – by *raising* it in the process of grafting on the modern *French* political subject (a subject that Hegel made sense of, rightly or wrongly, via British political economy).<sup>11</sup> This process, he hoped, would *nullify* the old and produce a *new* German political subject, one that would, in this very process, resolve the modern problem of individual freedom – egoistic despotism.<sup>12</sup>

Through the concept of *Aufhebung*, Hegel effectively outlined the contours of a historical movement that would import the rights of the impersonalized individual into a dutiful corporate and personalized body politic, yet at the same time preserve its progressive nature regarding individual freedom, while removing its terroristic de-socializing energies. It should be noted that in this sense what 'is' and what 'ought'

existed at the same time for Hegel, *not* by virtue of some mystical or purely abstract dialectic. Instead, the pressures of the geo-political milieu required the incorporation of a foreign subject that, in Germany, was both 'is' (not present in Germany, but very much present in France/Britain) and 'ought' (to be imported to and transformed in Germany). In other words, Hegel's (in)famous dialectic cannot be understood as an abstract formulation that can then be applied to a society's endogenous development. Rather, Hegel's dialectic was an analytical device framed by the problem of prescribing social transformations with an international dimension. Herein lies Hegel's great advance on Kant's regulative universal history.

Elements of this remarkable political philosophy appear as early as Hegel's 1798 essay (1999d) on reform in Württemberg, recently occupied by the French. However, the abandonment of the Reich by its Austrian emperor, the creation of a Francophile Confederation of the Rhine, and the defeat of Prussia at Jena were all traumatic reminders of German backwardness that propelled Hegel, in his years at Bamberg, Nuremberg and Heidelberg, to articulate *Aufhebung* as a coherent and ordered *Philosophy of Right*. It is important to enter into a short excursus on this work, because often it is imagined that international relations appear, in its conclusion, as a final object of enquiry. However, if we take the understanding of *Aufhebung* discussed above, then the *Philosophy* appears as a work, at its heart, framed by the need to understand the international dimension of social transformation.

Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* starts by laying out the ontology of the impersonalized individual – a subject that knows itself as a 'completely abstract I' (Hegel 1991: 67–68 §35). But crucially, Hegel sets up the ontology of the impersonalized individual in *developmental* and not essential terms, concordant with a potentiality for *Aufhebung* (see Schmidt 1981). Private property, defined akin to in English Common Law as a freely alienable possession (Hegel 1991: 95–97 §66, 67), becomes the first 'moment' of mediation of this egoistic individual wherein he/she recognizes the rights of other individuals *qua* individuals (ibid.: 75 §44, 94 §64).<sup>13</sup> The act of securing one's welfare therefore gains a moral element: it is not simply an egoistic pursuit, even though at this moment morality exists only in an arbitrary set of atomistic claims (ibid.: 143–162 §115–135). The *Philosophy* then presents a number of moments of mediation through which this developmental individual, without losing the quality of individuality, can be reconciled with a network of moral social relations and, in so doing, bear the fruit of the modern era, an Ethical State.

The first moment is the family, the social institution wherein the ethical spirit is 'naturally' present within the love shared through relations of personal dependency, a love that expresses the Christian (and by association Ancient Greek) holistic ethic. This love requires the undivided surrender of personality into a family unity, and thus the impersonalized nature of the possession of private property is tempered as a paternal familial possession (ibid.: 199 §158, 200 §161, 207 §167, 209–210 §172). But as individuals leave the family and enter into civil society, re-appearing as impersonalized political subjects, this ethical base seems to be in threat of dissipation.<sup>14</sup> However, all is not lost because civil society is structured in large part as a system of needs wherein individuals enter into a state of all-round interdependence – a Smithian division of labor (ibid.: 220–221 §182–183, 228–230 §190–193). In fact, labor is divided (reflecting the German context) into three estates each of which is responsible for a different aspect of reproducing the polity and through each of which the ethical moment is preserved. The agricultural estate, being immediate to nature, is subsumed under the ethics of the family; and the bureaucracy, being exempt from participating directly in the system of needs, is imbued with a purely universal ethics.

The estate of trade and industry, however, is most exposed to the imperative of securing particular and therefore arbitrary needs, and as such is most in danger of forgoing an ethical life (ibid.: 234–239 §200–207).<sup>15</sup> Yet this danger is resolved by a further mediation: that of the corporation. The corporation acts as a substitute family within civil society, ensuring that the welfare of the individual is secured in a community of similar interests (ibid.: 270–272 §250–252). In effect, the corporation is Hegel's attempt to preserve the communal corporate life of traditional Germany in the centre of the most capricious, particularistic and foreign moment of modern life (see Heiman 1971; Riedel 1984: 129–156). With these various mediations of capriciousness within civil society, the ethic of family life is preserved and raised in its interaction with the needs of the egoistic individual.

There is, though, a curious lacuna in Hegel's train of mediation. Those whose family life has ill equipped them to pursue a specialization in the system of needs fall outside of the corporation (Hegel 1991: 272 §253). Moreover, Hegel seems to think that the expansionary nature of the system of needs necessarily produces a *Pöbel* – a rabble – that has missed the mediating moment of the corporation (ibid.: 267 §245).<sup>16</sup> Looking toward Scotland and the British condition in general, Hegel warns that, in a sense, civil society can never be rich enough to solve

its own problems. But then this line of enquiry is dropped, and the dialectic of *Aufhebung* implicitly assumes from here on that the corporation captures all.<sup>17</sup> This methodological problem foreshadows a very concrete developmental problem in *Vormärz*<sup>18</sup> Prussia, to which I shall return later.

This issue aside, the *Philosophy of Right* posits a number of different moments of mediation – most importantly the family and corporation (acting as second family) – that preserve the form of social relations deriving from the traditional *Kleinstaat* even in the presence of impersonalized individualism. And this conjoining of two political subjectivities – the corporate subject rendered through relations of personal dependency, and the individual subject rendered through impersonalized exchange relations – is mediated in the moment of the Ethical State and realized in the constitution. In other words, the form of freedom – found in the individual particularity of civil society – is mediated with the content of freedom – the universality of the state as a self-conscious political community (Hegel 1991: 284–285 §261).

The monarch of this new community expresses freedom at its highest level, as the embodiment of individualism now raised to the level of the Ethical State (ibid.: 314 §277, 316–318 §279; see also Avineri 1972: 185–187; Berry 1981). But, though a central agent in the pursuit of an ethical life, he is a capstone and no longer the foundation.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the substantive moment of mediation with regards to the constitution occurs not in the halls of the king's personal residence, but in the executive and legislative branches of the state. According to Hegel this governance should be structured through the bi-cameral principle.<sup>20</sup> The lower house is populated by the representatives of the corporations and agricultural estate; and these still particularistic interests are finally mediated by the upper house, which consists of the universal estate – the bureaucracy. Thus, governance and representation is not factional, but is ultimately concerned with resolving, at the highest level of mediation, the rights of the impersonalized individual with the ethical duties of life in the state (Hegel 1991: 339 §301, 342 §302, 343–357 §303–319). This ultimate mediation takes place in and through the development of the political constitution (in the widest sense of the term) (ibid.: 336 §298) and is internalized by the general population via the public dissemination of such debates (ibid.: 352 §314). With this train of progressive mediations of particular interests through universalistic institutions, the modern Ethical State is formed.

What is all the more important for our argument, however, is that one finds *Bildung* as the progressive agency that drives forward every



moment of mediation in the *Philosophy of Right*. *Bildung* starts in family life by raising the child's consciousness out of a natural freedom toward an engagement with the self as an inter-subjective individual (ibid.: 211–212 §174–175).<sup>21</sup> Civil society then becomes the surrogate family that further 'educates and supervises' the individual (ibid.: 264 §239).<sup>22</sup> Specifically, civil society teaches the impersonalized individual that the condition of interdependence requires caprice to be mediated by a formal right and wrong (ibid.: 224–225 §187).<sup>23</sup> And this formal understanding allows for a further movement of *Bildung* through the representation of the corporation within the executive and legislature of the State (ibid.: 238–239 §207). Indeed, the universal estate – the bureaucracy – does not act instrumentally in Hegel's schema but educationally (see Shaw 1992), and it is knowledge itself that is the core criterion for pursuing the universal vocation of the bureaucrat (Hegel 1991: 332 §291, 335 §296). Finally, the task of the bureaucracy is to mediate particular interests so as to develop the universalistic content of the constitution. Because this mediation is an open public undertaking, the press and the realm of public opinion should not be feared as factional nor as against the sovereign: public opinion is a moment of *Bildung* where these highest levels of mediation are fed back to be comprehended by the individual himself (ibid.: 352–357 § 314–319).

I shall return to the geo-political moment outlined in the *Philosophy of Right* presently. But for now, it is important to elucidate the major shift that Hegel's political philosophy of *Aufhebung* produced in the existing articulation of *Bildung*. By implicating *Bildung* as such a universally important and expansive social agency required for the modernization of a backward polity, Hegel prescriptively raised the Philosophy faculty to be the substitute for the French bourgeoisie as agents of revolution.<sup>24</sup> Here, again, Hegel broke with the *Aufklärung* project. No longer could the *Bildungsbürgertum* function as one valid corporate body amongst an array of equally valid corporations, all charged with upholding, through their specific vocations, the *Ständestaat*. Against Kant's corporate enlightenment, Hegel's Philosopher now had a *pre-eminent* duty of transforming the polity into an Ethical State.

Therefore, with Hegel *Bildung* had become an *über* agency for the development of a modern Ethical State. Though using (folk) religion as a social glue, Hegel was adamant that the church should not become the pre-eminent guide of modern political development (Hegel 1991: 290–297 §270; 1999d). And even the bureaucracy was guided in its universal vocation by a university education, provided first and foremost

by the Philosophy faculty, with this faculty guided by Hegel.<sup>25</sup> His substitute German transformation for the French Revolutionary road into modernity was a revolution of Philosophy. By recognizing the world-historical necessity of importing the impersonalized individual, yet at the same time preserving and raising the social relations of the *Kleinstaat*, it was, for Hegel, the Philosopher who would guide Germany away from the danger of impersonalized despotism toward an *ethical* impersonalized political subjectivity.

Crucially, in this schema of world development *Bildung* became the dialectical other to egoism, the progressive agency bound to the negative agency in the development of individual freedom. And this, perhaps, was the biggest transformation of the political-philosophical meaning of *Bildung* inaugurated by Hegel. *Bildung* itself had now become a constitutive force of modern world development; and the bearers of this agency, the *Bildungsbürgertum* – or more specifically, the Hegelian Philosopher – were themselves making world history.<sup>26</sup> In effect, the Philosopher was the verso to the French Jacobin, and the English capitalist, and this made the *Bildungsbürgertum* of a comparatively backward Reich suddenly a world-historical social force.

Herein also lies the importance of the *Science of Logic* in Hegel's oeuvre. For, the *Science* effectively provided a substitute philosophical constitution to the political one of the French. Hegel's understanding of the constitution was quite uniquely dialectical: it was at the same time a *written* – objective – legal document *and* the *process* of mediating the particular and universal in political life (Hegel 1991: 241–242 §211, 287 §264–265, 289–290 §268–269, 312 §273–312; see also Stillman 1998: 89–92). In this way the German constitution of philosophy unified the outer political form and inner spiritual content of individual freedom, unlike the French original, which only constructed the outer shell, leaving the purpose of egoistic freedom empty (and thus terroristic). This, in fact, was the practical purpose of Hegel's *Logic*. Not only did it allow the Philosopher to inculcate among the body politic a dialectical comprehension of the self and the world, but the highly stylistic and systematic language of the *Logic* was decided on by Hegel to fulfill a specific pedagogical function: it was the practice in Germany to provide students with text books to accompany lecture series, and the *Logic* was a text book to be read precisely *in conjunction* with the lecture (see Harris 1979: 4). Hegel's substitute constitution, the *Logic*, was the encoding of a method of knowledge production adequate to produce the progressive agency of *Bildung*.<sup>27</sup>

But none of this in and of itself answers the question that Hegel had posed in the *German Constitution*: which patch of German soil might be rich enough to sustain the process of *Aufhebung*? Hegel's substitute revolution of Philosophy was by no means idealistic: it required a political-institutional basis to proceed. By 1818 Hegel's attention had turned back to Prussia, which, by virtue of the reforming efforts of Karl vom Stein and Karl August Fürst von Hardenberg (see Pinkard 2000: 310), had inaugurated a neo-humanist revolution in the universities. Hegel therefore arrived enthusiastically in Berlin with his political philosophy of *Aufhebung* ready to be applied and realized.

However, almost instantly upon his arrival the nature of the struggles over the course of Prussian reform threatened to undo and de-legitimize the very basis of Hegel's political philosophy. Furthermore, the problem emanated from the activities of the lower rung of the intellectual stratum itself, in their pursuit of a German national identity. And Hegel's acrid response to this betrayal of *Bildung* by a section of the Prussian *Bildungsbürgertum* is of special interest for the purpose of this chapter. His substitute revolution of Philosophy, it may be remembered, depended upon an interpretation of the French Revolution that was exhausted by the machinations (especially through the Terror) of impersonalized *individualism*. However, as I have shown in Chapter 2, this was a fundamental misapprehension of the international dimension of the Revolution which, through the processes of comparison and substitution, had produced a novel political subject, the impersonal collective. Hegel's great achievement was his ability to analytically capture the international dimension of modern social transformation in his concept of *Aufhebung*. But as we shall see, other sections of the German intellectual stratum, if not analytically capturing the international dimension of social transformation, had nevertheless started to re-frame the normative struggle over German development by reference to a German version of the impersonal collective, the *Volk*. Hegel, though, found the deployment of this political subject repulsive.

The Reason for this analytical and normative mismatch within Hegel's writings over the effect of the international dimension of social transformation can be found in the way in which his consciousness of backwardness propelled him to approach world development as a movement of *Geist*. However, in order to turn to the infamous world spirit, first it is necessary to turn to the Prussian reform project in general so that its effect upon the intellectual stratum in particular can be appreciated.

***Deutschtum* or *Bildung*? The battle over reform***Revolution in the good sense . . .*Karl August Fürst von Hardenberg<sup>28</sup>

It is difficult to overstate the trauma that the 1807 Treaty of Tilsit visited upon the Prussian body politic. Stripped of its territories west of the Elbe, as well as most Polish lands, the *Ständestaat* was effectively reduced to four eastern provinces. On top of this territorial amputation, French forces remained in occupation of west of the Vistula, an indemnity of 120 million Francs was set, and the grain trade was destroyed with Napoleon's incorporation of Prussia into the Continental System (thus closing access to the British market) (Berdahl 1988: 107–109). In these exceptional circumstances, and bearing in mind the total discrediting of the ability of the *Junkers* to perform their military duty, a small group of noble reformers were able to commandeer the corridors of power and put into play their own project of 'defensive modernization' (Epstein 1966: 598).

What united the reformers, headed by Stein and Hardenberg, was a lowest common denominator: they understood that a hierarchical corporate structuring of social life had proved inadequate for providing the taxation and military dues needed to withstand the qualitatively different geo-political contestation of the Napoleonic age (Paret 1966: 118). Acting on the general opinion at the time that the court had become a captive of the most backward stratum of nobility (Gagliardo 1969: 175), the reformers managed to outmaneuver the King's personal advisors, re-structure the administration into responsible ministries, and even abolish the chaotic division between territory and function, created in the first place by Frederick the Great. Their greatest challenge, however, was to reform the now comparatively backward military–agrarian complex. In terms of the military, the army had to emulate the martial relations enjoyed by the French citizen-soldier; and in terms of agrarian issues, Prussia had to emulate British capitalist improvement so as to increase tax revenues especially in order to pay war indemnities. Both reforms required the existing hierarchical array of corporate political subjects to be superseded by the establishment of one unanimous political subject bearing a universally applicable set of rights and duties relating, ultimately, to surplus extraction. Both reforms, in short, required a decorporation of the Prussian military–agrarian complex.

The Re-organization Commission pursued two main military reforms: one, the creation of a popular militia; and the other, the re-education of

the officer cadre with a new non-hierarchical outlook. The question of a popular militia had been in the air since 1793, and Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst had already in 1798 voiced the opinion that it would be necessary to stimulate the Jacobin spirit (Simms 1998: 78). But it was the year 1806 that starkly highlighted the bankruptcy of a professional army when faced with a Jacobin rabble (Gagliardo 1969: 177). The Re-organization Commission thus announced that *all* were born defenders of the realm, and more so, that anyone, regardless of social status, might actively lead this defense: 'While an empire perishes in its weakness and disgrace', proclaimed August Neithardt von Gneisenau, 'perhaps a Caesar is following his plow in his most wretched village' (cited in *ibid.*: 178; see also Paret 1966: 134). In fact, the Army Law of 1814 affirmed the right and duty of all citizens to serve for three years in the standing army. This citizen force, the *Landwehr*, would be called upon in times of war to fight *alongside* (and not behind) the regular King's army. Small arsenals were scattered around the countryside to serve as rallying points for local resistance, and the local *Bürgertum* were to serve as officers (Roskinski 1966: 79–80). In these ways the Jacobin citizen-soldier was introduced to Prussian military authority.

Furthermore, this democratization of the army unsettled the symbiosis of honor and *Junker* and thus the hierarchical mediation of military authority.<sup>29</sup> Scharnhorst's reforms proceeded to abolish the special claim of the nobility to officer positions (although the highest still remained a nobleman's preserve) and set into place a meritocratic ethic: education was to replace estate-specific honor as the qualification for officership. Although Scharnhorst had set up the first new *Militärische Gesellschaft* in the early 1800s (Sheehan 1989: 230), by 1810, with the founding of the Military Academy at Berlin, education had become a pre-requisite for entry into the officer cadre (Paret 1966: 138; Brose 1993: 83–84). Most importantly this education was designed to produce an officer that could *interpret* orders and take the initiative on the battlefield so as to match the flexibility of French skirmishing.

While military reforms were initially crucial for survival, by 1810 the need to increase the tax base had become the new priority because meanwhile Prussia had fallen behind on indemnities and France was now threatening to annex Silesia. The Financial Edict of 1810 addressed this threat,<sup>30</sup> and proposed to increase tax revenues by freeing industry from the fetters of the *ancien* guilds. These reforms dovetailed with the existing and much larger movement for opening all occupations to all estates. This movement drew upon an increasing interest in Scottish political economy, especially the notion that capitalist transformations

in the agrarian structure could cultivate voluntarism and activism at an individual level (see Tribe 1984; Berdahl 1988: 117, 124; Gray 1990). Britain, after all, remained the pre-eminent example of a state that had successfully resisted the Terror and Napoleon's army.

Thus reformers sought to emulate private-property rights in order to limit the reach of governance in the activities of social reproduction (see Angermann 1981: 85; Berdahl 1988: 111). And this meant that the mediating role of the *Junker* between the peasant and the sovereign authority in the extraction of surplus had to be removed, as was proclaimed in Stein's famous 1807 October Edict: 'all serfdom in our states comes to an end... there will only be free people' (cited in Carsten 1989: 74; see also Berdahl 1988: 115–122). Although the Edict never specified exactly what was abolished with personal serfdom (and indeed, the *Junkers* clawed back much of their authority with later edicts), from here on the principle that the peasantry should enjoy unanimous and universally applicable rights and duties over social reproduction framed all Prussian political debate concerning the disintegration of the social fabric (see Gagliardo 1969: 184).

The general introduction of free trade ran concomitant to this process. Tariffs were slashed soon after 1806; and by 1818, with the demise (but not entire destruction) of geographical and particularistic guilds and corporations, Prussia was transformed into one economic unit, a unit more genuinely free-trade than even the British original (see Gagliardo 1969: 186–187; Hughes 1988: 65; Brose 1993: 42).<sup>31</sup> Yet primitive accumulation in Prussia was no carbon copy of the English original, in terms of neither its effects nor its rationale. For, above all, it is necessary to remember that reform was undertaken in order to emulate *both* the transformations in taxation *and* military service that, respectively, British enclosure and French Jacobinism had delivered. At the time, this was a historically unprecedented combined project shared only by Mohamed Ali in Egypt.

But crucially, from the standpoint of the reformers – and indeed, from that of most of the ruling strata in Prussia – the core danger presented by *both* reforms was the dislocation of the lowest stations of society from the hierarchical control of the ruling strata. Therefore, though recognizing the need to graft on aspects of the British economic and French political revolutions, reformers (and conservatives alike) consistently conflated the results of these very different (though related) revolutions into one threatening social category: the anchorless, politically unmediated, urban rabble (*Pöbel*).<sup>32</sup> All motives for and processes of decorporation tended to produce the same fear of nurturing a Jacobin

enemy within, and more so, one that could be mobilized at any point by belligerent Republican voices. This fear would act to constrain the actions of various Prussian (and then German) ruling classes at critical junctures over the course of the next century.

Despite the best hopes of the reformers, the decorporation of social reproduction necessarily destabilized from the ground up what it was designed to protect: the authority of the ruling strata arranged around the Hohenzollern crown. Many ruling classes were threatened by the ongoing results of reform, but none more so than the *Junkers*. Certainly, the *Junkers* enriched themselves with the spoils of peasant Regulation<sup>33</sup> and privatization of the commons. Neither were they necessarily against the introduction of new techniques of production imported from capitalist Britain if they might enhance surplus extraction: there were few noble Luddites even east of the Elbe. But all were vigorously united in rejecting the accompanying dissolution of hierarchically mediated corporate rights and duties of social reproduction (see Berdahl 1988: 138). 'Rather three more Auerstadts', proselytized the Silesian Baron von der Recke, 'than one October edict'. (Cited in Carsten 1989: 76).

The *Junkers* held an important initial advantage through which they tried to secure the best of both worlds. With the collapse of centralized authority after 1806 the local noble-dominated *Landtag* had remained the only viable system of governance (see Berdahl 1988: 108). And from this vital foothold the *Junkers* proceeded to effect a number of modifications to the reform program. The universally applicable tax system was divided into six differential corporate categories that favored the *Junkers* (Carsten 1989: 94). Most importantly, the military reforms that sought to produce the citizen-soldier were re-infected with *Junker* values. Notoriously, the higher ranking noble officers proceeded to re-build a non-meritocratic honor system in the officer cadre via the (officially illegal) practice of dueling (Berdahl 1988: 203, 221). But most decisive was the fate of the *Landwehr* (see Showalter 1971). After the Napoleonic Wars the higher noble echelons of the army actively worked to bury this dangerously egalitarian institution. By 1819 most of the reforming officers had been judged to have 'Jacobinist' tendencies and were forced out of the corridors of power. The standing (King's) army regained its supremacy and the *Landwehr* and universal conscription remained only in qualified and weak form.

Frederick William III celebrated many of the more successful reforms of Stein and Hardenberg (Brose 1993: 41). But if the king, like the *Junkers*, had no objection to the import of British capitalist techniques of production, he likewise had large objections to importing the associated

political rights and duties of the impersonalized individual. After all, structuring social reproduction entirely through the rights of private property would necessarily start to dissolve the paternal mode of governance through which the Hohenzollern crown maintained its supreme position. Thus Frederick sought to retain paternal outposts in the newly freed market by modifying the anti-guild promulgations of 1810 and 1818; he even personally paid for setting up artisan colonies in rural Brandenburg and Silesia (*ibid.*).

Ultimately, though, the deepest challenge of reform to corporate and paternal forms of social reproduction was the creation of one unanimous political subject with a universally applicable encoding of rights and duties. This required the replacement of both the patrimonial courts of the manor and the personal cabinet of the king as mediating institutions of political authority. Reform required an impersonalized and universalized political space from which to organize the division of labor; and this required a political constitution. In the first decade of reform, Frederick was in no position to deny the handing over of executive power from the crown to Stein and Hardenberg's small group of Cameralists and therefore promised a constitution forthwith. Yet after 1815, with the immediacy of the geo-political threat over, Frederick started to renege on this promise. With the French lesson of convening the estates fresh in mind, Frederick had no desire to risk a legislative national assembly. And the creation of an array of Provincial Estates in 1821, wherein the nobility enjoyed significant influence, was the King's own special *Mittlestand* solution to the question of constitutionalism.<sup>34</sup> This body, however, worked only in an advisory capacity at best, had no legislative or executive punch, and therefore could not form general agreements with the nobility over new taxes to finance war preparation. Thus, for monarchical fear of a French destination, emulation of the British road was denied: a fixed ceiling was given to the accruing of public debt (Tilly 1966: 488–493). The fateful relation of finances to railroad construction to the Jacobin threat would be visited in the near future, and with disastrous results for the monarchy.

But how did all these frictions over the reformation of the military-agrarian complex affect the intellectual strata?

The military reforms had led to increased official enthusiasm for the neo-humanist movement of raising independent and original thought over machine-like obedience (a movement of which Hegel, of course, was a member) (McClelland 1980: 122–125). In principle, Frederick could tolerate this neo-humanist revolution of the mind so long as he deemed it to strengthen the military arm of his authority.



Yet neo-humanism was a double-edged sword because it promoted education as a pursuit relatively autonomous from the interests of the crown. Just how autonomous the new universities should imagine themselves to be remained an open question with the historical example of the Mainz Jacobin insurrection of 1793 led by Andreas Hoffman and Georg Forster – university fellows (Pinkard 2000: 102). In fine, the Prussian reforms had created considerable opportunities for the intellectual stratum to improve their position within the ruling strata; but at the same time they had increased the danger of reaction against this improvement.

It was, however, those who supplied the propaedeutic for university education, the Gymnasium teachers, who broke the delicate rapport between Frederick and the experiment in free thought. In 1811 Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, a teacher from a Berlin gymnasium, founded the first openly political society in Prussia independent of *Junker*, monarch, administrator and philosopher (see Düding 1987: 22–27; Schulze 1991: 50–52). Jahn's gymnasium movement sought to cultivate within the youth a German identity befitting the challenges of the times, namely the expulsion of the despotic French who had by now turned German upon German in their fiendish plots for world domination. To contribute to this aim, the gymnasium was to be a martial training ground – both physically and spiritually.

Certainly, Jahn's project was romantic in the strict sense of the word, promoting a love of community. But it was noticeably different to that of the Romantics. Instead of looking back only to the medieval Holy Roman Empire in order to glorify a hierarchical corporate order, Jahn called for the resurrection of a putatively egalitarian ancient Teutonic community (see Simon 1954: 316; Mosse 1975: 75). In other words, Jahn agitated for the creation, on German soil, of a distinctly French-like political subject to match, paradoxically, the threat of Napoleon. Instead of the *Volk* being understood, as it had been by Justus Möser, as a personalized and localized political community, Jahn effectively transformed its meaning to accord with an impersonal collective. The social intercourse through which the egalitarian rights and duties of this new political subject were to be expressed and defined was the quality of *Deutschtum* – 'German-ness'.

Jahn's example soon caught the imagination of university students. Subsequently, a trend began in the formation of societies diametrically opposed to the old corporatist student *Korps*. These *Burschenschaften* sought to construct an authentic and essentialist yet non-corporate German identity by unifying all students across fraternities (see Stark

1978: 329). But to add insult to injury, while bypassing the nobility, crown and administration (as well as outlawing the noble art of dueling among students), the *Burschenschaften* promoted the new Teutonic political subject by borrowing from the Jacobin festivals of Reason! Only by copying such public gatherings could the virtues of *Deutschtum* be communicated *en masse*.<sup>35</sup>

The festivals received their original impetus as celebrations of the *Volkskrieg* – the wars of independence won (so it was claimed) by a citizen-army in which many a *Burschenschaft* had fought (Stark 1978: 325; Hughes 1988: 43).<sup>36</sup> The legend of the *Volkskrieg* appropriated the French Jacobin subject – the citizen-soldier – and rendered it in German colors to be turned back against its Gallic homeland. The most notable *Burschenschaft* festival occurred in 1817 at the Wartburg in Thuringia, where, in a fever pitch of *Deutschtum*, one participant proclaimed: ‘The will of the princes is not the law of the Volk; rather the law of the Volk should be the will of the princes’ (cited in Stark 1978: 335). Indeed, the *Burschenschaften* were foremost among the vocal critics of Frederick’s broken promise of a constitution (ibid.: 334). In effect, then, the lower ranks of the *Bildungsbürgertum* were launching a very German revolution from below: they were attempting to orientate the future direction of German development by reference to a Jacobin political subject whose rights and duties implicitly subverted the ruling position of reformer, counter-reformer and crown alike.

The opportunity to suppress this dangerous doctrine presented itself when a Prussian noble conservative playwright was assassinated soon after the Wartburg festival at the hands of a *Burschenschaft* member. At this point, Metternich intervened and proclaimed that the *Burschenschaften* were plotters intent on undermining that artifact of the *ancien régime*, the German Confederation (Lutz 1971: 222). The infamous Carlsbad Decrees of 1819 followed swiftly. This series of reactionary measures, agreed on by most German monarchs, tightened article 13 of the Confederation’s act of association, which directed each state to base its constitution on the old Estate system. Most importantly, the Decrees established a plenipotentiary in each university possessing powers to punish political dissidents (McClelland 1980: 62).

This reaction directly affected Hegel. On a number of occasions, after Hegel had moved to the most important neo-humanist university in Berlin, Frederick issued cautions to any faculty who harbored ‘dispositions dangerous to the state’ (Pinkard 2000: 440, 503–504). In fact, a number of his students had been present at the Wartburg and were arrested in the post-Carlsbad roundup of members of *Burschenschaften* in

Prussia (Lutz 1971: 222). Therefore to Hegel it seemed as if the *Burschenschaften* were only fanning the flames of this reaction and in doing so negatively impacting upon his revolution of Philosophy. The very duty of the Philosopher to spread *Bildung* universally across the social world was now being threatened by the monarchs of that superannuated political form, the German Confederation. The *Burschenschaften* had thus tainted the whole of academia with a rebellious seditious streak, and this was the Reason for Hegel's vitriolic and seemingly conservative attacks on the new nationalism – *Deutschdumm* (German-dumbness), as he sarcastically called it (Pinkard 2000: 311).

Furthermore, Hegel's dislike of *Deutschtum* was compounded by the way in which it oriented social beings toward what he believed to be *the* problem of the modern world – producing an Ethical State out of impersonalized individual freedom. Hegel believed that, rather than facing this head on, the *Burschenschaft* movement sought to replace the French challenge of modern life, which he saw in terms of socializing the egoistic individualism of the Constitution with an essentialized and archaic collective identity. Instead of orienting German politics toward the modern challenge of incorporating, yet at the same time transforming, the French political subject, the *Burschenschaften* sought both to freeze history and to stratify the relations between societies.

In opposition to the *Burschenschaften*, Hegel's political philosophy charged the Philosopher with pursuing a diametrically opposed project of *Aufhebung*, namely, to transform the social world through an international dimension by driving forward the dialectical interaction of *Bildung* and egoism within the impersonalized individual. And to launch such a substitute revolution of Philosophy – one that would lift Germany out of backwardness and at the same time inaugurate a new world-historical era of modern political freedom – required a *continual* process of *mediation* even through and across political boundaries; it could not countenance a stratification of particular identities in either time or space.

But, a *continual* mediation? Was this possible? Were there not limits to the spread of the Ethical State? How could the German Philosopher hope to ethically mediate a social space outside the confines of the state? The answer Hegel gave relied upon the auspices of *Geist*, and it is to an investigation of this mystical force that we must now turn. Here we shall find how Hegel's consciousness of backwardness, at the same time as it analytically positioned social transformation within an international dimension, prescriptively obscured the results of this process – a multi-linear modernity centered upon the frictional contestation

between two political subjects, the impersonalized individual and the impersonal collective.

### ***Geist* as a consciousness of backwardness**

*... German emotion is calmer, more ember than flame, so it expresses itself more slowly and pierces the heart more deeply.*

Clausewitz<sup>37</sup>

Let us now return to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and specifically the notion of the Ethical State as the highest moment of the mediation of particular interests through universal institutions. As may be remembered, the degree to which particular interests had resolved into a higher constitutional unity formed the national being's 'spirit', and this was expressed in a singularity, the sovereign (Hegel 1975: 51–65; 1991: 367 §331). Hegel, via this conceptual move, effectively anthropomorphized the state into an individual (ibid.: 51–53; Hegel 1991: 359 §321). But what kind of domain did this spiritual 'individual' inhabit?

By the logic of one aspect of Hegel's argument, the international domain was, as in text book Realism, akin to a state of nature. *The Philosophy of Right*, after all, documented a process of mediation which itself pre-supposed the existence of a higher, more universalistic, institution. And there existed, materially, no institution higher than the executive and legislature of the Ethical State (ibid.: 275 §258). So if *Aufhebung* was to incorporate an international dimension to social transformation, the relation between states had to somehow be facilitated by a higher universalistic institution through which the particularities of national spirits could be mediated – with *Bildung* – into a higher ethical life (ibid.: 359–363 §321–326).

Hegel's resolution to this dilemma was that geo-political contest played itself out as the expression of an *unobservable* 'institution', *Geist* – the world spirit (Hegel 1975: 26–32, 124–131). *Geist* manifested itself most forcefully through war, as geo-political contestation tested the resolve and integrity of each individual national spirit (Hegel 1991: 361–365 §324–328; 1999f: 140).<sup>38</sup> Although all states, just as individuals in civil society, had to recognize each other's independence formally, it was nevertheless the constitutional content of the state – the degree of successful mediation of universal and particular interests – that substantively decided which 'individual' would be judged through war as truly independent and thus free (Hegel 1991: 366–367 §330–331). War decided what state possessed the higher spirit, and this world-historical

'individual' would set the standard by which others were externally pressured to transform internally, else wither and die. Through the working out of this geo-political inter-subjectivity, the kernel of a new stage of development in world spirit would be placed in a young state. As the current world-historical state decayed, world spirit would move to inhabit this new national spirit. Thus geo-political contestation quite literally formed the 'world's court of judgment'.

Nevertheless, by positing *Geist* as that force which constituted international relations, Hegel was making use of, in the words of Hedley Bull (1977), a domestic analogy. Just as particular individuals in civil society found their universality in the state, so, according to Hegel, did particular states find their universality in world spirit (Hegel 1991: 324 §362). And just as within the state, particularistic individuals found rapprochement through a higher mediation, so too did particular states find *rapprochement through war* and the world spirit. To be clear, Hegel did not expect or desire the movement of *Geist* to result in a world state; rather, the rapprochement that *Geist* pursued in the geo-political realm was one of socio-political forms: through the mediation of diremption, both domestically and geo-politically, humanity was historically progressing through the dialectical expression of *one* specific political subject – the free and equal individual.

Crucially, this meant that in Hegel's narrative *Geist* could countenance only *one* leading spirit in any historical moment (ibid.: 374 §347): through the dialectical passing of world spirit from one leading nation to another, world development occurred in a uni-linear fashion. It is, to say the least, surprising that the outcome of Hegel's attempt to sensitize the German ruling strata toward pursuing social transformation through an international dimension was a uni-linear philosophy of world history de-sensitized to the generative nature of this dimension, one that gave rise to a specifically modern form of multi-linearity. This, however, was precisely the tension produced by Hegel's consciousness of German backwardness and his attempt to prescribe ways out of this condition.

Let us recapitulate the argument so far. The starting point of Hegel's political philosophy took Germany and France (especially, but not only) to be organized through qualitatively different forms of social intercourse and political rights and duties. They were, in this sense, different national spirits, defined as much by their comparative difference as by anything else. Here, the ethical mediation of social beings was a process specific to the nature of each polity, therefore ruling out a pre-existing trans-national domain. Yet conscious of the comparative backwardness that this difference had now placed Germany under, Hegel sought

to find a substitute revolution through which Germany could enter (French) modernity and solve the ethical problem of modern life where even France had failed. This required analyzing social transformation through an international dimension, so as to conceive of the importation but also transformation of a foreign political subject across borders. *Aufhebung*, a process of mediating particular interests through various socio-political institutions, would have to be driven by the agency of *Bildung* wielded by the Philosopher, namely, the cultivation of a self-awareness of the social roots of one's individuality. However, Hegel had positioned this whole strategy around the assumption that there was one singular modern subject against which Germany had been rendered backward – the impersonalized individual of the French Constitution. *Bildung* was the ethical verso to this egoistic individual, so the very justification of escaping backwardness through a substitute revolution of Philosophy was that this was part of a *universal* process of rapprochement among polities by way of solving the ethical problem of modern life. And this required *Bildung* to work even beyond the political community, through a universal, transversal institution of socio-political mediation, *Geist*.

By this reasoning, the 'international' does not, then, appear in Hegel's political philosophy to be discussed as an ultimate object the social substance of which, namely *Geist*, is to be contested. *Geist* is not a manifestation of mysticism, the teleology of individual freedom or even the manifestation of human consciousness in general. *Geist* is a necessary manifestation of Hegel's consciousness of backwardness. This consciousness of backwardness propelled Hegel to construct a particular analysis of, and prescription to overcome, illiberal politics – the revolution of Philosophy – by simultaneously constructing the universal archetype of 'liberal' agency against which and through which such possibilities could be manifested – *Geist*, the world spirit, and its inner dialectic of *Bildung* and egoism. *Geist* was Hegel's false step into universalism made necessary by the dictates of his substitute revolution of Philosophy.

With this in mind, it is now instructive to dissect Hegel's attempt to force the French revolution of backwardness into a uni-linear world history expressed in the ethical development of the free and equal individual. In Hegel's opinion, the French Constitution manifested a purely outward (formal) individual freedom while ignoring its inner content, leaving the spiritual soil of France too poor to facilitate the growth of an Ethical State. Conversely, Hegel pointed out, Luther's Reformation had already produced a rich inner freedom, even if the German polity was woefully lacking in its outward manifestation.<sup>39</sup>

By this reasoning, the French Revolution had now passed on the formal political component of individual freedom – the Constitution – to the German world via the world-historical individual, Napoleon, and his Civil Code. The German Philosopher could therefore indeed conceive of himself as world-historical in solving the problem of the ethics of the impersonalized individual by actualizing its freedom both internally and externally.<sup>40</sup>

To legitimize this claim to a prior actualization of inner Reason in Germany, Hegel had to make two historical–sociological propositions. First, he proposed that art, science, religion – in short, all those facets of human life that cultivated inner freedom – were in fact moved by an *evolutionary* logic; while politics, the medium of external freedom was open to *rupture* (Hegel 1975: 120). Second, he ascribed this inner evolution to the Germanic people in general – meaning, in fact, most European polities.<sup>41</sup> Hegel invoked the world of European Christianity as the milieu of modern world development while noting that a fracture within this world had appeared: Catholicism had led to the political rupture of the French Revolution, while Protestantism had led to the internal revolution (Hegel 1999c: 220).

In setting up the problem of the contemporaneous transition of world spirit in this way, Hegel implicitly allowed the specificity of the French Revolution as a political rupture to be superseded by a *general* evolution. Through this treatment of the Revolution, Hegel preserved the universal and *uni-linear* nature of world history *even while* acknowledging the fracturing of the European body politic that the Revolution had caused. And the key outcome of this narrative was its necessary compression of the differential (if relational) development of France and Britain into one trajectory expressed through the dialectic of egoism and *Bildung*.

With this in mind, let us return to Hegel's understanding of that Enlightenment philosopher from whom both he, and his illustrious predecessor, Kant, had first understood the relationship between ethics and politics: Rousseau. Hegel, in fact, believed Rousseau to be the ideational originator of the French Revolution (see Wokler 1998: 35). Furthermore, Hegel categorized Rousseau's notion of natural right, alongside Kant's, as formalist in nature. And what is more, Hegel conflated this formal understanding and the British empirical understanding into the same tradition against which to contrast his own political philosophy of *Aufhebung* (Smith 1990: 226). However, contrary to Hegel's understanding (1991: 277 §256), Rousseau had never invoked a will individually possessed by a political subject of the type engaged with by

British empiricism and Kant's noumenal Reason. Neither was Rousseau's General Will a mere *aggregate* of particularistic wills, but rather an organic, virtuous body.<sup>42</sup> Rousseau's General Will was not even the same as the General Will of the Jacobins, because, as I have discussed already, the international dimension of social transformation active in the French Revolution had produced a new political subject: one neither of the British ilk (an impersonalized individual), nor of Rousseau's *ancien régime* (a personalized collective), but an *impersonal collective*. Hegel however, had assumed that the Terror was the workings of the impersonalized *individual* ... and he had assumed too much.

And what political subject, one might ask, *had* powered the sinews of Napoleon's *Grande Armée* and rendered Germany comparatively 'backward'? Moreover, who was it that took this nationalist spirit most seriously: Hegel, or the *Burschenschaften*? Hegel called *Deutschtum* *Deutschtumm* precisely because he believed it to be avoidance of, rather than engagement with, the core problem of modern life. When, as part of crafting his substitute modern revolution of Philosophy, Hegel raised *Bildung* to the verso of *the* expressive subject of modernity, he necessarily took the meaning of modernity to be exhausted by the inner workings of the impersonalized individual. Therefore, any attention given to the impersonal collective as a political vehicle with which to race against the French, showed, for Hegel, a *lack of Bildung*.

In sum, even though Hegel's consciousness of backwardness had granted him the vista from which to imagine a social transformation to modernity through an international dimension, this dimension *had* to act for him as a conduit for rapprochement, a singular world-historical passage, navigated by the *Bildungsbürgertum*, from particularity toward universality. In truth, however, the international dimension was not a passage from *ancien* particularity toward modern universality, but a passage toward a new form of multi-linearity. And multi-linearity, as a structural aspect of modernity, was anathema to Hegel's *Geist*, the spirit of the revolution of Philosophy, and an impasse for the agency of *Bildung*.

## Hegel's last challenge

*Freedom is the new religion ... the French are the elected people ... Paris is the new Jerusalem and the Rhine is the Jordan which separates the sacred land of liberty from the land of Philistines.*

Henrich Heine



It is fitting to end this chapter by considering Hegel's reaction to two premier events in European politics just before his death: the July Revolution in France, and the English Reform Bill. Their simultaneous occurrence would question the ability of Hegel's universal and uni-linear narrative to explain these latest turns in modern world history; the next set of revolutions would undermine this narrative completely.

In July 1830 Europe, as Metternich put it, 'caught cold' (Brose 1993: 88). The source of the infection was a revolution in Paris in reaction to an ultra-conservative clique that, through the government of Charles X, wished to restore the *ancien régime*. Charles had already dismissed the troublesome Chamber of Deputies twice, and then proceeded to erect, in the July Ordinances, strong press controls. Members of the recently disbanded National Guard manned the Parisian barricades forthwith, and the Bourbon was forced to abdicate in favor of the pro-bourgeois Duke of Orleans. This re-assertion of the republican principles of the original Revolution ignited the passion of many a *Bürger* in Europe – all the more so with the French bourgeois minority in Belgium succeeding in gaining independence from the Dutch. Indeed, at the time, July 1830 was believed to be as epochal an event as August 1789 (Eyck 1957: 334–336; Pinkard 2000: 631).

However, with the return of the revolution came a return of French chauvinism. For two years Germany – and Prussia especially – were rocked by belligerent French rhetoric regarding the return of the natural frontier of the Rhine (Brose 1993: 88). This was accompanied by constant mobilization and de-mobilization; at one point a French army even besieged Antwerp. On top of this, when Czar Nicholas I ordered Polish troops to advance on Belgium and France, an anti-Holy Alliance insurgency began in Poland. Frederick's support of the Slavic Czar over the putatively Teutonic Polish enraged the supporters of *Deutschtum*.<sup>43</sup> Thus, pressure from the east and the west led to a resurgence of national festivals, although this time centered in Bavaria rather than Prussia (Düding 1987: 35; Hughes 1988: 74).

Furthermore, July 1830 re-activated the pressure exerted on Frederick over the creation and content of a non-corporate unmediated political subject. And this is why Hegel, so enamored of 1789, nevertheless fiercely criticized those who imagined the present as a romantic replay of the Bastille (Pinkard 2000: 633). For Hegel, such an assessment of the July Revolution, just like the festival of *Deutschtum* at the Wartburg, could only work to de-stabilize the delicate path of *Aufhebung* in Prussia.<sup>44</sup> Instead, he made sense of the July Revolution by reference to his narrative of 1789 – as yet another consequence of the separation

of religion and politics in France; the abdication of Charles was just one more installment of the Terror (Hegel 1995: 460). Yet, it was this revolution that still seemed to be shaping the modern world, and not Hegel's more subterranean force of *Bildung*.

As if all this was not enough, a very British kind of revolution was also gaining steam, climaxing in the 1832 Reform Act regarding parliamentary representation. In light of this reform, in the last article before his death, Hegel re-considered his increasingly negative verdict on the ethical health of the British state. Previously he had painted Albion in the colors of a declining national spirit for a number of reasons. First, Britain had not managed to resolve the problem of the *Pöbel* produced by the creation of an impersonalized individualistic civil society (Hegel 1999e; see also Pelcynski 1951; Macgregor 1992). Second, Britain had never managed to produce a universalistic legal code, but only a common law that operated purely on the particularistic principle of precedent (Hegel 1991: 241–242 §211, 1999c: 221). And third, the representative system operated on the enfranchisement of the propertied and moneyed class; such corruption could not be tackled by an administrative elite who, corrupt themselves, exhibited no sign of *Bildung* in their vocational training (Hegel 1999c: 222; 1999e: 250, 263, 265). Yet even though Britain was not a land of *Bildung*, Hegel had always admired Britain as the font of individual liberty: in no state had such freedom been the subject of public debate and reflection (Hegel 1999c: 221). Moreover, Britain had exhibited its world-historical leadership by tutoring the world in such freedom through the medium of trade. '[A]ll great and enterprising nations push their way to the sea' (Hegel 1991: 269 §247), said Hegel, implicitly promoting the trident of blue-water policy over the thunderbolt of the *Grande Armée*.

And now Hegel dared to ponder as to whether the 1832 Reform Bill might signify a rejuvenation of this world-historical spirit (e.g., Hegel 1999e: 237; see also Pinkard 2000: 641). But if Britain was rejuvenating itself, what developmental trajectory the spirit would take? Would it follow the French path? And if so, would this not be dangerous to his historical narrative to the extent that a Protestant spirit was now falling back into the Catholic trap? (see Pinkard 2000: 641) Indeed, with a pending reform on municipal ordinance that restricted city citizenship according to a property qualification, might Prussia too, under the influence of the British spirit, fall into the same trap? (see *ibid.*: 641–644) Then again, perhaps Britain might well follow its own path, and not that of either France or Prussia-Germany. In this respect, Hegel's unresolved question upon his death was this: who was it that was leading

world history? The French, the British, or the German? But the framing of this question only allowed for a uni-linear answer – *either* Britain *or* France *or* Prussia-Germany. Such a framework systematically excluded the challenge of coming to terms with the multi-linear character of modern world development and the generative nature of its international dimension of social transformation.

## Conclusion

Hegel is remarkable for his acknowledgement and embrace of an international dimension of social transformation. Hegel is just as remarkable for making sense of the particular backwardness of German politics by reference to the internal developmental tensions of a singular and universal liberal political subject, thus closing down a vista onto the *generative* nature of this international dimension. Ultimately, Hegel's substitute revolution of Philosophy failed to account for the fact that the 'original', the French one, had not replicated the impersonalized individual of British common law, but generated, through the international dimension of social transformation, a novel political subject – the impersonal collective. Hegel's *faux pas* (courtesy of *Geist*) into universalism could not abide the generative effect of this dimension, and because of this he consistently and vehemently criticized the project to emulate the impersonal collective in Germany as *anti-modern*.

Indeed, the paradoxical way in which Hegel's political philosophy engaged with the international dimension of social transformation is ultimately the Reason for his paradoxical stance on the social constitution of geo-politics and its combination of (putatively) Realist and Liberal worldviews: for Hegel the 'international' is both a quasi-anarchic realm of radical difference *and* an institution of *Geist* driving forward universal rapprochement. By this reasoning, Hegel's *Geist* cannot be put to rest in IR theory so long as a social theory of international relations requires us to grapple with the problem of understanding the co-constitutive relationship of differentially formed political communities without conceptually destroying that co-constituted difference under a universal historical trajectory. One can, of course, still fruitfully use Hegel's theory of the constitutive self in order to investigate the 'international' as an object of enquiry. Yet this will not reveal the constitutive nature of the 'international' in Hegel's theorizing of social transformation.

Hegel is a crucial author in the story of the development of a 'liberal' project designed to overcome German backwardness. For it is with

him that the *Bildungsbürgertum* started to assume that their agency to effect German reform was directly embedded in a universal struggle over the development of impersonalized individual freedom. It is with Hegel that *Bildung* rises to a level of universal importance. Indeed, with Hegel's (late) rise to prominence in Prussia, and as part of the broader neo-humanist project, Philosophy had become institutionalized, if only for a short while and imperfectly so, as a leading force within the ruling strata through which to guide modernization. Hegel had justified this ascent by claiming that German Philosophy was *the universal* force of modern world development, more progressive and leading than even the French Revolution. This, unsurprisingly, was a heavy load for the intellectual stratum of a backward polity to bear. And once Hegel's substitute revolution had patently failed, once *Bildung* and the Philosopher had been proven unable to capture and mediate the developmental tensions of a multi-linear modernity, once the 'liberal' project of the *Bürgertum* had failed to live up to its world-historical calling, all universal claims as to the analytical and ethical negotiation of a fractured humanity would be treated with suspicion and even derision.

Now, however, we must turn to the developments in Prussia leading up to 1848, especially, the growing fear that, through the growth of an unanchored *Pöbel*, a Jacobin enemy was being created from within. In the following short Interlude we shall see how this tension began to separate the business, academic and bureaucratic interests within the *Bürgertum* along the path toward the 1848 revolution. Outlining the disastrous nature of the Revolution will then set the context for the response, by the *Bildungsbürgertum*, to 1848 – *Realpolitik* – and Max Weber's own attempt to re-formulate the intellectual's 'liberal' project for a post-Hegelian world.

# 5

## Interlude: *Vormärz*

The 1820s' depression exacerbated the diminishing hold on the means of production that some peasantry had managed to retain with agrarian reforms (Berdahl 1988: 265). In Eastern Prussia, the hunger march became a regular occurrence, and the whole of Germany was captivated by the desperate plight of the Silesian weavers (Gailus 1994: 173; Beck 1995: 169). This condition of dearth was perceived by contemporaries to be fundamentally unprecedented: it seemed permanent and systemic, and could not be attributed merely to a natural famine or to an idle peasantry (Marquardt 1969: 82). Moreover, with resurgent republicanism across the Rhine emanating from the July Revolution, the fear of the *Pöbel* haunted the land as much as hunger (see for example, McClelland 1971: 63; Berdahl 1988: 309). Anti-Manchesterism was progressively blended ever more finely with anti-Jacobinism: Stein and Hardenberg's previous concerns over mass peasant migration to industrializing towns remained center stage in political debates (Gagliardo 1969: 218). Frederick himself even issued a decree condemning the flight of capital from agriculture to stock exchange speculation (Brose 1993: 237).

### **The fracturing of the *Bürgertum***

For our purpose here, the most important outcome of these growing antagonisms over the effects of decorporation lies in the increasingly differentiated responses offered from within the *Bürgertum*. This process of differentiation can be distilled into: (a) the rise of the bureaucratic stratum, (b) the spread of *Deutschtum* as a republican-nationalist platform within and outside of academia, and (c) the introduction of a business liberal class positioned half within, half against the ruling strata.

The bureaucracy wasted little time in taking advantage of the new governmental autonomy introduced by Stein and Hardenberg (Hintze 1975: 83–87; Simms 1998: 79). By the end of the 1820s, the ultimate executive power lay in the highest collegiate of councils within the bureaucracy (see Beck 1995: 126–129). Given the existing battles within the administration between those ‘liberals’ of Hardenberg’s era and the more conservative ruling strata (and this fault line was especially pronounced in Berlin), the bureaucratic estate, as a whole, started to perceive itself in self-referential terms as a miniature version of society (see *ibid.*: 129; Angermann 1981: 86; Knudsen 1990: 116). It is in this sense that the public space of debate *within* the now relatively autonomous halls of administration was increasingly taken by its members to be a viable substitute for that created by a French-style National Assembly.<sup>1</sup> It was therefore assumed that in Prussia the *Beamtenstaat* (the bureaucratic state) would take the role of surrogate nation instead of the Third Estate. And for the impersonalized and universal rights and duties of the Constitution, the *Beamtenstand* (the bureaucratic class) would substitute impersonal bureaucratic rule.

Academic qualifications for entry into the bureaucracy became more rigorous, and of course, sons of bureaucrats were better placed, than outsiders, to follow their fathers’ career (Gillis 1971: 23–26; Beck 1995: 129–130). In addition, Frederick had capped government finances (for fear of the French-like consequences of convoking a National Assembly to vote for more taxes). This, combined with a growing importance attributed to university education through neo-humanist reforms, led to an increase in students at the same time as the number of administrative posts remained static.<sup>2</sup> Bureaucratic elitism therefore contributed to a growing crisis within the *Bildungsbürgertum* over career prospects. The squeeze on professional occupations made popular two alternative routes to political influence for the *Bürgertum*.

First, the academic route. After the Carlsbad decrees, universities witnessed increased radicalism among their fellowship regarding the promotion of the discourse of *Deutschtum* (Jarusch 1982: 10). Metternich’s rejuvenation of the Decrees in the 1832 Six Articles, re-affirming the monarchical responsibility to support the paternal spirit of the Holy Alliance in the face of the July Revolution, simply intensified this radicalization (see Düding 1987: 35; Hughes 1988: 74–75). Therefore, as the *Burschenschaft* generation aged and turned into professors, a combination of nationalist and republican sentiments developed in academia and these sentiments were often self-consciously articulated against ‘bureaucratic absolutism’ (Stark 1978: 326, 335). The *Vormärz* era even

saw the rise of German Studies, a project that sought to recapture the egalitarian and republican roots of German law and literature (in distinction to the caste-like nature of the Roman versions).<sup>3</sup> And with the example of the realization of political participation in the July Revolution fresh in the mind, a radical wing of *Burschenschaften* even led a brief uprising in 1833 in Frankfurt. In fine, then, a somewhat ill-articulated republican-democratic academic stratum developed from student roots. It was liminally positioned in the ruling strata, and criticized the strictures of the existing reform project as a re-invented form of absolutism and clique rule.

Second, the business route. Under Napoleon's rule, guilds and feudal tenures had been abolished in the Rhineland, and a ruling business class had in effect been created with the re-organization of social reproduction through various chambers of commerce (see Diefendorf 1980: 204–206; Sperber 1991: 37–39). However, upon the return of the Rhineland to Hohenzollern rule in the Congress of Vienna, Frederick wished to replace *Rhenish* laws with the still corporately defined land laws of 1794 (the ALR), and to dismantle the *Rhenish* institutions – that is, the Chambers of Commerce – so as to build a Rhineland *Landtag* (Diefendorf 1980: 332). The business interests fought back. And because the Rhineland provided significant tax and excise returns, an uneasy truce remained in effect all the way up to 1848. It was, then, the Rhineland businessmen who became leading advocates of economic-liberal forms of governance in *Vormärz* Prussia.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, it is hard to find any kind of 'business liberal' in Prussia who fitted the stereotypical *laissez-faire* mentality (Sheehan 1973: 595–596). Almost all were worried about the rise of factories in the towns and the de-humanization of laborers in factory work, and almost all looked up to the magnificence of British competitiveness at the same time explicitly noting its deleterious effects (McClelland 1971: 63; Brose 1993: 55). In fact in the Rhineland *both* sides of the production divide retained guild sentiments: employees sought corporate protection from the vagaries of the market, while employers wished to protect their position of authority against the potential autonomy that their employees might gain as free laborers, even if this might make them a hostage to the fortunes of the conservative counter-reform project (Sperber 1991: 54). Perceiving themselves to occupy the urban front-line against this threat (see Gailus 1994: 187–189), the business liberals sought to strengthen their presently ambiguous position in the legislative and executive corridors of Prussian government. Increasingly, and especially after the July Revolution, the business liberals believed that

their voice was being sidelined by 'bureaucratic absolutism' (Gillis 1971: 15, 79; Sheehan 1973: 601; Sperber 1991: 110). What is more, their ranks were growing, as the narrowing of opportunities to enter the *Beamtenstand* pushed more and more university-educated *Bildungsbürgertum* to seek opportunities in business (see Gillis 1971: 15–23; McClelland 1980: 193–196).

### Floundering reform

Despite all the frictions that decorporation of the military–agrarian complex had created within the ruling strata, the *Beamtenstand* continued to energetically push forward reform. The prime Reason can be found in the continuing threats emanating from the geo-political milieu in general and France in particular. For, every crisis of governance in Paris had created a spewing forth of republican belligerency; and this, in turn, had invoked the threatening image of an army of citizen-soldiers marching into Prussia and turning the disaffected *Pöbel* against those authorities that had recently abandoned them to the vicissitudes of the market. For example, the war scares of 1830 provided the backdrop for the news that the French were planning a Paris-to-Strasbourg railway. The image of a French nation in arms invading at lightening speed thus forced the military reformers to take seriously the potential of private industry to construct a metal skeleton that would make Prussia a more hardy creature (see Showalter 1975: 19–34; Brose 1993: 175–178, 212–239). In fact, that famous customs union, the *Zollverein*, rather than as a tool to further industrialization, was introduced as a political artifice through which the Prussian government could partially incorporate and thus neutralize a dangerously pro-French Bavarian Rhineland.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, if Prussia faced the threat of republican France directly, its options, at all times, were once more subtly constrained by the overseas perfidious interests of the British Empire. Britain was hardly hostile to Prussia, for in the post-Napoleonic settlements Lord Castlereagh, desiring a bulwark against France, had actually given the German state more Rhineland than it had asked for (Simms 1998: 105–116). Nevertheless, the British government continued to pursue self-interested policies that either placed obstacles in the way of, or agitated further the tensions within, the reform of the Prussian military–agrarian complex.

For example, British negotiations with the *Zollverein* over iron tariffs were designed to encourage primary production in Prussia, especially



the export of cheap grain to the hungry British *Pöbel*.<sup>6</sup> This, of course, was entirely unhelpful for the railroad race that Prussia had embarked on with France. Or take the fallout of British attempts to solve the Eastern Question. The French government, being Egypt's premier development partner, chose not to support the Ottoman Sultan against incursions from Mohamed Ali. Louis Philippe was infuriated upon hearing the news that an Anglo-Russian entente had been formed without French approval to protect the Sultan, to push Ali back to his Egyptian home, and, for the British, to keep the route to India open.<sup>7</sup> With the appointment of Adolphe Thiers, rhetoric of the exceptional cultural identity and political interests of France in Europe increased, and in response, the discourse of *Deutschtum* experienced a popular explosion.<sup>8</sup> The whole incident galvanized the Francophobia of the young generation of *Burschenschaftler*, and led them to increasingly distance themselves from a king and government who would not defend the specific virtues of *Deutschtum* against French encroachments.<sup>9</sup>

In these ways, decorporation of the agrarian-military complex and geo-political tensions merged to place the *Beamtenstaat* substitution project under a systematic pressure that eventually led to its collapse.

Most importantly, increases in government spending on railroads were deemed necessary after 1830 in order to allow the Prussian army to match the potential speed of French deployment. However, this expenditure could not be met exclusively by private investment: it required new government loans and taxes, and thus a convening of a French-like General Estates to pass such measures. If all this was not enough, in 1840, a new king, Frederick IV, was crowned who, in the midst of this agitation, wished to return to the *Ständestaat* principles of his Great Prussian forebear and inaugurated an era of medieval-style Christian awakening.<sup>10</sup> It was this traditionalist Frederick who was compelled, in order to match French capabilities, to finally convene a United Diet in 1847.<sup>11</sup> Unsurprisingly, Frederick attempted to retain his paternal legacy by haphazardly constituting a modern undivided plenum through the old *corporate* principle of representation.<sup>12</sup> This arrangement satisfied neither *Bürger* nor *Junker*, and even less so when Frederick's first address to the Diet stonewalled the prospects of the writing of any 'unnatural' Constitution. With the refusal of the king to recognize the Diet as a permanent national assembly, the raising of a state loan for increased railroad production was unsurprisingly voted down. Add to this a crop failure leading to famine, and the environment was ripe for revolt.

## Failed revolution

Meanwhile, for the preceding couple of decades, all liberal eyes in France had been set upon the English parliamentary reform act of 1832. This act placed the *Juste Milieu* policy of the Orleanist government under comparative pressure by suggesting that the franchise ought to be extended alike in France beyond the most propertied. When the prime minister, François Guizot, resigned in February 1848, crowds gathered outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs anticipating political change. With an accidental whiff of grapeshot another revolution was ignited in Paris, soon spreading to Baden, Vienna and then Berlin. In Berlin the urban crowds likewise gathered to hear the response from Frederick to the new crowing of the Gallic cock; and again, an accidental shot set in motion a number of days of barricade fighting. It was in these March days that both the business liberals and *Bildungsbürgertum* sympathetic to the republican elements within the *Burschenschaften* made their bid against bureaucracy, nobility and the king for leadership over German reform. And so the individualist and republican elements of German liberalism briefly formed a common front.

In Berlin, Frederick ordered his troops to retreat from the city: better that he remain monarch in a mixed constitution than have the Hohenzollern claim to Prussia taken away from outside. Donning the citizen-soldier colors of the black, red and gold, Frederick kowtowed to all the liberal demands: parliamentary elections, freedom of press, a constitution and even a future liberal merging of Prussia with greater Germany. A constitutional government, headed by a Rhineland liberal, Ludolf Camphausen, replaced the now-discredited *Beamtenstaat*. On 22 May the first Prussian National Assembly convened, its members predominantly derived from the stratum of liberal businessmen;<sup>13</sup> and by November all noble privileges had been abolished (Carsten 1989: 102).

However, convoking a National Assembly did nothing to solve the biggest social problem of the era, the rise of an unrooted hungry mass. In fact, the fear of a French-like revolt of the *Pöbel* remained as high as ever: in March Prussia was shaken repeatedly by Jacobin scares; one rumor of French pillagers roaming the German countryside at will grew to enormous proportions (Stadelmann 1975: 80). Moreover, the Assembly of *Bürgertum* was reminded of the problem that revolution posed in terms of excess revolutionary energies, when, in the summer of 1848, a mob attacked the Berlin armory and liberated arms. Rudely awoken to the autonomous energies of the urban *Pöbel*, the Assembly shifted

toward the right. Plans to uproot the king's army and replace it with a body of citizen-soldiers responsible only to parliament foundered, and the Assembly began to look on the protective arm of the nobility in a less judgmental fashion (see Craig 1964: 111–112).

At the same time, spurred on by the victories in Vienna and Berlin, a combination of business liberals and, predominantly, German academics met, in May, at St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt. The task: to convene a preliminary Germany-wide parliament to replace Metternich's legacy.<sup>14</sup> Many of the old *Burschenschaft* academics were present at what came to be known as the 'professors' parliament' (Stark 1978: 342).<sup>15</sup> More than anywhere else, the Frankfurt parliament sought to constitutionally materialize the republican and egalitarian German *Volk*. Indeed, stunned by the initial shock of revolution, all German monarchs initially agreed to send delegates and support this German *Nationalversammlung* (national assembly). But here too the Frankfurters faced the same problems as did their Berlin brethren. For, in the meantime, the new French government of Alphonse de Lamartine had proclaimed that it could not, at least in principle, recognize the 1815 treaties that had torn the Rhineland from *la patrie* (see Stadelmann 1975: 107). And again, with the French threat hanging in the air, the parliamentarians were compelled to temper their liberation guaranteed through revolution with the need for their safety guaranteed by order (see for example, Hughes 1988: 88). Military and fiscal resources to prop up the new Germany were demanded from the various states; but, guarding their military power from the influence of these commoner pretenders, few monarchs responded adequately (*ibid.*: 89).

The Prussian nobility proceeded to take advantage of these vacillations. A number of *Junkers* in the high echelons of the military re-established a Camarilla around Frederick in response to their forced evacuation of Berlin.<sup>16</sup> By November, with the liberal assembly as much concerned for order as for revolution, this Camarilla succeeded in installing Count Brandenburg's conservative government. The re-occupation of Berlin with a military presence followed shortly, and by December Frederick felt secure enough to take the initiative in the reform process and grant the constitution with himself as the ultimate political authority and supreme commander-in-chief.

The fate of Frankfurt was similar to that of Berlin. Here, British foreign policy also played a role. In response to March 1848, German liberals had set up a provisional government in Schleswig in an attempt to break away from their Danish masters (see Stadelmann 1975: 112–113; Langewiesche 1992: 70–71). However, this northward extension of

a potentially powerful unified German state encroached too closely upon the sanctity of Britain's blue-water policy: Schleswig-Holstein bordered on the Baltic 'Bosphorus of the north'. So while the Frankfurt assembly commanded the Hohenzollern dynasty to do its pan-German duty and take Schleswig-Holstein, Frederick, under pressure from both Britain and Russia, instead concluded an armistice with the Danes, in August, at Malmö. Those assembled in St. Paul's Church cried treason, but in doing so only revealed their utter dependency on the goodwill of German monarchs. Worse was to follow. In a last effort to draw onboard Prussia, the Frankfurt Assembly offered Frederick the imperial crown in April 1849. Frederick promptly refused this 'crown from the gutter': how could he exercise his paternal authority over Germany if this very authority had been bestowed on him by his children?

Unable to make peace with the *Pöbel* and its perceived Jacobinist tendency, business and academic leaders in Berlin and Frankfurt abandoned their plans to replicate a French-like constitutional hegemony of the bourgeoisie and fell back into place behind the monarch and the armed nobility. Moreover, with this defeat had also been sacrificed the one project that concretely attempted to find a Prussian substitute for French Constitutionalism: with 1848 the project to develop as a *Beamtenstaat* reached an ignoble end. The next German project of substitution would be a nationalist socialism.

# 6

## Weber's *Realpolitik*

### Introduction

Max Weber has a nebulous presence in IR. On the one hand, he does not occupy a position in the classical canon of political thought equivalent to that of, say, Hobbes. But on the other hand, the reception of his social scientific endeavor in Anglo-American academia at large and IR in particular has informed many of the most basic typologies of the modern state apparatus and modern political rule<sup>1</sup> as well as some of the most prominent ways of understanding the ethico-political character of a world of territorial states (Walker 1993a; Neumann and Sending 2007). There is, however, an increasing body of literature that has sought to refute this orthodox Anglo-American reading of Weber.<sup>2</sup> In various ways these works all criticize the conflation of Weber's 'positivism' with the natural-scientific meaning of 'objectivity' dominant in Anglo-American social science.

The re-interpretation of Weber in IR has taken advantage of a movement in Political Theory to contextualize Weber's political thought through its German roots wherein the influence of Nietzsche and neo-Kantian *Kulturphilosophie* has been uncovered (Barker 1980; Eden 1983; Scaff 1987; Löwith 1993) along with a more careful appreciation of Weber's writings on the vocations of science and politics as peculiar to his pre-Weimar surroundings (Mommsen 1984; Beetham 1989; Titunik 1995; Kim 2002; Pfaff 2002). For IR, these literatures have been engaged with primarily in order to re-assess the value-neutral status of Weber's *Realpolitik*, usually with an eye to rescuing Morgenthau from a neo-realist teleological history of social-scientific advance toward (Anglo-American) positivism. For this purpose, Weber's famous texts on the vocation of politics and science are re-interpreted as informing

a quasi-tragic awareness of the necessary evil involved in political actions. In fine, responsibility in policy-making, especially foreign policy, requires an awareness that there are limits to the pursuit of universal ideals, and that illiberal means might have to be chosen in order to mount the best imperfect defense of individual freedom (Walker 1991; Barkawi 1998; Pichler 1998; Williams 2005a).

Of all the authors discussed in this book, Weber, at first glance, seems to be the least-affected by a consciousness of German backwardness. His method of constructing ideal types was based on the belief that one could not mount value comparisons across differentially developed cultural systems; rather, each system had to be critically appreciated by its own standards. Even his historical narratives, all of which possessed vast geo-cultural breadth and chronological depth, dealt with random conjunctures rather than with pre-ordained expressive subjects. In other words, narratives of progress, for Weber, were fictions to be mobilized to make more sense of the geo-cultural peculiarity of current German ways of thinking about the truth of human existence. Indeed, any claims to the existence of collective harmonies or of universal rapprochement of human societies were, for Weber, ideologies that facilitated the will to power of individuals.

In IR most engagements with Weber focus upon how he constructed international relations as an object of analytical and ethical enquiry by reference to the above facets of his oeuvre: analytically, through his epistemology of radical cultural differences; and ethically, in the way that such differences produce limits to the modeling of political action upon universally applicable ethics. It is through this approach that Weber's fusion of ethics and politics are seen as precursors to Morgenthau's conservative liberalism or contextualized as part of the grand tradition of tragic sensibility in political thought. Weber *can* be understood as a sort of 'phenomenalized' Kantian, allowing us to think about the practical limits of applying liberal ethics to mold the world of politics. And this thinking *can* be mobilized toward investigating international relations in terms of a condition of irreducible cultural diversity. Nevertheless, to do so misses the depth to which this 'diversity' informed Weber's quasi-tragic relating of the liberal project to illiberal politics.

In this Chapter 1 show that the common thread running through Weber's oeuvre and pushing forward this fusion is, in fact, a consciousness of German backwardness. Weber did not merely posit difference as the object of social enquiry: at a deeper level, it was inter-societal difference that generated the fusion of ethics and politics that, through

his vocations of science and politics, produced Weber's special brand of *Realpolitik*. However, I argue that this fusion of ethics and politics depended upon a value comparison made across cultural systems: Weber saw exemplified in the historical rise of the English middle classes the universal archetype of liberal political agency. Having made this comparison, Weber would ultimately, through the political agency of the German *Bildungsbürgertum* imagine his own substitute project of German development to be embedded within a singular world-historical Liberal project. Moreover, the ontological basis that allowed for this *faux pas* into universalism was one ultimately inherited from the German intellectual engagement with modernity through the French Revolution. For, both analytically and ethically, Weber assumed the problem of modern social transformation to be exhausted by the struggle over the negative and positive aspects of a singular political subject – the impersonalized individual. Weber's casting of the ethics and politics of the liberal individual within a world of cultural difference nevertheless occluded the generative nature of the international dimension of social transformation that produced such difference in modern world development.

Weber believed that the 'liberal' project of the *Bildungsbürgertum* would have to embrace the infinite particularity of cultural systems in order to save the promises of individual freedom in an era where Hegel's universalism regarding the agency of *Bildung* had been discredited. *Bildung*, for Weber, had to cultivate a self-awareness of the national limits of individual thought and action. With Weber, then, the spread and penetration of *Bildung* starts to 'fall' – it becomes nationally limited. What framed the urgency of this reformulation of the 'liberal' project for Weber was the belief that German development, despite its technical and material successes, was backward in character. And the source of this backwardness was the arrested development of the German middle classes themselves, a legacy of Bismarck's rule. For, with the alliance of iron and rye, Bismarck had effectively foreclosed any space in the political system for the middle classes to pursue their own interests. By supporting what Weber took to be the atavistic discourse of *Deutschtum* and a traditional *Volk*, and thereby passively allowing the instrumental rationalization of the organs of governance, the German middle classes displayed no 'heroic' agency through which to spread an ethical approach of individual freedom.

To find a substitute agent for the arrested development of the German middle classes, Weber produced his own brand of *Realpolitik* the fortunes of which were dependent upon the cultivation of a plebiscitary

democracy. In this special democracy, parliament would be turned into a breeding ground for non-noble but charismatic politicians who, leading mass parties, could aspire to political dominance. Once the masses had been animated by this demagogic politics, once, instead of passively following an instrumental rationality, they were pursuing a moral obligation toward the *Volk*, and once the stranglehold of the atavistic classes on this moral obligation had been broken, there would exist the opportunity for the intellectual stratum to inject *Bildung* into the body politics through the vocations of science and politics.

The disparate nature of Weber's texts, in terms of objects of enquiries and shifts in method, makes his works particularly difficult to comprehend as a whole (see Tenbruck 1980; Hennis 1983). For these reasons, rather than following a strictly chronological discussion of Weber's works, I make a number of passes through the oeuvre in general, each time focusing more on the obscured international dimension of Weber's production of knowledge on the modern (German) condition. However, to draw out the substantive context in which Weber's *Realpolitik* developed, I first of all focus on the post-1848 era of German unification. I show how the failures of 1848 impacted the standing of the *Bürgertum*, especially the *Beamtenstand*, and the German liberal cause in general. I specifically investigate the nature of German unification and the effect that Bismarck's leadership had on the composition of the ruling strata in the context of industrialization and its impact upon the rights and duties of social reproduction. Bismarck's 'white revolution' attempted to offset any radical transformations in the nature of political authority, but merely succeeded in intensifying these struggles and directed them toward engaging in mass political mobilization. With political struggles among the ruling strata now framed through the discourse of *Deutschtum*, I show how in the Wilhelmine era this legacy of Bismarck destabilized both domestic and foreign policy leading toward the calamitous Great War.

### ***Realpolitik*: Liberalism for a post-revolutionary era**

*The discussion of the question, what should rule, whether justice, wisdom, virtue, whether an individual, many, or few – this question belongs in the realm of philosophical speculation; practical politics has to do first of all with the simple fact that it is power alone that can rule.*

Ludwig August von Rochau<sup>3</sup>



The period immediately following the 1848 revolution in Prussia was one marked by ambiguity over the status of liberalism and republicanism, which were briefly joined together in the March days. On the one hand juridical reforms had survived the restoration, and basic individual rights and equality before the law were retained in Frederick IV's 1850 Constitution (Gillis 1971: 148; Sheehan 1989: 755). On the other hand, and at the same time, elements of traditional corporate society were re-introduced into Prussia by Frederick. Most importantly, and especially so for Weber (as we shall see), the universal franchise was replaced by the three-class system (*Dreiklassenwahlrecht*). While the three categories were effected on a decidedly liberal criterion (Sheehan 1989: 787) – that is, the amount of taxes paid and not family descent – this system was still designed to give the nobility (as well, of course, as a number of *Junkerfied* bourgeois) a disproportionate command in the democratic lower chamber of parliament. Behind this double movement lay a monarchical project to claw back the institutions of political authority from *both* the *Bürgertum* and the nobility. Executive power and command over the military remained in the monarch's personal hands (Beck 1995: 226), and Frederick had a direct hand in selecting the noble representatives to the higher chamber of parliament (Gillis 1971: 212).<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the most far-reaching effect of this re-assertion of Hohenzollern control was its transformation of the role of the bureaucracy. During the 1850s the *Beamtenstand* was effectively transformed into a tool of the royal executive. Various disciplining techniques separated the bureaucrat, as an official of the government, from his role as an active citizen of the state; and in elections, bureaucrats were ordered to vote for the correct candidate (Gillis 1971: 149–171; Beck 1995: 221–224). Having pacified the *Beamtenstaat*, Frederick could now bypass the concerns of parliament by selecting a camarilla of high-level bureaucrats through which to exercise his bidding.<sup>5</sup> To put it bluntly, and to point toward the forthcoming discussion of Weber, the *Beamtenstand* retained possession of the means of governance, yet lost all command over political ends.

For the *Bürgertum*, the progressive results of the 1848 revolution were decidedly mixed. The basic rights defining the free and equal individual subject had been won, but at the same time this victory, in and of itself, had not been enough to place businessman or academic firmly within the conduits of legislative and executive authority. In fact, in a sense, there had been a backward movement: even the *Beamtenstand* had how been freshly subordinated to the king (see Lee 1974: 115). Soberly, the

*Bürgertum* had to recognize that, having been dazzled by the allure of a constitution, they had entirely misapprehended the dark dynamics of Prussian power. And it was these dynamics that now required urgent elucidation.

First on the agenda was Metternich's Confederation. For, if 1848 had taught the *Bürgertum* anything, it was that legislative and executive enfranchisement in Germany could only come by first of all disarming this weapon of the *ancien régime*. It was for this purpose that the German National Association (the *National Verein*) was formed in 1859 amidst a resurgence of associational life. The *National Verein* promoted the *kleindeutsch* solution to unification that posited Prussia as the center toward which other German lands would gravitate. While this certainly was not the only liberal policy of the period, it was the most prominent and coherent (Schulze 1991: 59, 85, 87). This was the soil upon which *Realpolitik* was nurtured, and the seed was planted by the secretary of the *National Verein*, Ludwig August von Rochau.

What 1848 revealed to Rochau was that it was not possible to start, as apparently the French bourgeoisie had done on August 4, by proclaiming the idea first and expecting reality to follow accordingly. Rochau's book, *Grundsätze der Realpolitik, angewendet auf die Staatlichen Zustände Deutschlands*, therefore preached a 'practical politics'.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the received understanding of *Realpolitik* in IR is synonymous with a purely means-driven pursuit of power, and Rochau's political philosophy might seem at first glance to affirm this interpretation in its support of any course of action that could end in *success*. However, Rochau had in mind an ethical aim: to use the illiberal Prussian executive to bring about unification, dissolve the reactionary Confederation and thus clear the way for the institutionalization of individual freedom untainted by atavistic political influences. In this sense, success for Rochau was not a criterion to be judged simply on instrumental grounds: the ends to which action was mobilized had to be ethical and in keeping with the spirit of the times. And as luck would have it, Rochau noted that the *Zeitgeist* of 1850s' Prussia was embodied in neither *Junker* nor monarch nor *Beamten*, but in the business liberal (see Meinecke 1962: 396; Lee 1974: 110; Sheehan 1989: 852).

In an era of increasingly authoritarian rule what justification could Rochau have for positing the *Zeitgeist* as 'liberal'? In a word, industrialization. From 1850, Prussian fear of a belligerent republican France was intensified with the arrival of Bonaparte's nephew, Louis Napoleon. Louis, after all, had legitimized his power via a mass plebiscite rather than divine right, and by the end of the decade was making overtures to

Polish and Italian nationalism (see Schulze 1991: 82; Davis 1997: 158). Direct governmental support of railway expansion<sup>7</sup> (peculiar to Prussia in the German states) (Trebilcock 1981: 57) was undertaken, or at least enabled, primarily through the perceived need to arrest the encroachment of a newly resurgent Jacobinist France. In this way, Prussian industrialization was centered upon the expansion of railroads.<sup>8</sup> Railroad expansion was accompanied by a significant increase in studies of military deployment against possible French expeditionary forces (Mitchel 2000: 62–63).

Inevitably, with the increasing demand for urban labor, coupled with the ongoing transformation of the rural milieu toward agrarian capitalism, the old paternal and hierarchical social bonds fractured at an ever-increasing rate (Sheehan 1989: 756–757). But as had been the case before 1848, decorporation continued to raise the specter of a Jacobin enemy forming from within in the shape of the *Pöbel*. In fine, fear of the French republic led to policies that seemed to create the Jacobin threat internally. Yet despite this danger there could be no backing out of the industrial railroad race, especially when 1852 saw the launch of the French *Crédit Mobilier*, a public institution designed to channel investment into French industry.

There was still the option available of at least regulating the dangerous social excesses of industrialization. And the Prussian government attempted such a plan by limiting the speculative and investment power of the joint-stock bank, the preferred financial instrument with which to raise adequate funds for railway construction (see Kitchen 1978: 88–93). By this logic, Frederick's government sought to steer the course of industrial development between the twin pillars of internal social dissolution and external Jacobinist threat. However, this policy necessarily handicapped the functionality of the new instruments of investment. It was to overcome this handicap that Prussian businessmen (Rhinelanders especially) set up banks in neighboring states, funneling investment into Prussia while escaping direct governmental control (Trebilcock 1981: 43–44). In fact, 40% of all capital in the period came from outside (including from French and Belgian investors) (Kitchen 1978: 95).

This was the activity that allowed *Bürgertum* such as Rochau to launch a moral claim for their enfranchisement in the legislature and executive: only they could finance the growth of the railroads, and at the same time expand the industrial economy sufficiently fast to incorporate all wayward laboring souls. Thus Rochau advocated, contra government policy, a rapid industrialization in order to deal with the Jacobin threat (Smith 1991: 39). With this he justified the pronouncement of a 'liberal'

*Zeitgeist* even in the years following the practical defeat of the German *Bürgertum* in their bid for legislative and executive power.

*Realpolitik* was therefore a political philosophy that spoke to the peculiarities of the post-1848 environment, an environment wherein the industrial and traditional stubbornly co-habited, and wherein the classical French trajectory could no longer be repeated or emulated. Prussia especially and Germany in general seemed to be pursuing a special path of development, a *Sonderweg*.<sup>9</sup> And therefore, instead of organizing society through a liberal ideal blueprint, illiberal means would have to be supported in order to reach liberal ends, that is to say, the triumph of a constitutional polity wherein individual freedom was secured by and on behalf of the *Bürgertum*. Ultimately, this meant supporting the atavistic military forces of the Prussian monarchy and nobility – who had at least granted some kind of constitution – in order to wipe out a greater evil, the Confederation. Now we shall investigate how this *Realpolitik* fared when a *Junker* called its bluff.

### ***White Revolution: Monarchism for a post-monarchical era***<sup>10</sup>

*I take the king in my fashion, I influence him, I 'treat' and guide him, but for me he is the centre of my thought and action, the point of Archimedes from which I move the world.*

Bismarck<sup>11</sup>

At heart, Otto von Bismarck was a traditionalist who believed the proper political order to be a paternal monarchical hierarchy maintained through a healthy society of estates. Nevertheless, after 1848 Bismarck was convinced that German liberal and republican sentiments could no longer be ignored; indeed, he considered that taking a traditional conservative position might only aggravate existing social tensions and lead to a French Revolution in Prussia (Eley 1992: 12). Bismarck's solution was to preserve the royal center by setting the peripheral social forces – the *Junkers*, peasants, businessmen, bureaucracy, and later the working class – in constant struggle against each other (see Holborn 1960; Paur 1981: 430).<sup>12</sup> The energies released by these struggles, channeled and manipulated through Bismarck, would act as a centrifugal force, clearing the center of political authority for the king. Thus, rather than seeking to turn back the clock, or embark upon a new substitute development project, Bismarck sought to *arrest* German development in its extremely contradictory post-1848 settlement. The remarkable social

energies utilized to suspend this development in the air was, as we shall see, what ultimately made the monarchist a revolutionary.

Crucially, this strategy required Bismarck to confront Metternich's legacy: the Confederation and the Holy Alliance. These institutions privileged the nobility and thus disturbed Bismarck's attempt to balance progressive and regressive forces; Bismarck could defend a *particular* monarch, but not the *universal principle* of Monarchy (Holborn 1960: 91–92). His vocation, as he saw it, was to function as a constitutional buffer that protected the sanctity of Prussian monarchism even though this protection undermined the universal principle of Monarchism. But while this vocation influenced the manner and consequences of German unification, Bismarck's white revolution was first set into motion through a set of conjunctural opportunities.

First, the immediately domestic circumstances. Bismarck was invited into the halls of power as a strong man in order to end a stalemate: the liberal-dominated parliament had refused to pass a military budget that, in essence, would allow for a de-civilianization of the army (Ritter 1969: 116). After the scares of 1830 and 1848, Wilhelm I, the new sovereign, was convinced of the need to further separate the dangerous Jacobin-like confluence of citizen and soldier. Therefore in the late 1850s he introduced reforms that increased the period of conscripted service from two to three years in order to more effectively separate the conscript from his social surroundings and turn him into a defender of the crown. In addition, the *Landwehr* was to be poured back into the regular army, thus diluting the liberal officers of this citizen-army in a solution of noble patronage (ibid.: 108–109). In this sense, Bismarck entered the heart of Prussian politics so as to defend and drive through this royal prerogative against what were perceived as home-grown Jacobinist tendencies.

Second, the geo-political circumstances. In order to rid the Prussian crown of entanglements with Russian and Austrian monarchs, Bismarck took advantage of the waning of Albion's blue-water policy caused by the waging of the Crimean War wherein, by attacking its traditional ally, Russia, Britain had lost a significant amount of independence concerning its Continental foreign policy. This presented the opportunity, denied to Prussia by Britain and Russia in 1840, for Bismarck to take Holstein-Schleswig and thus engineer a war against Austria. In addition, with Anglo–Russian friction on the eastern front, Bonaparte's and Cavour's alliance of convenience now created a threat to Austria's western flank. And on top of this the Cobden–Chevalier trade treaty between Britain and France compelled Bismarck to launch his own

negotiations with Napoleon over the Zollverein. The practical effect of these negotiations was to force middle Germany to choose between Austria and Prussia. In these circumstances Bismarck had a relatively free hand to maneuver Austria diplomatically and then militarily out of the new Prussian-dominated German empire. In proclaiming the North German Confederation, Bismarck effectively dropped the deadweight of defending the *universal* principles of the *ancien régime* through the diplomatic relics of the Holy Alliance.<sup>13</sup>

Ejecting Austria, however, was not enough. For, it would not accomplish the geo-political sea change that Bismarck required in order to successfully implement his white revolution at home. For this, Bismarck needed to usurp Bonaparte's role as the continental-alliance broker. By ensuring the maximum space for diplomatic maneuvers, Bismarck could spare the new German empire from a flanking alliance between the two remaining continental great powers of France and Russia that had traditionally exacerbated either Republican or Royalist sentiments within Prussia. In this sense, Bismarck's foreign policy was an attempt to emulate the perfidy of Albion, yet as a continental power and not as an island. Unlike British foreign policy that sought to tame threats to its worldwide trading supremacy, the German strategy of balancing geo-political forces was effectively the extension outward of the attempt to stratify social forces *internal* to Germany.

The outcome of the wars of unification was immensely important for the future relationship of German liberal and republican sentiments that had worked together, if only briefly, in 1848. Crucially, Prussia had triumphed over both Austria and France by relying on speed, mobilization, training and industrial weaponry (see Mosse 1974: 145–160) but *not* on a total mobilization reaching out to encompass the spirit of the people (Ritter 1969: 155). Moreover, by allowing French soldiers through the lines of encirclement into Paris to put an end to the Commune, the Prussian royal army had helped to silence the last Jacobin insurrection and thus dispatch Napoleon's lingering ghost; from now onward it would be France that looked across the Rhine in trepidation. But more importantly, in achieving unification through these mechanisms Bismarck had removed the egalitarian impulse of the *Burschenschaften* revolution from below. And this meant that in the future the discourse of German nationalism would become more and more a tool to be utilized for the pursuit of elite interests.

As we shall see, this shift in the meaning and political bases of *Deutschtum* would have a significant effect on Weber's appreciation of the Bismarck era. For now, however, it is necessary to investigate the

way in which the political structure of the new German empire worked to institutionalize Bismarck's white revolution.

Just as had been the case with the 1850 Prussian settlement, there were no doubt elements of liberalism within the new German constitution. In fact, the *Bürgertum* finally found a political home in the *Reichstag* – a parliament democratically elected through empirewide universal suffrage. The *Reichstag* enjoyed regular elections, the freedom of speech, and the right to directly address the Chancellor. What is more, Bismarck convinced Wilhelm to cede to the *Reichstag* the approval of the Reich budget and all imperial laws, including those pertaining to the Reich army. Add to this the fact that the free-trade principles of the Zollverein came to underwrite the commercial law of the Reich (Fischer 1963: 88), and one might agree with Geof Eley that *Realpolitik*, to a significant extent, had actually worked – the *Reichstag* was a liberal haven (see Eley 1992: 10).

Yet the *Reichstag* was precisely that: a haven – or more accurately, a quarantined area for liberal indulgences – because the effective structure of political authority resided in the *Bundesrat*, a kind of joint ministry of representatives of the federated states' governments (see Huckov 1987: 26–35; Seligmann and McLean 2001: 17–20). Furthermore, the constitution possessed no bill of rights; it was, rather, a constitutional agreement between German monarchs that could be abrogated at any time. On top of this, Article 9 of the Constitution (a rule that would infuriate Weber) forbade any *Reichstag* representative from sitting in the *Bundesrat*. In other words, Bismarck was careful to limit the legislative and executive reach of the democratic lower chamber (Seligmann and McLean 2001: 35). The only functioning policy-making office was that of the Chancellor, and he was, by implicit agreement, combined with the position of the Prussian minister-president (*ibid.*: 30). Indeed, the armed forces of the *Reichstag* took an oath to the Kaiser, not to the Reich in the abstract, nor to the array of German monarchs. Finally, foreign policy, including the declaration of war, was the exclusive prerogative of the Kaiser, not the *Bundesrat* (*ibid.*: 30–31).

In sum, by preserving the formal independence of the German states, Bismarck managed to offset any liberal encroachment on the Prussian legislature and executive: the three-class franchise remained. At the same time, all the constitutional mechanisms worked to secure Prussian predominance within the *Bundesrat* and over the *Reichstag*. Thus Bismarck managed to retain Hohenzollern supremacy precisely by creating a constitution that constantly put off a choice between monarchy and liberal democracy; between paternal rule and the impersonal

rule of law and between the *Kleinstaat* model and centralized control (see Mommsen 1990: 292).

The question now arises: How effectively did these constitutional suspensions manage to dissipate the shocks caused by the decorporation – and now industrialization – of social reproduction in the new Germany?

Such shocks increased throughout Bismarck's rule as the agrarian milieu, especially to the East of the Elbe, experienced more capitalistic transformations in its social structure. The move toward commercially farming root crops, especially sugar beet, brought with it a train of technical innovations in agriculture, which in turn required enclosure, the concentration of ownership and an increased dependency on seasonal labor (see Perkins 1981; Sheehan 1989: 749, 756). Day laboring rose in importance, fracturing the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the productive unit and contributing to the general disintegration – mental as well as material – of *Stand* life (see Blackbourn 1987). A mass exodus of millions from East of the Elbe began under Bismarck.<sup>14</sup>

But not an exodus to an urban life imagined by Karl Marx. As I suggested in the previous chapters, Rhineland businessmen had never been blue-blooded *laissez faire* liberals; the pursuit of their business interests had always been mixed with a fear of the *Pöbel* and thus tempered by an acceptance of corporate institutions. The new industrialists emerged from this tradition and, in fact, took it further: they tended to emulate the *Junkers' Herrschaft* relation within the realm of industrialized social reproduction (Paur 1981: 431) by cultivating a paternalistic factory life (Ferdinand von Stumm operated the most famous of these factory welfare systems) (Sweeney 1998: 36). In this sense, the social relations of production in East Elbian agriculture were more capitalist in content, more decorporized and individualized, than Rhineland urban industry could dare to be (Perkins 1981: 117). And stirring within the industrial milieu was the *corporative* project par excellence: working-class socialism. In 1875, at the Gotha Conference, the *Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands* (SADP) entered the political stage; if any social force was to represent the long-feared Jacobinization of the *Pöbel*, it was to be the SADP.

All these developments disturbed Bismarck's white revolution on three related fronts, two of which have already been alluded to. First, the decay of the *Gutsherrschaft* inevitably worked to undermine the original social basis of paternalism. Second, decorporation led to alternative projects of re-corporation (e.g., the SADP and the Stumm system) both of which threatened, in different ways, to bypass Bismarck's



political authority in the battle over the rights and duties of social reproduction. The third front related to Bismarck's recurrent need to garner liberal support for his white revolution. With the *Kulturkampf* (the attempt to eject Catholicism from public institutional life) and the constant threats made to the conservatives to re-populate the *Herrenhaus* with liberal representatives, Bismarck could be mistaken for himself being one of the latter. Yet to realize the liberal *Zeitgeist* was never Bismarck's strategy, which was rather to keep all social forces in a state of suspended struggle away from the monarchical center of political authority.

Bismarck was temporarily saved by an agrarian crisis that developed in 1878 caused by a rising tide of American and Russian cereals flooding over the liberal Zollverein borders. The fall in cereal prices turned the traditionally free-trade East Elbian landlords toward protectionism. This dovetailed with the demands of Rhineland industrialists, sensitive to the cut in profit margins engendered by the Great Depression (see Volkov 1978: 175; Carsten 1989: 128–129; Eley 1992: 8–11). Bismarck's patronage of the resulting alliance of iron and rye allowed him to solve the several problems that faced his white revolution. For our purposes, two solutions are of note. First, Bismarck once more made his basis of support mobile and as such relatively autonomous from any one political interest. Second, and with some opportune help from a number of attempted assassinations of the Kaiser that could be presented in terms of a Jacobin-like insurgency from below, he was able to re-populate his ministry with conservatives and enact anti-socialist legislation to break the SADP (see Eley 1992: 12–15; Seligmann and McLean 2000: 21–34).

There was, however, one front that Bismarck was not successful in attacking, and that was the issue of social welfare. Bismarck considered the Stumm system, and other industrial corporate-welfare systems like it, a threat to the centrality of the monarch's paternal authority. Hence he attempted to shift the moral and practical center of social-welfare provision back to the state and specifically to the Kaiser's beneficent hand. Bismarck promoted a number of legislative initiatives, all of which were compromised because industrial help was needed to fund social security. In the end (at least during Bismarck's rule), social welfare remained primarily, both morally and practically, within the paternal hands of large industry (Paur 1981; Tample 1981; Ullmann 1981).

Unable to capture the welfare of urban workers, Bismarck turned, as a compensating device, toward an alternative paternal project of securing the welfare of Germany among the world of nations (see Paur 1981: 452–453). Yet in this world Bismarck could only allow himself a limited room

for maneuver. After all, even though he was pursuing a balancing act on the continent he could never match the expansive nature of the British naval policy, a policy that balanced Europe for the sake of building informal and formal empire abroad. But for Bismarck, 'abroad' was *already* a terrain captured by Russian, British and French maneuvering. *Weltpolitik*, therefore, was necessarily a cautious game of declaring Germany's right to a 'place in the sun' amongst the great powers, securing assets overseas to use as bargaining chips within Europe, pushing forward trade ventures wherever possible to help the industrialists' search for profits during the Depression, but never to the extent that these pursuits would cause a reaction against Germany and thus threaten the delicate balance of his white revolution.

Bismarck's white revolution therefore continuously attempted to court various political interests, but only with the intention of keeping them from forming a solid support base. Ultimately, by injecting a centrifugal motion into these contending social forces Bismarck merely charged them with more potential energy. *Kulturkampf* produced, under the pressures of discrimination, a more unified Catholic front that would, through the Centre Party, popularize and strengthen the conservative voice for the foreseeable future (see Seligmann and McLean 2000: 23); Bismarck's flirtation with *Weltpolitik* tantalized and then exasperated the followers of *Deutschtum* who had by now found an institutional support in Heinrich von Treitschke and his neo-Hegelian explanation of geo-politics as a battle between national souls. This would lead, over the next decade, to the creation of associations such as the German Navy League, the Pan-German League, and the German Colonial Society (see respectively Eley 1980; Chickering 1984; Berman 1998). And similarly, Bismarck's oppression of the SADP had the effect of honing its corporate consciousness: the Leyden Program in 1881 recognized the need for clandestine struggle, and so began the first coherent and sustained socialist mobilization in modern history.

Bismarck's white revolution was eventually brought to an end by the new king, Wilhelm II, who, in opposition to Bismarck, believed the proper monarchical duty to be the *direct patronage* of all aggrieved social forces. After forcing Bismarck's resignation, Wilhelm aimed to re-enfranchise previously marginalized socialists, workers and Catholics into the new order. For this purpose Wilhelm (inspired by Bismarck's replacement, Leo Von Caprivi) sought to establish workplace safety regulations, revoke Polish-language restrictions and reduce the grain tariff in order to lower the price of food for the worker (see Carsten 1989: 134–136; Seligmann and McLean 2000: 76–79). But all this precipitated

an entirely predictable massive backlash by the conservative backbone of the iron and rye alliance. To articulate their interests in both the *Bundesrat and Reichstag*, conservatives turned to mobilize the bitter resentment in agrarian circles at the tariff reduction. The resultant Agrarian League (*Bund der Landwirte*) was truly a mass pressure group, comprising of 200,000 members by 1894. Closely allied to the German Conservative Party, this conservative-populist groundswell articulated a protectionist (and even xenophobic) position.<sup>15</sup>

On top of this, Wilhelm's allowance of the anti-socialist laws to expire, coupled with his paternalistic push toward workplace legislation, turned a significant sway of liberal opinion toward the imperialist camp. Indeed, the Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verband*) and the German Navy League were 'middle class' pressure groups designed to push social contestation away from the increasing socialist agitation of capital and labor, and toward the geo-political problem of German empire (see Eley 1980: 349). The push for empire, through a world-class navy, concurred with the long-held belief that imperial expansion could act as a safety valve on the pressures of unemployment, over-population and over-production that industrialization had created and the socialist party (now renamed *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SDP)) had fed upon.<sup>16</sup>

In effect, all the potential energy accrued under Bismarck was now transformed into kinetic force through Wilhelm's policy of direct patronage. What is more, and as I noted previously, the egalitarian impulses identifiable in prior *Burschenschaften* articulations of German nationalism had dissipated under Bismarck. Wilhelm's patronage therefore opened the channels for social struggles to be expressed and fought over by reference to the German general will. *Deutschtum* now became the discursive battleground upon which all parties – conservative to liberal – sought to mobilize mass politics to secure their elite interests.<sup>17</sup> And this unleashing of elite-led populist politics was also to have devastating effects for the Hohenzollern command over political authority.

What is more, Wilhelm now had to legitimize his own position as supreme provider of social order and consensus through the grammar of *Deutschtum*. This meant primarily a re-formulation of Bismarck's *Welt-politik* so as to allow Wilhelm to provide the *Volk* with its rightful place in the sun. He effectively abandoned Bismarck's policy of playing a specifically German balance-of-power game, and set his sights instead on *directly emulating* the sources of British world power, especially the navy, through the foreign policy of *Flottenpolitik* (Farrar 1981: 31; Mommsen

1990: 302).<sup>18</sup> Wilhelm, and then chancellor Bernhard von Bülow, used foreign policy as a means to capture the allegiance of various pressure groups that claimed to speak on behalf of the general will. (Bülow, it should be noted, modeled his colonial politics on Disraeli (Mommsen 1990: 294), who had, in a fit of conservative populism, crowned Victoria Empress of India.) And this neo-Bismarckian strategy was infinitely more dangerous than the original: instead of shifting allegiances to secure the center, German domestic and foreign policy now swung wildly toward chasing and capturing particular interests all in the name of an abstract *Deutschtum*.

The results of *Flottenpolitik* were not only meager but disastrous. The German colonial empire in 1914 remained a miniscule and random agglomeration of territories (Herwig 1992: 55). In the pursuit of this empire, however, Wilhelm had managed to attract the ire of the world leader, Britain. Germany's one success on the high seas so far was the development of a significant merchant navy used to find niches for German goods around the globe, especially in South America. But while certainly not matching the world leader in exports, the sign 'Made in Germany', even by the late 1890s, had started to cause alarm among Britain's manufacturers (see Forbes 1978; Kiesewetter 1991). This economic development, combined with the military development of the Germany navy, itself a direct threat to British naval policy, produced a fundamental shift in British foreign policy. By 1907 its balance-of-power game was re-positioned directly toward the containment of Germany (Seligmann and McLean 2000: 137).

*Flottenpolitik* also came to be generally disliked within Germany. The agrarian interest resented the fact that the logistical requirements of a modern navy would contribute to a hegemony of the industrialists. And the taxation increases that the navy-building required pushed much of the working class into the hands of the SDP (ibid.: 126–132). Furthermore, despite the support of liberal pressure groups, the acknowledged failure of *Flottenpolitik* by 1909 caused a crisis of prestige for the monarch and for the military's ability to pursue the German general will on the international playing field. Wilhelm's ill-timed and ill-understood comments on Germany's relationship to the Great Powers (calling the British 'mad as hares' in the famous *Daily Telegraph* interview) only added to this general misery and distrust amongst the *Bürgertum* (Mommsen 1990: 303).

In fine, the more Wilhelm pursued *Weltpolitik*, the more he agitated the social forces contending over the divisions produced by decorporation and industrialization; the more he lost the faith of his subjects;

the more he retreated into that one remaining bastion of monarchical control: the military (Ritter 1970: 124–125). Crucial to note here is the effect of Bismarck's first battles with a liberal parliament over the social constitution of the military machine. From these battles the military had gained a significant degree of autonomy vis-à-vis administrative structures, and many of the higher military functions came to reside in a Military Cabinet that reported directly to the Emperor rather than to the parliament-vetted War Ministry (Craig 1966: 124–125). Thus, the outbreak of war might well have temporarily rallied all – socialists, liberals and conservatives alike – around the defense of the German nation. But it was precisely this rally that sped up the transfer of executive authority to the now relatively autonomous military branch. On behalf of the displaced Kaiser, the Army High Command, *Oberste Heeres-Leitung* (OHL), proceeded to lead the German nation into a humiliating defeat at the hands of the French, British and Americans.

This, of course, was hardly the outcome to German development envisaged by those like Rochau who had hoped to instrumentally and realistically mobilize illiberal forces for liberal ends. And such dark developments would lead Weber to populate *Realpolitik* with a radically different content. But in order to turn to Weber himself we must examine how these dramatic shifts in the political structure post-1848 specifically affected the *Bildungsbürgertum* and especially those within this stratum that pursued a 'liberal' project of German reform.

## A new vocation of science

*There are only two ways, ours or Hegel's.*

Weber<sup>19</sup>

It is best to start this examination with one crucial intellectual trend post-1848 – the decline of Hegelian Philosophy. As part of the broad re-framing of *Bürgertum* liberal politics as *Realpolitik*, academia witnessed a growing recognition of different and distinct national trajectories, trajectories that, moreover, could no longer simply be treated as means for the ends of a universal *Geist*. Indeed, many future *Kleindeutsch* historians, who initially held Hegelian sympathies (e.g., Johann Gustav Droysen), were rudely introduced to the discrete supremacy of Prussian power over the speculative rights of man in the 'Historian's Parliament' at Frankfurt (see Giesen 1998: 133). With the discrediting of Hegel's substitute revolution of Philosophy, *Realpolitik* sympathies abounded; even Treitschke was initially an enthusiastic

supporter of Rochau (Holborn 1960: 94–95fn18; Meinecke 1962: 396). ‘Culture’ arose as the replacement category for *Geist* and signified instead a distinctive, unique and self-referential developmental political community (see Smith 1991: 69–70). This cultural turn caused a break of historical study with natural science (Lee 1974: 42), which, in its application to the social world had provided speculatively universal theories. Classical Political Economy and Hegelian Philosophy were tarred with this British nomological brush.<sup>20</sup> The new approach, it was hoped, would be able to free the individual nature of Prussia’s present trajectory of development from those universal speculations that had, in 1848, confounded and restrained the *Bürgertum* cause.<sup>21</sup>

This was the position taken by the most famous and influential group of German historians of the post-1848 era – the Historical School of Economics (Mäki 1997: 475), whose notables included Wilhelm Roscher, Bruno Hildebrand and Karl Knies. Members of this school were convinced that British classical political economy could not cater for the uniqueness and unrepeatability of specific historical-cultural experience. The second generation of the School – notably, Gustav Schmoller, Werner Sombart – developed this position further through a programmatic mouthpiece, the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*<sup>22</sup> (which Weber would later join). Writing after unification, Schmoller and Sombart even considered German developments not as aberrations to the British norm but as molding an innately superior form of political development (Schumpeter 1954: 812; Beck 1995: 244). If Rochau had presented the liberal as the leading force within Germany, then the Historical School now went one step further and presented the German *Sonderweg* as a leading cultural force in world history.

Hence the famous *Methodenstreit*. The controversy over method pitched the Historical School of Economics in battle with Carl Menger’s Marginal theory. Technically, the bone of contention was the proper content of economic study – institutions and historical development versus utility and price (Shionoya 2001: 11). But in broader terms, the controversy spoke to the appropriateness of applying a nomological method for understanding the special path that Germany walked. Menger was convinced that it was possible to abstract from historical particularity and raise economic theory to an autonomous realm populated by nomological types of actions and associated laws (Mäki 1997: 476–479). Schmoller and his colleagues charged Menger with using ill-matched foreign (British) methods to study the specificities of German development, and, with some institutional support, won the argument.

But the *Sonderweg* also had a lesson in store for the teachers. As I have noted, the 1850s witnessed a rapid industrialization in the German states (Prussia especially), the *differentium specificum* of which was an emphasis on the methodological application of science to practical problems. Scientific specialization took hold of academia as the number of technical schools increased so that the value of education became more and more articulated in terms of *Technik* rather than *Bildung* (see Kocka 1981: 462–463; Schnädelbach 1984: 69–83). In this way, the German *Sonderweg* began to force a change in the very criteria of what counted as legitimate knowledge production of German development: instrumental means were replacing ethical ends.

Life Philosophy was the most influential response outside of the academy to the rise of *Technik* (Köhnke 1991: 74–77) and Friedrich Nietzsche was to be its foremost prophet by the end of the century, calling for a rethinking of the meaning and purpose of truth when science had lifted the veil of nature and found the universe to be ultimately meaningless (Schnädelbach 1984: 62). Alternatively, one of the most prominent responses within the academy was neo-Kantian *Kulturphilosophie*. Stepping over Hegel's grand synthesis of philosophy and history back toward Kant's categorical separation of Reason and experience, the neo-Kantians of the Heidelberg school, led by Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert,<sup>23</sup> went further to claim that not even systems of moral judgment could hold universal validity. The neo-Kantian position preferred instead to investigate culturally specific systems of meanings and values.<sup>24</sup>

Weber's initial mentors came from the pre-1848 broadly Hegelian and neo-humanist tradition and, to this extent, Weber's formative experiences were imbued with the ethico-political values of *Bildung* encoded within the existing intellectual 'liberal' project.<sup>25</sup> However, Weber came of true intellectual age within the Historical School (where he was introduced to Marx and the historical notion of capitalist development (Szokolczai 1998: 104)). Indeed, from early on the problematization of Hegelian universalism sparked in Weber a concern for its psychological effects on the nature of human being – *Menschentum* as it was popularly known<sup>26</sup> – especially in light of the increasing dissolution of communal life during Bismarck's rule.<sup>27</sup> During his time at Heidelberg, he became familiar with neo-Kantianism through Rickert (ibid.: 140; Oakes 1988: 7); and from 1892 he started to read Nietzsche, all the while showing an appreciation of the high stakes at play in the *Methodenstreit* (Sumiya 2001: 128–131). By the early 1900s Weber, through further readings of Nietzsche, felt that the challenge to the 'liberal' project of

the *Bildungsbürgertum* could only be met by supporting a neo-Kantian position. He laid out this position in a series of papers on method and a series of critical essays on his previous comrades from the Historical School, especially Roscher and Knies.

Weber agreed with the Historical School that the specter that haunted the living was Hegel (Weber 1969a: 54; 1975: 66; Sumiya 2001: 121). Damned with Hegel was his disciple Marx, and especially the socialist epigones, who had all produced nomological statements on economic development that resolved any political deviations from the universal (British) norm as accidents, not as valid in their own right (Weber 1969a: 70; 1977: 67). But looking more closely at the Historical School, Weber noted that neither Roscher nor Knies had managed to fully exorcise the specter of Hegel. The Reason was that they took the difference between history and natural science to be centered upon the objects of enquiry, and not on the form of knowledge production required (Weber 1975: 68). Roscher and Knies had used the same emanatist logic to select objects of enquiry as had Hegel: some historical phenomena were more important than others as it was through them that a universal logic of human development flowed (ibid.: 68, 76–77). The tendency therefore remained to play down the problem of cultural difference by rendering social categories in uniform, universal and nomological terms. This aura of rapprochement in the nature of social being effectively emptied historical categories of all political content (ibid.: 64, 73, 200, 295; see also Kobayashi 2001: 62, 86). And the danger with this was that it disengaged the *Bildungsbürgertum* from any attempt to address the special German context in which agricultural reform and industrialization had worked to dissolve the social base.

Neo-Kantianism was so appealing to Weber because it pursued a form of knowledge production different from Hegelian philosophy – namely, the cultural construction of *particular* worldviews – and presented the opportunity to dig into the specific psychological effects and cultural, and inevitably political, ramifications of the changes to social reproduction in Germany. By siding with neo-Kantianism, Weber sought to promote the epistemological shift prompted by the notion of *Sonderweg* that placed causality not in the diachronic-historical realm (of universal becoming) but in the *synchronic-cultural* realm (of specific mores and values). This shift was what lay behind his moving away from the discipline of political economy and toward historical sociology. By 1908 Weber had helped to set up the German Sociological Association with the intention of securing a pristine institutional base from which he could re-orient the intellectual ‘liberal’ project in light of the challenges that



the German *Sonderweg* presented to the nature and spread of *Bildung*. And this is how his method of historical sociology furnished the new vocation of the social scientist.

Taking Nietzsche's critique of truth and power to heart, Weber posited that, dominance, rather than an act of violence, was a soliciting of willful action from individuals toward securing another individual's particular interest. By this reasoning, collectively held understandings could not be considered consensual expressions of truth but only of a particular will to power (Weber 1978a: 925). By extension, one could not anthropomorphize individuals into singular collectivities, whether as a nation or as humanity, because this required the elimination from analysis of the will to power that constructed the relations of dominance between individuals (e.g., Weber 1969a: 108). This ontological insight, Weber believed, could best be operationalized in an historical sociology that used the anti-universalist epistemological position of neo-Kantianism, namely, the interrogation of the cultural construction of particular systems of social meaning. All this meant that, contra Hegel, world history for Weber could only be expressed as a pluriverse of contending cultural systems of domination in the pursuit of specific interests (Weber 1969: 81). Weber was fond of speaking of this spiritless universe by reference to J.S. Mill:

...simply on the basis of experience, [wrote Mill] no one would ever arrive at the existence of *one* god – and, it seems to me, certainly not a god of goodness – but at polytheism. Indeed anyone living in the 'world'...can only feel himself subject to this struggle between multiple sets of values, each of which, viewed separately, seems to impose an obligation on him. He has to choose which of these gods he will and should serve....

Weber<sup>28</sup>

But if godless, Weber was no nihilist. Rather, Weber believed that social science could and should help to answer why truth had *become* such a problem for German culture in its recent history (Weber 1982c: 143; 1969a: 57). In this sense, Weber's vocation of science was one of self-clarification. Specifically, the purpose of his historical-sociological method was to enable the scientist to de-naturalize and make profane the meanings and values of the cultural system that individuals reproduced in their willful actions (Weber 1982c: 152; see also Oakes 1988: 28). In this way, an individual could not mistake his/her will to power as a dialectic of universal becoming; it was, necessarily, a dialectic of

social domination. Furthermore, integral to this vocation was the duty to speak to the world of politics and to remind the politician of the realities of prescribing courses of action in a polytheistic world (Weber 1982c: 150). If the politician decided to act on the assumption that his particular value-laden interests were the truth, then the scientist had to force a recognition of 'inconvenient facts', facts that could not be resolved to a particularistic worldview that masqueraded its will to power in the promotion of a universal good (ibid.: 147). With this recognition, the politician could meet his vocational responsibility to pursue his value-laden interests through prudential means that by ideal standards might appear as evil but nonetheless would not entirely discredit the ends (Weber 1982: 119–127). We shall see shortly what, for Weber, this value should have been and what collective delusions conspired to corrupt its promotion.

With these vocations of science and politics Weber sought both to re-legitimize the German intellectual strata as guides through a post-Hegelian modern world<sup>29</sup> and to redeem in this new world their 'liberal' project. To this effect, Weber could no longer conceive of *Bildung* as a universalizing agency driving forward a singular Liberal project. The ability to think and act individually was still, for Weber, the ethical goal of politics. However, the social conditions of this individuality now had to be imagined in terms of a variety of individual wills struggling to construct the dominant values of a cultural system itself inhabiting a pluriverse of contending systems. There were, therefore, limits to the individual's correspondence with universal truths – such as humanity – that, nevertheless, had to be addressed within the framework of the contested reproduction of a discrete national culture. Cultivation of a self-awareness of these limits was the new *Bildung*. This is why Weber's early enthusiasm for Heinrich von Treitschke's notion of an Ethical State, a relic of Hegelian philosophy, remained even in his neo-Kantian and Nietzschean turn: Weber was *both* a 'liberal' and a 'nationalist'; his 'liberal' project was necessarily, and *self-critically*, nationally limited.<sup>30</sup>

The tool that allowed the intellectual to express this new *Bildung* of self-limitation was the ideal type.<sup>31</sup> Weber's ideal type offered no hypothesis as to the actual content of social actions, but rather provided a means of giving expression to the cultural problems of the present. By heuristically constructing an 'historical individual' – for example, modern-day bureaucratic rule – one could match this type of social meaning and action to the historical record. The ideal type could never be found in existence, and certainly not in emanatist form; but by

presenting a historical narrative – a fiction – of the development of this ideal type, its actual historical and cultural specificity could be clarified (Weber 1969: 44; 1969a: 68, 78, 90).

One could produce a narrative of world history, however, by examining the relationship between ideal types in terms of their 'elective affinity'.<sup>32</sup> This notion allowed for an epistemological survey of the mutually supporting aspects of different types of social action without subsuming these differences into a Hegelian emanatist history. In other words, the core of Weber's sociology was that history should be approached as neither linear nor evolutionary, but *conjunctural* (Weber 2001: 14; see also Collins 1986: 34–35). So, for example, even if modern economic and political institutions enjoyed a functionally necessary relationship (Weber 1978a: 963, 968), this was a relationship enabled by elective affinity rather than a causal co-constitution (*ibid.*: 909). Indeed, Weber was clear that the modern market, the modern state and the modern army had arisen from 'different historical sources' (Weber 1978: 224; 2003a: 309). While he pointed to the special nature of England as the polity that displayed the purest expression of capitalist social organization (Weber 1978: 133; 2003a: 347), modern bureaucratic government the ideal type of which could be identified back in Roman Law, developed most vigorously outside of the capitalist heartland in the European periphery (Weber 2003a: 341; 2003d: 149, 210–211).

The ideal type was therefore Weber's solution to the failings of the Historical School: it allowed for a historical sociology that did not imbue the object of enquiry with an expressive and universalistic logic of human development. And this is the very specific sense in which Weber saw his ideal type as 'objective', and why he considered *Verstehen* to be a method of non-subjective analysis – that is, the comprehension of, but not belief in, a social value system (Weber 1977: 98–143; 1990: 29). Indeed, Weber considered his ideal type *itself* as a form of knowledge production peculiar to the cultural values of the German present (Sayer 1991: 150; Löwith 1993: 53; Eliaeson 2000: 246): the decades of reform in recent German history had led to a replacement of politics with science – personal commitment had been superseded by impersonal contemplation (Oakes 1988: 31). Ultimately, Weber's ideal type was an epistemological device through which this rationalization of the German cultural world could be *immanently* critiqued. Finally, this is why Weber read Menger's battle with the Historical School with all due seriousness: the *Methodenstreit* represented the battle within the *Bildungsbürgertum* over the values of *Technik* versus *Bildung*. For Weber, the modern condition of impersonalized individualism possessed two

possible tendencies: an unthinking instrumentalization of this condition versus an ethical self-awareness of the historical and social constitution of this condition.

### **Bismarck's legacy: Weber's solution**

He left behind a nation *entirely lacking in any kind of political education* ... And above all a nation *entirely without any political will*.

Weber<sup>33</sup>

Yet, crucially, Weber made sense of the course of this battle within the *Bildungsbürgertum* by reference to a consciousness of German backwardness that he attributed to Bismarck's legacy (see Baehr 1988: 175–176). I have already noted Weber's early philosophical and political concerns with *Menschentum*. As far back as his inaugural address at Freiburg University in 1895 Weber noted that the modernizing influence of the world market had started to impact the cultural integrity of the nation through its understanding of the nature of modern being, especially east of the Elbe (where Weber had spent his conscript days (Mommsen 1984: 21)). Specifically, Weber noted that a seismic shift had started to occur in the composition of the German peasantry. More and more, Catholic Poles were replacing German Protestants, as the capitalistic farming of the sugar beet created opportunities for those with lower material and spiritual requirements (Weber 2003b: 3–11).

There are two important points to note in his discussion. First, Weber believed that the Protestant Germany was not retreating from the eastern frontier due to material necessity, but rather because of the impact of a mass psychology of freedom – namely, a desire to escape from the *Herrschaft* relation of personal dependency (ibid.: 8). Second, Weber observed that contrary to the doctrine of the prophets of political-economy – both Smith and Marx – capitalistic development seemed to be producing a decrease rather than progressive increase in the material and spiritual substance of humanity (ibid.: 11). Thus, a historically astounding process of industrialization, rather than buoying up the ability of the German nation to combat the external threat of the world market in its dissolution of the existing German cultural fabric, had been allowed to undermine this fabric.<sup>34</sup>

Weber attributed the Reason for these skewed developments to the fact that the middle classes had not risen to political domination upon the crest of these cultural transformations, even though it was their interests that were valorized by the process. And in his opinion, this

arrested development of the *Bürgertum* was ultimately the fault of Bismarck,<sup>35</sup> who had embraced the iron and rye alliance between industrialists and *Junker*, as well as retained the dominance of these classes in the new parliamentary system via the three-class franchise in Prussia and article 9 in the Constitution.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, by outlawing the fledgling socialist party, Bismarck had compelled the German middle classes to become a slave to aristocratic and noble patronage (Weber 2003c: 135). In short, Bismarck had left behind 'a nation *entirely lacking in any kind of political education*' (Weber 2003c: 144).

For Weber, this lack was expressed most clearly in the way in which the middle classes articulated their own will to power through the atavistic discourse of *Deutschtum* (German-ness). This discourse, rather than critically engaging with the legitimacy of the modern age, actually preserved the authority of aristocracy and nobility by valorizing a collective and harmonious will of a traditional *Volk*. Weber judged *Deutschtum* as anti-*Bildung* to the extent that, though a value-laden discourse rather than an instrumentalized *Technik*, it was one that valued a collective identity – a harmonious general will that in reality legitimated particular atavistic interests. In effect, Bismarck had denied the middle classes a political space in which they might develop a self-awareness of the positive and negative aspects of the dissolution of social bonds that the pursuit of their own interests had engendered. All this led Weber to lament on behalf of the middle classes: '[w]e are epigones of a greater age' (cited in Myers 2004: 272; see also Weber 1969: 28; 2003b: 23).

With the development of the *Bürgertum* arrested, the intellectual's political agency of *Bildung* had no powerful agent to work upon and through. A substitute agent was required for the middle classes who lacked any will to their own power. The elusive nature of this substitute haunted Weber for many years.<sup>37</sup> However, the first clear assessment of the tasks of national regeneration in an age of epigones appeared in his writings on Russia's 1905 constitutional revolution. Weber noted that an overdue capitalistic development in Russia had inaugurated unpredictable and unique processes (Weber 2003c: 55). Because of this, Russian liberalism was locked in a unique struggle against bureaucratic centralism in order to save the individualist notion of human rights for the masses (ibid.: 67). But past liberal triumphs did not form a reliable guide because the classic French genesis of modern freedom was an unrepeatable conjuncture of events and processes (Weber 1978a: 871–874; 2003c: 46, 69).<sup>38</sup> Instead, the only hope of securing the spirit of individuality in the peculiar Russian present was by means of nurturing the national spirit.

Taking this lesson from the Russian experience, Weber directly invoked what he saw as a progressive mobilization of the general will: the men of the Convention had understood the need to fuel a national passion in order to drive through the Rights of Man against the resistance of the *ancien régime* (see Weber 2003b: 25). If the *Bürgertum* wished to attain a leading status in the present conjuncture, then it seemed that it was ultimately necessary to use Jacobin means. For Weber, this strategy did *not* bow to the atavistic illusions of the discourse of *Deutschtum*, because the main purpose here was to use this fetish to dislodge the *Junkers* from power. In form, Weber was remaining true to the post-1848 strategy of *Realpolitik* – illiberal political means for ideal liberal ends; but in content, by embracing the Jacobin spirit of the masses, Weber's *Realpolitik* was drastically different to what had been formulated by the *National Verein*. One might say that Weber's answer to Bismarck's White Revolution was a White Jacobinism.

But the problem for Weber in prescribing a substitute agent for the *Bürgertum* was that it therefore required a mobilization of political agency that was not *specifically* tied to the individualization of social bonds produced by the middle-class will to power. In fine, Weber had to find a psychical energy that provided the motivating force for the pursuit of ethics *in general*, rather than one specific to the contestation between *Technik* and *Bildung*. This is why Weber's pursuit of a *Realpolitik* that could lead Germany out of its arrested state of development led him to find an answer to the anthropological question of what foundationally motivated human action. Weber pursued this answer through a study of the concept of 'charisma' in the sociology of religion.

### **Charisma: A spiritual antidote to arrested development**

...redemption attained a specific significance only where it expressed a systematic and rationalized 'image of the world' and represented a stand in the face of the world.

Weber<sup>39</sup>

Weber took his sociology of religion to be an investigation of the dynamics of *actualized* ideals – of belief systems that provided meaning and direction to social action (Weber 1982d: 292; see also Schluchter 1981: 20–21). In this sense, the religious spirit (as in Weber's famous book title) was not ethereal but an 'ethical maxim for the conduct of life' (Weber 2001: 17) – the interface between the economic requirements of human life (by 'economic' Weber meant the practical requirements

of reproducing living individuals) and the political ordering of such life through modes of authority. These ethical maxims had to be studied as ideal types of social conduct. True, ideal types were 'carried' by those social groups who economically benefited from their ethical maxims, but this did not mean that there existed a functionalist relationship between spirit, economics and politics. Rather, what differentiated religious ideal types were their cosmic considerations (Weber 1982d: 112, 269–270; 2001: 21).

For Weber, then, it was the *mismatch* between perceptions of everyday life and the religious imagery of how the world should be that led to both psychological and physical conflict and thus to the requirement to make a political choice between ethical directions (Weber 1963: 36, 59). In short, it was the religious spirit that *activated the dialectic* of material interests and social meaning. And this activation was what ultimately powered the trajectories of historical development, thereby providing Weber with a fundamental anthropological statement on agency:

Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest.

Weber<sup>40</sup>

Weber's switchman manifested itself as a particular historical personality – the prophet. And the prophet possessed a special source of authority over individuals, namely, charisma – the ability to mobilize the actions of others by preaching a salvation doctrine that promised redemption (especially for the non-privileged strata of society) (Weber 1982d: 274). As such, charisma was distinct from all other types of political legitimacy precisely in its purpose of radically overturning existing social meanings and forms of conduct (including challenging the existing priesthood over control of the laity) (Weber 1963: 46, 60). Moreover, the prophet exercised his power not through irrational revelations but by demagogically outlining a systematic image of how the world should be that was oriented toward a transformation of everyday economic life (Weber 1978: 244; 1978a: 1111, 1117; 1982d: 280). It was the persuasive power of this rational image that gave the prophet the authority of charisma: his calling was recognized by individuals and followed willingly (Weber 1978: 241).<sup>41</sup>

However, once the prophet had attracted a following, a dissipation of charismatic authority would eventually occur. For, all religions required

a priesthood as an independent stratum through which the religious worldview could be systematized and adapted to drive everyday custom (Weber 1963: 27, 60–76). In time, this institutionalization led to a decline in the importance of preaching – of galvanizing the religious community. It was, then, the fate of charismatic authority to recede with the necessary development of permanent institutional structures, and that of traditional or instrumental-rational authority to re-take its place (Weber 1978a: 1121–1125, 1133). In short, charisma was a revolutionary agency, the ‘tide’ of which ebbed and flowed (ibid.: 1121).

Of course, there was one particular tide that was of central importance to Weber: Protestantism – the basic cultural resource in Germany that had increasingly proved to be unable to stem a loss of social meaning. Central to the understanding of this worldview was the Calvinist belief in predestination. Christians who believed in predestination had no outside means of knowing that they had been elected for heavenly redemption save that of having confidence in their own destiny. Crucially, this self-confidence required an active orientation toward the outside world not as a vessel but as the *tool* of God (Weber 2001: 56–101). The Protestant calling demanded work to be undertaken not to indulge in the pleasures of the world, nor to flee from the world (ibid.: 11; Weber 1982d: 290–291). Rather, the good Protestant was concerned only with the *means* of working in the world.<sup>42</sup> The believer was charged with fashioning the social world according to an ascetic of methodical labor (Weber 1963: 181; 2001: 28), in short, to make the real world concord to the Protestant worldview (Weber 2001: 101). Restless, continuous, systematic work in this world for its own sake (ibid.: 116): this was the means toward the ends of a cosmic salvation.

That the Protestant ethic was carried by those middling strata of society whose position most readily concurred to its this-worldly doctrine, again, Weber did not deny (Weber 1963: 80–84, 94, 96, 134; 1982d: 285–319). But that was not to say that the Protestant ethic was functional to an already existing capitalist development.<sup>43</sup> Rather, Protestantism promoted a unique ascetic, one that would *encourage* and not resist egoistic social behavior (Weber 1963: 217). Thus Weber claimed that the Protestant ethic *psychically* opened up the desirability of a career in business by sanctifying the never-ending accumulation of things (ibid.: 220). In other words, the ethic cleared the way of cultural-institutional obstacles that might divert social behavior away from the instrumental-rational pursuit of economic activities foundational to capitalism (ibid.: 269; see also Collins 1986: 33). But disenchantment – the de-mystification of the world by finding salvation in the methodical



pursuit of labor – was *not* equivalent to a loss of meaning in social conduct.<sup>44</sup> True, all the distinctive characteristics of bourgeois individualism appeared through the calling: malaise, a compulsion to act despite of oneself, an impersonalization of social interaction, an inner isolation etc. (see e.g., Weber 1963: 206; see also Beetham 1989: 316–317). Yet this was to convince oneself of the possibility of receiving salvation. The means were instrumental, but the ends were still cosmic and thus of moral content.

However, when the calling started to structure everyday life in general, when the charisma of the Protestant prophet became institutionalized through the marketplace, these cosmic ends dissipated (Weber 1963: 235; 2001: 124; 2003a: 368–369). And this is how instrumental rationality distinguished itself from the other basic ideal types of social action – value-driven, emotive and traditionalist (Weber 1990: 59) – through its *self-conscious* privileging of predictability and calculability in the means of social conduct over the value-laden ends that such conduct was mobilized toward (Weber 1978: 66–68, 240). In other words, instrumental rationality was social action devoid of any moral referent. (The quintessential capitalist practice, in this sense, was book-keeping (see e.g., Weber 1978a: 975; 2003a: 275).) But instrumental rationality also distinguished itself from other basic ideal types of political authority, namely charismatic and traditional, by the way that it allowed for a domination of technical means over moral ends (see Weber 1978: 215). This was especially noticeable in modern bureaucracy's pursuit of calculable, predictable and deliberate planning (see *ibid.*: 217–226; Weber 1978a: 958–975; 2003a: 338–342).

Thus, although the Protestant ethic demanded that the care for things should only lie on the shoulders like a light cloak, to be thrown off at any moment, with the ebbing of charisma and the advance of instrumental rationality, 'fate decreed that the cloak should become a shell as hard as steel' (Weber 2001: 123).<sup>45</sup>

As may be remembered, Weber's historical sociology provided general categories of economic, political and ethical actions, yet avoided nomological and emanatist assumptions about the development of the content of these categories. Likewise, the tide of charisma was Weber's general anthropological statement on the psychological roots of political agency. But in a polytheistic world, the courses that this tide would take would be affected by specific conjunctures of ideal types in elective affinity that constituted specific cultural systems. Thus, through his work on religion, Weber's historical sociology retained a neo-Kantian outlook on a polytheistic world at the same time making claim to a

universal psychic force – charisma – that animated human development *in toto*. With this combination, Weber could now lay claim to (a) the nature of transformative political agency in general and (b) the substitute agent (who would not be a straightforward representative of the ‘middle class’) that would wield this agency to unblock the arrested development of the German empire.

### ***Realpolitik* as a vocation**

*It became frighteningly obvious that the effect of Bismarck’s legacy was the ‘will to powerlessness’...*

Weber<sup>46</sup>

Germany, by Weber’s reasoning, was experiencing an ebbing of a specific tide of charisma: the Protestant Ethic. Through a unique conjuncture, protestant charisma had been replaced by instrumental-rational governance. Weber, no doubt, was here speaking to the specific fate of the German *Beamtenstand* that, after 1848, had been reduced from a leading stratum to a technocratic force: any political interest could simply use the bureaucrat’s command over knowledge production for their own ends. Thus, the *Beamtenstand* was the ultimate bearer of instrumental rationality – their whole legitimacy now rested on the efficacy of the *means* of governance, and not on the *ends* of government (e.g., Weber 1978a: 987; 1982b: 334; 2003d: 159–160). So much was this of direct concern for Weber that he even made a universal claim that it was in the arena of political authority and not the market where instrumental rationalization was most inescapable (Weber 2003d: 156). And this was Bismarck’s legacy: the white revolutionary had quickened the ebbing of protestant charisma and set up defenses against its return, thus ruling out any surge of political agency that might develop an ethical orientation toward the individualization of social life. In effect, Bismarck had arrested the development of political authority between instrumental rationality and traditional rule (expressed through the discourse of *Deutschtum*), thus ruling out any charismatic force that might use *Bildung* to create an ethical modern German culture.

Over the course of the Great War, Weber came to believe that *Realpolitik* had to pursue two goals in order to resolve this legacy: first, a meaningful enfranchisement of the masses into modern political life; and second, a responsible mobilization of the spirit of the masses toward ‘liberal’ ends. The biggest obstacle to these goals, Weber believed, was the way in which Bismarck had robbed the *Reichstag* of leadership, thus

making it vulnerable to the power of bureaucratic instrumental rationalization. The bureaucracy exercised control over the *Reichstag* because their instrument of domination – knowledge – was denied to the parliamentarians: there was no right to enquiry (Weber 1978a: 992–993; 2003d: 180). In addition, mass politics had also become instrumentally rationalized. The parties, being denied a direct conduit through the *Reichstag* to political leadership, had increasingly become fund-raising bureaucracies whose ends had become subordinated to the means of efficiently reproducing themselves as organizations (Weber 1978a: 984; 2003d: 149). The result of this instrumentalization of political authority was a *de facto* colonization by atavistic interests of the most crucial executive decisions of the state, namely, foreign policy and the conduct of war.

It was not the Great War *per se* that bothered Weber, because in a polytheistic world of irreconcilable cultural differences war was inevitable. What *was* disastrous was that the policies through which Wilhelm had catapulted Germany into war had unnecessarily mobilized an extremely dangerous array of enemies that would make for an even harsher domestic and geo-political climate in which to cultivate a culture of individual freedom after the war.<sup>47</sup> The politics of *Deutschtum* had kept open the political space in which that untimely stratum – the militaristic *Junkers* – could hold on to their traditional privileges, especially through a profitable alliance with heavy industry. And Weber remained scathing of the takeover by the OHL and the extent to which it had exacerbated the war needlessly, especially with its policy of unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic (see Mommsen 1984: 228).

Weber's solution to these problems relied upon creating direct access from party politics to executive control (Weber 2003d: 132–133; see also Mommsen 1984: 146). He prescribed an emulation of British parliament by dropping Article 9, allowing the 'right to enquiry', and finishing with the Prussian three-class franchise. This would provide the space to institutionalize a plebiscitary democracy that allowed Weber's substitute agent for the charismatic Protestant 'middle class', the *demagogic politician*, to cultivate political leadership (Weber 1982: 102). In this special democracy, parliament would be turned into a breeding ground of non-noble but charismatic politicians who, leading mass parties, could aspire to political dominance (Weber 2003c: 132–133). Once the masses had been animated by this demagogic politics, once, instead of passively following an instrumental rationality, they were pursuing a moral obligation toward the *Volk*, and once the stranglehold of the atavistic classes on this moral obligation had been broken, there would exist

the opportunity for the intellectual stratum to inject *Bildung* into the body politic. Here, then, would arise the possibility of cultivating a self-awareness of the need to preserve the freedom of individual thought and action against the herdlike mentality of both tradition (*Deutschtum*) and instrumental rationality.<sup>48</sup>

The vocations of science and politics would be mobilized to ensure this ethical possibility in the following ways. First, those politicians of prophetic ability – that is, those who could mobilize their party members toward a cause through their charisma – would rise to prominence in the halls of executive and legislative power via the party system. In this way parliament would become a breeding ground of true political leadership (Weber 1982: 80). And though during the War Weber was unclear as to the procedural position of such leaders, in the wake of the 1919 revolution he proposed that the President of the Reich should himself be directly elected (see Mommsen 1984: 184). This plebiscite democracy (Weber 2003e; see also Pfaff 2002) was, in effect, the maximum mobilization of charismatic authority. The political agency of the demagogic politician could galvanize the masses to perform value-driven actions to transform their cultural community. Second, however, this demagogic agency would be ethically tempered by a responsibility toward ensuring the economic security of its pasture: the mass party membership (Weber 1982: 102; 2003d: 204), and with the President, the economic well-being of the German nation. In this way, means would always have to be balanced by the way they would effect the ends of political action. Third, the intellectual would use his/her own special political agency to color these debates in Parliament with the hue of *Bildung*. This would ensure that the basic psychical impulse of the charismatic politician would be consistently guided toward a self-awareness of the limits of his own beliefs. With this responsibility to act according to the limits of truth, a careful course could be plotted for the German polity through a godless world.

### **Weber's value comparison across cultures**

*Only a politically mature people is a 'nation of masters'. ... Only nations of masters are called upon to thrust their hands into the spokes of the world's development.*

Weber<sup>49</sup>

In effect, then, Weber developed the links between the vocations of science and politics in order to produce a *Realpolitik* with which to resolve

the problem of arrested German development. Yet Weber was not content to limit the mandate of his vocations of science and politics simply to guiding the German *Sonderweg*. For during the Great War he believed he was witness to a closing down of charismatic potentiality both in America and, with the Bolshevik turn, in Russia too. Meanwhile, Europe seemed to have whole-heartedly embraced the atavistic warmongering of nationalism. It was left to Germany to fight against both a universal ebbing of charisma by instrumental rationality and the capture of cultural values by atavistic delusions of a collective essence. Weber thus proclaimed that the duty of a *Machtstaat* was to determine the character of the culture of the future of humanity (Weber 2003: 76).

This placed the architects of German *Realpolitik* under an incredible moral responsibility: having matured as a 'nation of masters' it was this nation's responsibility to pursue its calling at the level of world development (Weber 2003d: 269). Even if instrumental rationality might be colonizing the whole world, and even if all that remained of charisma was being channeled into the atavism of the old traditional classes, the political agency of the German *Bildungsbürgertum* might nevertheless act as a star to guide humanity, with the help of *Bildung*, through its 'polar night'.<sup>50</sup> Weber's *Realpolitik* ultimately required the *Bildungsbürgertum* to step out of the epigonal shadows of the German middle classes and reveal themselves as the saviors of humanity.

But was this not a position that could only be taken within an emanatist – dare it be said Hegelian – worldview? How, from a neo-Kantian viewpoint, could the future of a culturally polytheistic humanity be entrusted to *any* particular polity? How, from this viewpoint, could one even ethically think about thrusting a particular pair of hands into the spokes of world development? Weber had, after all, belonged to an intellectual milieu that had turned (even enthusiastically) toward an analytical and ethical embrace of the irreducibly polytheistic character of world development. It was this need to produce knowledge of difference that drew Weber toward the neo-Kantian position of replacing diachronic-historical causality (universal becoming) in human affairs with a focus on synchronic-cultural causality (cultural difference). And yet... this difference had never really been a neutral phenomenon for Weber: it was a problem to be analyzed precisely because, owing to Bismarck, the development of the German *Bürgertum* could be judged as arrested only *in comparison to the advanced historical development of a foreign 'middle class'*. Such a comparison required a value judgment of social types to be made across the neo-Kantian *hiatus irrationalis*. The question is, to where?

The shifts in European geo-politics post-1870 realigned the comparative context in which German intellectuals made sense of their cultural 'special path', which had now become firmly focused back upon British capitalism rather than on French republicanism.<sup>51</sup> Having come of intellectual age during this realignment, Weber overwhelmingly assumed the archetypal middle class agency to be exemplified historically in the English capitalist entrepreneur.<sup>52</sup> For, with the rise of the yeoman as the rational cultivator the English middle classes, unlike their brethren in both France and Germany, had distinguished themselves by managing to bend the will of the nobility to support the political instantiation of individual freedom (Weber 2001: 117; 2003a: 98, 111). And what is more, they had at the same time managed to maintain an ethical commitment toward retaining political freedom of individual thought and action instead of succumbing to the instrumental rationality of modern bureaucratic rule that made of political agency a herdlike mentality. True, the English shared this honor along with the Dutch and New Englanders as partakers in the only heroic (charismatic) bourgeois fights against tradition so far (e.g., Weber 2001: 5). Yet, it was still the English capitalist entrepreneurialism that, historically, had most successfully kept the instrumental rationalization of political authority at bay (Weber 1978a: 977, 987).

In other words, there was an *archetype* – and not ideal type – of the political agency of individual freedom, one expressed historically in the liberal project of the English middle classes. And it was against this universally comparable archetype that Weber judged the German species to be historically arrested and backward. Thus, despite employing a neo-Kantian epistemology that disallowed value comparisons across national trajectories, Weber still judged the current illiberal state of German politics by performing just such a value-laden inter-societal comparison.

Let us here recap the argument. The ultimate purpose that drove Weber to link the vocations of science to that of politics was to escape a condition of comparative German backwardness. It was a consciousness of such backwardness, manifested in the arrested development of the German middle classes, that compelled Weber, via an investigation of charisma, to fuse liberal ethical ends with the practical means of illiberal political forces. However, in producing his political philosophy of *Realpolitik*, Weber re-imagined and re-defined *both* the particular political condition *and* the universal criteria by which this condition could be judged to be progressive or backward. In Weber's case, the particular political condition was the historical backwardness of the

German middle class, and the universal criteria were exemplified in the world-historical agency of the English capitalist class and its successful co-opting of the will of the nobility in the pursuit of institutionalizing individual freedom in political life. Moreover, having judged the German middle classes by reference to a universal archetype of the middle-class will to power, Weber could then make a *faux pas* into universalism and conceive his intellectual vocation as enabling a German 'nation of masters' to 'thrust their hands into the spokes of modern world development' (Weber 2003d: 269).

When all is said and done, Weber's *Realpolitik* relied on a framing of the world-historical movement of *Bildung* inherited from Hegel, specifically on the assumption that both Germany and humanity's modern problems emanated from just *one* form of political subjectivity – the impersonalized individual.<sup>53</sup> True, Weber mounted a devastating critique of the ontological assumptions of universality embedded in Hegel's revolution of Philosophy. And taking issue with the 'special path' of German cultural development, Weber expressed the internal dialectic of egoism and self-awareness of individuality through the instrumental rationality versus charismatic nature of the Protestant ethic; in the post-Bismarck political conditions of arrested development this dialectic was intensified by the persistence of traditional forms of authority. Nevertheless, the 'dialectic' of the impersonalized individual still framed both the analytical and prescriptive components of this political philosophy. And it was this that produced Weber's Hegelian-like slip-back into universalism both in terms of analysis and prescription.

Analytically, Weber's whole attempt to dissipate the Hegelian illusion of universal becoming, which had been so harmful to the rise of the *Bürgertum*, relied upon the ontology of the impersonalized individual. Weber believed that the political subject internally constructed a meaningful interpretation of its standing in the world as an individual, and engaged with the social world from a position of predomination. Social meaning was derived from a voluntary choice of the individual; therefore, the will to power of the individual was impersonal in form to the extent that it was not communally or collectively constructed in the first instance (see Barker 1980). Moreover, by this ontology, any claim to a collective subject could only gain reality as an ideology that was rooted in an *atavistic* will to power. In other words, by Weber's ontology it was *impossible* to speak of the impersonal collective as a *modern* political subject. This is why, prescriptively, the impersonal collective for Weber (the *Volk*, the discourse of *Deutschtum* etc.) was only a *means* to an ethical modern freedom, and *never such an end in itself*. Weber's Jacobinism was

White because it refused to consider the impersonal collective as a form of modern political subjectivity itself, but rather as atavistic and thus to be used purely as a temporary means to cultivating an ethical life of modern individualism.<sup>54</sup>

Ultimately, then, Weber's political philosophy failed to engage with the impersonal collective as a modern political subject. But was this issue still pertinent to an investigation of the development of a now-powerful geo-political entity such as Germany? Weber, of course, spoke little of the French Revolution and its impact on Germany, and this is hardly surprising considering the fact that even during Weber's childhood Bismarck had already reversed the geo-political pressure between France and Germany. Yet, as I have shown above, this had not reversed the development *within* Germany of a political discourse of rights and duties derived from Jacobinism – *Deutschtum*. And here, there are remarkable similarities with Hegel's critique of the *Burschenschaft* and their attempt to modernize the Reich through the instantiation of a German impersonal collective. However, if, as I have shown, this discourse of *Deutschtum* had lost its egalitarian impulse by the end of the century, it still framed political struggle through Jacobinesque mass mobilization, and increasingly so in the lead-up to the Great War. In the aftermath, the clash between impersonal collective and impersonalized individual rights and duties within Germany would propel its *Sonderweg* toward a catastrophic and world-shaking climax.

## Conclusion

Hegel's response to German backwardness invoked the international dimension of social transformation only to close down its generative effect of multi-linearity through *Geist*. Weber, alternatively, responded to Germany's arrested development by accepting the neo-Kantian emphasis on inter-cultural difference, but an emphasis that hard coded this condition of multi-linearity into the very composition of humanity. Multi-linearity in human development was not amenable to being investigated as a condition generated through developmental relations between cultural systems, for this would be to repeat the disastrous Hegelian error. Nevertheless, driving the very assumption of arrested development in Weber, and hence the need to construct a *Realpolitik* to re-start this development, was a reference to the impersonalized individual as *the* real type of modernity and its internal dialectic as *the* struggle to be ethically engaged with. This was Weber's *faux pas* into universalism, and paradoxically, it was by treading this path and judging German



development in particular from this vista that he could posit a 'fall' in the spread and penetration of *Bildung* from universal to nationally limited.

Weber's *Realpolitik*, therefore, was certainly not positivist in the Anglo-American sense. But even so, it is not sufficient, in order to pursue a more careful ethics of knowledge production of international relations, to rely on Weber's vocations as a quasi-tragic counter-position to Anglo-American positivism. For, when facing the quasi-tragedy of Weber's *Realpolitik* we face an ethical tradition deriving from a consciousness of backwardness, and one accumulated around an elision of the international dimension of social transformation and its generative result in modern world development – a frictional relation between the impersonalized individual *and* the impersonal collective. In light of this international dimension of social transformation, and the multi-linear spectrum it produced, the darkness of Weber's *Realpolitik* becomes more diffused, and his quasi-tragic sense of a uni-linear modern world history is more problematical to maintain. This should be remembered when we turn, presently, to Morgenthau.

In this Part of the book I have argued that ultimately the development of the (French-) Jacobin subject, and its expression within German politics, was never confronted in its own right, but subsumed under, or mixed with, the problematic of the British impersonalized individual. Here, I have concentrated upon the intellectual reception and engagement with this problem. However, I have also had to outline a more general history of this reception at the same time, and a brief epilogue to this aspect of the present investigation is now necessary. In what follows I will suggest how the conclusion to Germany's *Sonderweg*, the social transformations that produced National Socialism, had an international dimension – how they might be better understood as a final substitution project for the French road. Certainly, all I can do here is suggest an alternative interpretation of such a contested phenomenon; yet this suggestion must be made in order to paint the Weimar context in which Morgenthau would make of the Liberal project a full-blown tragedy.

## Part III

# 7

## Epilogue: *Weimar*

In the preceding part of this book I argued that ultimately the development of the Jacobin subject, and its expression within German politics, was not intellectually confronted in its own right, but subsumed under, or mixed with, the problem of engaging with the British impersonalized individual. The focus of this narrative was the intellectual reception and engagement with this problem, although this itself was contextualized within the wider transformations enacted by German political strata through the challenge presented by these foreign political subjects. In what follows, I will suggest how the conclusion to Germany's *Sonderweg*, the wider transformations that produced National Socialism, might be better understood as a final substitution project for the French road. Certainly, all I can do here is suggest an alternative interpretation of such a contested phenomenon; yet this suggestion must be made in order to better contextualize Morgenthau's Weimar response to Weber's *Realpolitik*: his Political Realism.

### **A nation-in-arms?**

Germany, as I noted in the last chapter, was unified and Louis Bonaparte defeated by a re-royalized army. In effect, the wars of unification rectified the dangerously egalitarian nature of the wars of independence that had witnessed the creation of a citizen's army, the *Landwehr*. Little, if anything, changed in the military-citizen relationship between 1871 and 1914 – the citizen-soldier was no more to be seen in 1914 than it had been in 1871 (Showalter 1983). Yet there was one crucial difference between 1866 and 1914: in 1914, the German military machine entered into war with the support of a mass organized working class.<sup>1</sup> True, the OHL somewhat displaced the authority of organized

labor within the work place after the creation of a War Raw Materials Department (*Kriegsrohstoffabteilung*), the mission of which it was to outsmart the British blockade. Nevertheless, in return for this, unions were given representation on the War Boards and in general received an official recognition that had been all but impossible during peacetime (Seligmann and McLean 2000: 159–160).

In this respect an important paradox of Germany's *Sonderweg* was revealed in the course of the war. The precocious industrial development that had propelled Germany past both France and Britain in productive capacity had also produced the most coherent body of organized industrial labor. And the necessary compromise between a corporate body of labor and the High Command (OHL) consistently disallowed a complete militarization of governance and production that could take advantage of this precocious development. (The War Ministry, for example, always stopped short of invoking compulsory labor.) This, however, was not the case in slothful France and oceanic Britain. With no comparably organized labor to get in the way, the allies, Britain especially, managed to organize a centralized war economy superior to that of Germany (see Ritter 1973: 346–348). The German army tasted this superiority at the battle of the Somme in the summer of 1916, and the bitterness propelled the OHL to try and break the labor–military compromise through the Hindenburg program.

'Work for the general welfare is today the duty of everyone. No one has any right to special privilege in return for such work': these were the suspiciously Jacobin words that Hindenburg's report delivered in the late summer of 1916 (*ibid.*: 347). The program was designed to double, even treble, armament production by coercing the entire spread of German civilian life into a labor army. However, this forging of a nation-in-arms was resisted by organized labor (as well as by elements within the OHL), and the resulting Auxiliary Service law was shot through with exemptions (see *ibid.*: 354; Herwig 1992: 65–67; Seligmann and McLean 2000: 162–163). Once more a fully centralized war economy of the Jacobin type had been denied in Germany. And then the Russian Revolution intervened.

The Revolution was a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it provided the OHL with a breathing space on the Eastern Front. On the other hand, after the allies repelled the last desperate push on the Western Front, the OHL found that they had been left with an additional incentive for pursuing a negotiated end to the war. A catastrophic military defeat might work the Russian magic *within* Germany: troops routed from the front might bring revolution back with them, hence Eric

Ludendorff's sudden enthusiasm for negotiating the American armistice before the hour of final defeat (see Geyer 2001: 467–473). The problem, however, was that to accept the terms of the armistice would be to accept defeat even in the absence of an allied occupation of Germany; and this would surely bring dishonor on the General Staff and undermine the legitimacy of military authority. Better, then, that the *Reichstag* should be given the task of negotiating with Woodrow Wilson (Hucko 1987: 38).

Yet at the same time voices in the *Reichstag* had also started to talk of a very French solution to the problem: a *levée en masse*. Certainly, Paul von Hintze and, most famously, Walter Rathenau, did not desire to instigate a revolution from below. Rather, they believed that an 'insurrection of the people', or at least the threat of one, would make the allies think twice about occupying Germany (see Geyer 2001: 476, 482). This did not happen, and an armistice was pursued. Nevertheless the wartime flashes of a Jacobin-like relation between the civil and the military remained imprinted upon the German mind and haunted every worldview in the Weimar period.

## Constitutionalism and Jacobinism

The war brought to a head the problem of Jacobinization of German development that had, in various ways, influenced the *Sonderweg* for over one hundred years. This happened in a number of ways.

First, the ignoble end of 1918 made clear to the remains of the military command that working within the parameters of limited war had proved near fatal. From here on the command had far less time for traditional conservatism and royalist attempts to avoid a Jacobinization of the army (Noakes and Pridham 1988: 630). In fact, military planning shifted toward a total war of annihilation fought by and over the spirit of the people, and not only via an institutionally separated army. This shift toward (if not full embrace of) a Jacobin articulation of the citizen–military relationship was one core Reason why the German military, heretofore a jealous protector of noble privilege (real or acquired) would be able to identify a fellow traveler in, quite literally, an Austrian son of a bastard.

Second, the drive toward total mobilization had required an institutional acceptance of organized labor, and the SDP, it must be remembered, was only one of a number of different projects during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by government and industry to provide social welfare in the midst of industrialization. This meant

that the post-war government necessarily inherited a definition and practice of rights and duties that had never been colonized by the classical liberal distinction between public and private domains (Hong 1998: 32–35). And in this respect the Weimar republic was congenitally Jacobin and not a child of Anglo-liberalism. True, the Weimar Constitution did indeed establish the rule of law based on the inviolable rights of property and the free and equal individual.<sup>2</sup> But at the same time the Constitution proclaimed fundamental duties to the welfare of an impersonal social whole.<sup>3</sup> Note, for example, the same articles that proclaimed the freedom of property stated:

The organization of economic life must correspond to the principles of justice, and be designed to *ensure for all a life worthy of a human being*. Within these limits the economic freedom of the individual must be guaranteed.

...

The ownership of property entails obligations. *Its use must at the same time serve the common good* [my emphases].

The Weimar Constitution of 1919<sup>4</sup>

This attempt to encode the rights of the individual to property alongside the duty to follow the general will by securing the welfare of an impersonal social whole is what makes the Weimar Constitution essentially a Jacobin Constitution.

But third, and what differentiated the historical conjuncture of Weimar from that of Robespierre's, *this* Jacobin Constitution was delivered immediately after a *direct* military defeat and *during* a concerted and planned effort to emasculate German political authority on the international stage. This is important because the core purpose of the Constitution was to bind back together the German body politic in the midst of a crisis of both political legitimacy and social reproduction. Indeed, as the armistice was being negotiated, worker and soldier revolts broke out all over Germany, raising demands for the immediate removal of all *Landräte* who continued to govern in the style of the old system (Carsten 1989: 154). Moreover, Prince Max von Baden only barely managed to head off the radical-socialist Spartacist revolution by announcing Wilhelm's abdication and placing the SDP leader Friedrich Ebert as President of the new republic. A spate of *ad hoc* decrees followed designed to prevent any further radicalization of returning troops (Hong 1998: 35). But to retain some kind of order the new republican government had to side closely with the army; and it was both the army

and the *Freikorps* – militias of ex-soldiers loyal to their monarchist officers – who violently put down the Spartacist revolution. Thus, although proclaiming not just the rights of property but the duty to secure the good of the social whole, the new Republic from the very start had no centralized and unified authority through which to effect the general will. The infamous executive powers granted to the President merely highlighted this lack of central authority. Just how executive could the President be, if until 1930 French (and French-colonial!) troops were occupying the Ruhr? Just how much control could the President exert over the provision of social welfare through the economy if reparations had been decided without German acquiescence, and industrial magnates schemed to dislodge organized labor with the remains of the right-wing military and militias?

Fourth, Ludendorff – he who had urged a settling of accounts as soon as possible for fear of a Russian-style revolution in Germany – now proclaimed that it was the liberal-social-democratic members of the *Reichstag* who had stabbed the German soldier in the back (the *Dolchstoßlegende*). Ironically, the failure to secure the general will – the social welfare of the whole – came to be attributed to the one political species that *had*, though insincerely, called for a ‘peoples war’. This creature was herewith charged with capitulating and allowing economic and political domination and plunder to be undertaken by Germany’s external enemies. And in this way the ‘November criminals’ developed as an expansive category (much like Robespierre’s *ancien régime* in the republic of virtue): it consisted of all forces that opposed the general will – socialists, communists, liberals, capitalists and Jews.

Through all these various but related issues the Weimar question of political survival and social reproduction came to be framed by the Jacobin principle of the general will. In this sense, Weimar was experienced as the age of mechanical reproduction, industrial atomism and party-political fragmentation *not* because this experience merely reflected actually existing *laissez-faire* liberalism and the individualization of social life, but, *more so*, because this experience worked against the *Zeitgeist* of the general will. No wonder so many people, the young especially, searched for wholeness and were open as to the kind of socialism that might deliver it (see Gay 1968: 75–96). What is more, with the experience of the war years the discourse of *Deutschtum* underwent a qualitative shift: returned from elitist machination to its quasi-egalitarian *Landwehr* roots; it was now also embraced by the *highest echelons* of the political strata as the only social bond adequate to defend the polity.

But most importantly, as I have mentioned above, unlike Robespierre, Ebert had no practical chance of constructing a comparable Committee of Public Safety. This meant that the political subject of the impersonal collective had no strong institutional basis from which to claim its content: rather, this content was free to be constructed and contested by a host of different interests, among them Hitler's National Socialist party. (In many ways, this freedom had its roots, as I have shown in the last chapter, in the Wilhelmine period.) The recovery and expansion of German industry in the 1920s had been driven, in large part, by foreign loans. So when, owing to the Great Depression, this lifeline dried up and tax revenue declined, Heinrich Brüning's government was forced to cut back on social insurance. With this, the Weimar pursuit of the general will collapsed, exhausted, leading to Hitler's grasping of the state apparatus by employing the Constitution's own emergency decree, the infamous article 48.<sup>5</sup>

### From Jacobin to *Führer*

How, then, did the Nazi party define the political subject of the impersonal collective? And how did Nazism seek to solve the problem of securing the German general will?

Unlike the French bourgeoisie in Bourbon France, the Nazis could not look to British liberalism as a model for emulation with which to re-generate the polity. After all, was it not precisely the land of Locke that had directly and quite substantively shackled the German general will at Versailles?<sup>6</sup> Moreover was not Weimar a system that had constitutionally guaranteed the rights of the individual at the same time allowing for the degeneration of the nation? Individualism, then, was deemed to be synonymous with the enemy outside and inside. Thus, preached Joseph Goebbels, 'Fascism is by its essence anti-liberal, not only in its results but in its spiritual principle' (cited in Fried 1955: 778). Furthermore, in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and the Spartacist revolt, Nazism was also a mass movement that was instinctively distrustful of the masses. For, if there existed no discipline and authority with which to obligate all social beings to the *Volk*, the general will would collapse into faction under the weight of the international conspiracy hatched at Versailles.

For these reasons, Weimar politics was defined, like no era before in modern German history, by inter-societal comparisons. However, what distinguished this act of comparison was the tendency to treat the 'enemy' as a political entity that, in its direct shackling of the general



will, could *not* be treated at the same time as mentor. It is because of this that an existing trend among nationalist political parties became such a fundamental resource for Nazi social and political thought, namely the revival of the *Führerprinzip*.

The idea of a heroic leadership saving the *Volk* reaches back to at least the battle of Leipzig in 1813, but had been re-invented, especially, by the elitist middle-class Pan-German League. Their disappointment with the results of Wilhelm's *Weltpolitik*, combined with his acceptance of working-class politics (such that by 1912 the SDP held the largest share of parliament), led them to re-script Bismarck as sympathetic to the interests of the middle class. And with the Weimar republic now supporting all of Bismarck's historical enemies – socialists, Catholics and democrats – the League's 1919 Bamberg Declaration took Bismarck to be the model of a nationalist opposition. The solution to Germany's international subordination, therefore, could come from only one source: a 'people's Kaiser'. The Nazi party promoted this political philosophy, which arose, in part, from the fringes of the Pan-German League, and bended Nietzsche's 'triumph of the will' in order to prescribe a personality that had the will and power to actualize the *Volkstaat* as the solution to Germany's problems. Before long, Hitler was presenting himself as the genuine popular heir to the Iron Chancellor.<sup>7</sup>

Mobilizing this existing political philosophy Nazism expected all institutions of social reproduction to operate on the *Führer* principle. As has been suggested already, this principle was *not* synonymous with the *Herrschaft* of old – a relation of personal dependency and obligation. Specifically, the real purpose of the *Führer* principle was to freeze the class struggle – actually, antagonisms within the social structure in general – so as to allow for a meritocratic mobility of individuals across strata without fracturing the general will (see Fried 1955: 771–773). In this sense Nazism was the very antipathy of *ständische* society. In fact, Hitler criticized the honor principle among the officer cadre and went so far as to invest manual labor with the highest title of honor (Lüdtko 1994: 74; Knox 2000: 816). Moreover, Nazism legitimized private property ownership only through a similar meritocratic principle: those who performed well deserved the fruits of their efforts, regardless of their station (Stern 1992: 117). And performance, of course, was judged according to how such activities contributed to the securing of the German general will. 'There is no such thing as a commercial balance of expenditure and profit', noted Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, *Führer* of the Reich Estate of German Industry, '[t]here is only a national balance of being and not-being' (cited in *ibid.*: 120). Even Hitler's own

supremacy was legitimated, by Nazi intellectuals, in a similar fashion; witness Hans Frank, head of the Nazi association of lawyers:

Whether the *Führer* governs according to a formal written constitution is not a legal question.... The legal question is only whether through his activity the *Führer* guarantees the existence of his people.

Cited in Welch 1993: 85<sup>8</sup>

National Socialist rights and duties were delineated by reference to the *Volksgemeinschaft* – a warring political community encircled by an array of enemy social forces. The ‘myth of the front’ – of the *Volksgemeinschaft* being forged by the comradely bonds of soldiers in the trenches of World War I – played heavily in this identification, which was, in time, to become the basis of the German terror. Those social forces internal to Germany that connived with the enemy were to be identified by the degree to which they agitated for peace or war (see Fried 1955: 776, 780; Bartov 1994: 47). And by defining the *Volksgemeinschaft* thus, the notion of class struggle could be transposed from the domestic to the international field – *Lebensraum* now prescribed taking back from the greedy nations what was rightfully German (see Fried 1955: 781; Messerschmidt 1983: 722).

Initially formulated by Friedrich Ratzel (see Smith 1991: 91–93, 219–225), but taken forward in Karl Haushofer’s notion of *Geopolitik* (see Diner 1999), *Lebensraum* was a Social-Darwinian interpretation of Wilhelmine *Weltpolitik* (the attempt to emulate British expansion but as a continental power). With Haushofer, *Lebensraum* became solidified into a self – other philosophy: the people of the soil – the German nation – had to defend and expand their natural-existential domain against encroachment by the people of industry and commerce (variously, the British, the Jews etc.). *Lebensraum* was transformed by Nazi intellectuals into less of a geographical object – living space – than an organic being – a German life-world (Neumann 2002). Thus, with the world in a great depression, Hitler believed that the only possibility of tackling unemployment and offsetting the possibility of domestic class struggle was to settle a new generation of farmers in the East (Noakes and Pridham 1988: 629).

### **The Naziist impersonal collective**

In fine, though the supreme authority was manifest in a person, the rights and duties of the political subject of the *Volksgemeinschaft* were

nevertheless accorded in an *impersonal* fashion that merged human and nature into one. This radical impersonalization of the *Volk* produced a set of rights and duties of social reproduction that combined hierarchy and meritocracy in an antonymic way (see Schoenbaum 1967: 245–286). Therefore Nazism was a political authority neither atavistic, nor derivative of (a ‘bad’) capitalism, nor a continuation of nationalist politics by other means – it took one step beyond all of these existing forms of social reproduction. Propelled by the post-war correlation of international forces in the Weimar era the Nazi party finally, after over one hundred years of torturous engagement with the impersonalization of social relations of production, effected a process of German substitution to the British, French and now Russian paths that resulted in a novel, post-Jacobin, encoding of the rights and duties of the impersonal collective.

The novelty of the resulting *Volksgemeinschaft* was that individual rights and duties were officially banished from its social relations of production. To this effect, Nazism sought to reverse the obligations of the individual in Weimar social welfare: rather, the individual was obligated spiritually to the welfare of the *Volk* (Hong 1998: 271). Thus, for the rights of the individual and the duties toward the social whole, Nazism substituted the rights and duties according to the singular *Volk*. And for the national assembly as the deliberative political space of the impersonal collective, Nazism substituted the expressive will of the *Führer*. Only in this way could individualism be cleansed in its entirety from the German political subject; only in this way could the German general will be made strong enough to defend itself against the November criminals – British, socialist, communist, liberal and Jew.

However, Hitler had to initially work hard to realize his plan to fuse together the citizen and soldier in the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and even compromised the Nazi para-military in the Night of Long Knives so as to gain the trust of the existing military command.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, by the end of 1933 the trade unions were absorbed into the Nazi-run German Labor Front; anti-Jewish legislation came into effect from September 1935 onward, defining membership of the German general will on the basis of blood; the idea of the racial nation was incorporated into the military academies by 1938; military law was made harsher to conform to the new ethos of the *Volk-in-arms*; and a massive expansion of the conscript army took place – from 10 divisions in 1932, the *Wehrmacht* could boast 110 in 1939 (Knox 2000: 805).

And yet...did there still exist a fear of the radical and unsettling confluence of the Jacobin citizen-soldier in Hitler’s political consciousness?

After all, come 1939, and the *Führer* initially chose not to fight an insurrectionary war – a battle to the death between and among peoples – but a Blitzkrieg based more on the conservative tactics of 1914. Nevertheless, the logic of the rights of and duties to the *Volksgemeinschaft*, encoded in Hitler's Nazi Germany, could abide no such limitation. Operation Barbarossa sought to carve out the precious *Lebensraum* necessary for a reproduction of the *Volksgemeinschaft* that would retain its unity by offsetting class conflict; and when this *Geopolitik* of the general will foundered on the banks of the Volga, Hitler was finally compelled to embark on a war of peoples. This frenzied apex of the German *Sonderweg* shook the world for another three years before finally being contained. And many characteristics of world politics, both subjectively and practically, had already been irrevocably altered. In this broader sense, the *Sonderweg*, in its death, gave life to a new epoch of world order. In the decades immediately following World War II, all attempts to erect a global framework for rights and duties of social reproduction had to communicate with the ghosts of the victims of Nazism. Thus the generative nature of the international dimension of German social transformation left its deep mark on future world affairs.

# 8

## Morgenthau's Existential Crisis

### Introduction

Hans Morgenthau's special attraction for those who wish to disturb the dichotomous nature of the text book framework of IR theory has been twofold.<sup>1</sup> First, as a 'godfather' of the American discipline, Morgenthau is a strategically important author. Second, Morgenthau appears to be ripe for just such reinterpretations owing to the ambiguous way in which his intellectual heritage and his own writings map onto the mutually exclusive nature of liberal and realist worldviews popularly presented in text books. Of special importance, in this respect, is the reconciliation of Morgenthau with a tragic tradition of political thought wherein the human condition is considered to be one of anti-perfection and human action is characterized by *hubris* (see Frost 2003; Lebow 2003). One must avoid crusades of good versus evil because one's notion of the 'good' can never be universally applicable in thought nor perfectly realized in practice. Morgenthau can therefore be re-claimed as a critical and influential voice on the unbounded optimism of the American 'applied enlightenment' – the pursuit of a progressively tighter correspondence between knowledge and action.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, perhaps Stanley Hoffman has best explained the apparent ambiguities of Morgenthau's political philosophy: if he aimed to be realistic about the irreducible diversity of interests in international politics, this was in order to make a single ethical project – the liberal one – politically wise; he was, in short, a 'conservative liberal' (Hoffman 1981: 657; see also Gellman 1988). However, this apparently ambiguous combination of realist and liberal sentiments has allowed both neo-realists and liberals to mobilize Morgenthau in passing judgment on recent middle-eastern crusades of the Bush administration (Meyer

2003; Mearsheimer 2005). Nevertheless, this flexibility is not surprising because an ethics of self-limitation is general enough to frame any non- crusading prescription, be it conservative, liberal or radical. And as is always the case with the relationship between ethics and politics, the devil is in the detail.

Nicholas Rengger (2005: 325–326) has reminded us of a conversation between Michael Oakeshott and Morgenthau. Tragedy, Rengger notes, requires a belief in a *specific* ethical criterion that informs judgment on political actions by reference to the possibilities and strictures inherent in human nature. In this respect, the resurrection of Morgenthau as an authoritative source for critically re-introducing the normative moment back into IR theory requires us to answer the question posed by Oakeshott: by what criteria might the human condition be considered as tragic? If the criterion was, as Hoffman and others suggest, liberal in nature, then we must attempt to explain what historically specific political–philosophical problem Morgenthau was trying to answer by fusing an ethics of liberalism with the tragedy of international politics.

In what follows I place Morgenthau immediately within the Weimar intellectual context, a context defined by the transformation of a consciousness of backwardness into an existential angst over German cultural identity prompted by the capitulation at Versailles. I show how Morgenthau attempted to make sense of this crisis on the foundations of Weber's neo-Kantian political philosophy of a fractured humanity, and through this attempted to preserve the use of *Bildung* even in an apparently *post-liberal* era of existential crisis. For this, Morgenthau went beyond Weber's *Realpolitik* by ultimately judging an existential crisis of humanity to be the outcome of a uni-linear world-historical development driven by the internal dialectic of the one modern 'liberal' subject. With this, the German 'liberal' project that I have been documenting reaches its nadir.

By laying bare this context, I ultimately show that Morgenthau derived the criteria by which he considered the human condition to be tragic from an existentialization of the consciousness of backwardness. However, it was an existentialization that presumed a universality that Liberalism had never possessed. I argue that in this way Morgenthau obscured the international dimension of social transformation in his political philosophy and that it was this obfuscation that directed Morgenthau toward the construction in America of a Realist politics designed to conserve the (German) liberal project in a post-liberal world milieu. Considering his canonical status in the discipline of IR, this is ironic, to say the least; and the vibrant literature that has

recently re-canonized Morgenthau as an ethical resource for IR theory would do well to mark this obfuscation.

## Existential crisis in the Weimar Republic

*Together, Prussianism and socialism stand against the England within us, against the world view which has penetrated the whole existence of our people, paralysed it, and robbed it of its soul.*

Oswald Spengler<sup>3</sup>

With the Versailles settlement, Germany's developmental trajectory had very practically been restrained and contained by outside powers. Particularly affected by this was the neo-Kantian position: if heretofore deemed an acceptable foundation upon which to self-referentially understand the German *Sonderweg*, it was now unable to prescribe a clear direction once this special path had been geo-politically blocked. In short, neo-Kantianism now threatened to undermine the institutional standing of the *Bildungsbürgertum* as a guide to German development.<sup>4</sup>

Because of this, the era witnessed an intellectual shift back toward that most 'un-German' tradition of thought: Hegelianism (Turner and Factor 1984: 104). More accurately, Hegel re-appeared as part of a move from the now de-legitimized emphasis on epistemology toward phenomenology and ontology in order to re-discover a secure home for the lost German spirit. Friedrich Meinecke in many ways epitomizes this movement. Before the Great War, Meinecke wedded a neo-Kantian position of the inexhaustible diversity of cultural thought to the supreme moral authority of the state as the highest (but necessarily particularistic) expression of truth. Post-war, this position was softened and, looking toward universals, Meinecke now warned of the damage that *raison d'état* might do to *virtù*. In this sense, Meinecke's thought is defined by a frictional fusion of neo-Kantian particularity and Hegelian universality (see Sterling 1960; Iggers 1969: 175–218 and e.g., Meinecke 1962).

Alternatively, the national history school led by Heinrich von Treitschke emerged energized by this crisis (see Dorpalen 1957: 292–298; Metz 1982: 275–276). By the late nineteenth century, Treitschke had become the intellectual doyen of *Deutschtum* owing to his focus on the making of a German historical-national consciousness.<sup>5</sup> In actual fact, Treitschke had initially borrowed directly from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, especially the anthropomorphization of society into a willing and ethical collective being whose moral strength would be tested against

that of other moral beings in the arena of war. Treitschke, however, became increasingly scathing of Hegel following his own embrace of Rochau's *Realpolitik*, and his observance of Bismarck's unification. Now leading the elitist turn of German liberalism that laid the ground for organizations such as the Pan-German League, Treitschke asserted that the moral legitimacy of Germany as a historical nation required the dialectics of development through mediation to be surgically removed from the study of history, both domestic and thus international. This ultimately resulted in the claim that society would always be composed of *Herr und Knecht*, and that Germany could not borrow or graft on the cultural systems of other political beings without de-legitimizing its own moral worth. In this way Treitschke left German historians of the Wilhelmine era with a stratified Neo-Hegelian philosophy of history – a world of states frozen in their present conjunction. And if this schema had been gleefully employed to justify Wilhelm's *Weltpolitik* it was, post 1918, just as gleefully used by the Neo-Rankean school (philosophically the children of Treitschke far more than Ranke (Mommsen 1990a: 135–136)), to undermine the Weimar Constitution as an 'alien' system (*ibid.*: 139).<sup>6</sup>

There was, however, another way to deal with the *Kulturkrisis* beyond preaching the discourse of *Deutschtum* in an ever louder voice. And that was through a 'conservative revolution' in intellectual thought. Emanating from the same conditions that were producing Nazism, conservative revolutionary intellectuals, such as Oswald Spengler, Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt sought to synthesize the old and the new, to navigate the 1918 roadblock by reference to neither liberal/socialist evolutionary *techné* nor traditional conservative *ethos*. The point was to combine technology and culture – or more philosophically, enlightenment and faith – in order to arrive at a third way by which the German nation might survive the next war both spiritually and materially (see Herf 1984; Bullivant 1985). Schmitt, for example, re-cast the founder of 'liberalism', Hobbes, in a more decisionist light, focusing on the requirement for a supreme authority through which to bind individuals together into a homogenous political community. In Schmitt's interpretation,<sup>7</sup> only the fear that motivated individuals to surrender to a supreme authority could prevent a catastrophic slide into the state of nature. And this was the function of the concept of the political – to constantly remind social beings that they existed within a friend–enemy nexus. In this way, Germany could combine enlightenment and faith, thereby re-politicizing the bourgeois economy in the mobilization of material resources for the next war.



In fact, Schmitt's concept of the political points the way to a crucial problematic that framed all Weimar thought: the need to find a secure ontological base for the German political community necessarily had to define this cultural base by reference to Germany's enemies. Primarily (and this is not to downplay the specter of the USSR hanging over Weimar Germany), the negation was Britain. Moreover, the 'Friend:Germany/Enemy:Britain' distinction was not simply power-political in scope. Rather, and similar to the development of the *Lebensraum* concept, all manner of sociological, anthropological and philosophical qualities were increasingly poured into these geographical containers. For example, Oswald Spengler differentiated between the 'English' socialism (of the SADP) and 'Prussian' socialism (to be captured by Nazism) (Gay 1968: 85); Werner Sombart – Weber's old sparring partner from the Historical School – entitled his book (a work that investigated the introduction of capitalism into Germany) *Händler und Helden*: the 'traders' of the West counter-posed to the 'heroes' of Germany speaks volumes (ibid.: 80); and Nietzsche's nihilism now came to be seen in positive terms as a heroic declaration of war on the banal security of the bourgeois world (Bullivant 1985: 53).<sup>8</sup> Indeed, by generalizing the old eighteenth-century French/German distinction between *Zivilisation* and *Kultur*, everything anti-German could be poured into the 'enemy', whether it be Britain, France, Judaism, democracy, parliament, Marxism, socialism, communism, or even – and especially – Liberalism (see Herf 1984: 28–35). Therefore, the 'enemy' was a category that actually ignored political borders: it could exist both outside and inside. Indeed, the 'enemy' was most often expressed, in various ways, as the Weimar 'system' itself (see Lieberman 1998).

Overall, then, the Weimar era witnessed an intellectual shift away from epistemological concerns over cultural difference back to ontological questions about cultural existence. However, the developmental aspect of Hegel's ontology of becoming was now replaced by existential concerns of being. Concomitantly, the geo-political aspect of the German political context was no longer defined by the issue of comparative backwardness, but more so by a friend/enemy distinction. And the prime intellectual question now was not so much as to the kind of German polity that might arise in the future (liberal or illiberal), but rather, as to whether there would be a future German polity at all. All this made for an unforgiving climate in which the German intellectual might continue to exercise a political agency of *Bildung* through which to cultivate an ethical individual freedom within German politics.

When cultural difference had been infiltrated post 1918 – when the German *Sonderweg* had been captured and controlled by outside forces – the *Bildungsbürgertum* were compelled to return to an investigation of the ontology of *Sonderweg*. But crucially, this return was embarked upon in an era of crisis where the ‘liberal’ project could no longer function as the ultimate ideal of political development (as it had under the various versions of *Realpolitik*). In this respect, in the Weimar intellectual context, the consciousness of backwardness, rather than being constituted through the perceived need to catch up with the liberal ideal or preserve it within the German cultural system, now started to inform the problem of *existing as a discrete political community*. And with this shift, the multi-linear nature of world development became not only conceptually stratified, as it had become with neo-Kantianism, but, now, also existentialized. The differential development between Germany and all other political communities was transmuted into a life–death binary rather than a backward–advanced model; with this transmutation, *Bildung* lost both its historical direction and institutional home.

### Morgenthau in Weimar and beyond

*[The Great War] has extirpated Europe's belief in the individual as the ultimate value and in his earthly happiness as a potential goal for a philosophical-political system.*

Morgenthau<sup>9</sup>

It is in this intellectual climate that Morgenthau commenced the development of what would become his specific brand of Realism. And Law was the discipline within which he engaged with the existential crisis felt by the *Bildungsbürgertum*. The Weimar Constitution had appeared to neo-Kantian jurisprudence as the most rational formal encoding of law, valid in its internal consistency even if laid over the top of a frictional and most irrational socio-political context (see Koskenniemi 2001, Chapters 3, 6). Even before the entrenchment of Nazism, a number of intellectuals questioned this separation of the noumenal and phenomenal, especially, for example, some of the conservative revolutionaries mentioned above. Yet this species of intellectuals did not hold a monopoly on the critique of neo-Kantian formalism; for example, one of Morgenthau's strongest early influences, Hugo Sinzheimer, combined labor law and sociology of law to prescribe a peaceful transition toward social democracy in Germany (Scheuerman 2008).

With the rise of Nazism, Morgenthau, a German Jew, experienced first-hand the power of defining a political community in existential terms that circumvented entirely the supposed power of a rationalist legal blueprint (Frei 2001: 36).<sup>10</sup> As part of this project, Morgenthau turned toward international law and judged its content to be even more myopic regarding the correlation of shifting social forces than the content produced in the formalistic understanding of the Weimar Constitution. His DPhil dissertation, incorporating this critique, reflected the intent of Sinzheimer to re-populate the study of law with a concern for the psychological and social substance of the legal world (Morgenthau 1977: 9; see also Scheuerman 2008: 38–40).

For this critique Morgenthau found succor in Nietzsche's revelations of the ambiguous nature of human existence (Peterson 1999; Frei 2001: 24, 99–102). However, Morgenthau sought to reconcile such ambiguity primarily through engaging with the 'liberal' project of the intellectual stratum,<sup>11</sup> and here, Weber's more historically immediate institutional influence in the Weimar world was of more importance than that of Nietzsche. In his masterful biography, Christoph Frei is right to point to Morgenthau's later tactical downplaying of Nietzsche's (fascist tainted) influence in the American Academy; but he is somewhat cavalier in placing Morgenthau and Weber in the same generation of followers of Nietzsche (Frei 2001: 109). In a similar vein, Robert Schuett attributes Freudian roots to Morgenthau's understanding of the will to power (Schuett 2007). Schuett makes a convincing case of Morgenthau's encounter with Freud, and I have no wish to deny this important revelation. Nevertheless, if we are to speak of an intellectual *context* rather than individual contributions, it is, again, the figure of Weber in the Weimar context that dominated and framed Morgenthau's engagement with the vocations of science and politics. For, although Weber was certainly not the only, nor the prime, *cause célèbre*, his involvement in drafting the Constitution (see Mommsen 1984: 333–383), coupled with his stance on the correct vocation of the scientist (see Turner and Factor 1984), continued to inform the debate on the legitimacy and standing of that portion of the intellectual stratum that had not succumbed to the conservative revolution in thought. (Sinzheimer's sociology of law, for example, was influenced by Weber (Scheuerman 2008: 36fn25).) As is well-known, Morgenthau attended seminars on Weber's political thought, and enthusiastically read *Science as a Vocation* back in 1925 (Morgenthau 1977: 7; Frei 2001: 121).

In this sense, the roots of Morgenthau's Realism can be placed in his attempt to critically mobilize Weber's *Realpolitik* in a way that might

address the existential crisis that had undermined the intellectual 'liberal' project during the Weimar era... but not from within Germany or even Europe in general. In 1932 Morgenthau left Germany and in 1937 emigrated from Europe to the United States, as did a whole raft of German intellectuals during the decade.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century the American Academy had held a peculiar relationship with German academia. On the one hand, in a number of disciplines, history and sociology especially, American intellectuals tended to train in Germany as a default, having no real tradition to draw upon in the New-World setting. The American Economic Association, for example, was founded by students of Schmoller and the German Historical School, and inspired by the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (see Aho 1975; Novick 1988). On the other hand, the philosophical dimension of German thought – questions of epistemology, ontology, human nature etc. – was more often than not left behind in its importation over the Atlantic to accommodate the naked empiricism of the American applied enlightenment. Indeed, before World War I, continental intellectual history was hardly studied in the American academy (see Gunnell 1993: 192; Novick 1998: 24–25). *Wissenschaftliche objectivität*, with its many critical appreciations of the relationship between mind and reality (e.g., Weber's ideal types), was translated quite flatly into the 'objectivity' associated with a 'correspondence theory of truth' model of social-scientific inquiry.<sup>12</sup> But when in the 1930s a significant amount of bodies accompanied the discourse across the Atlantic, the pessimism of German political thought – its illiberal rendering of human nature and its qualifications on the possibilities of human progress – clashed directly and personally with the optimism of American ideas of progress through abstract rationalism within the halls of academia, and ultimately, government.

Only when Morgenthau had settled at the University of Kansas City in 1939 did he engage with the American jurisprudence literature, and he was surprised to find it empiricist, possessing little theoretical depth (Frei 2001: 181–182). In this, Morgenthau saw a reflection of the inadequacies of rationalist legal thought on Weimar writ large. His last article in the field, in 1941, criticized how the American law tradition paid no attention to the psychological and sociological laws governing the actions of human beings (Koskenniemi 2000: 228). Armed with this critique, and formally parting ways with jurisprudence for the more contentious arena of Political Science, Morgenthau moved to the University of Chicago, that crucial nexus in the American Academy where defenders and detractors of rationalism in Political Science met (Gunnell 1993: 195).

## The political philosophy of a conservative liberal

*Reason is like a light which by its own inner force can move nowhere. It must be carried in order to move.*

Morgenthau<sup>13</sup>

We shall return to Morgenthau's American context; first, however, his political philosophy must be discussed. Although Morgenthau had already published a number of articles in America, they were all incorporated into his first major works in his new field of Political Science: *Scientific Man and Power Politics* (1974 [1946]) especially, and also *Politics Among Nations* (1952a). These works have a double significance to the extent that they showcase Morgenthau's resolution of the crisis visited upon the intellectual 'liberal' project by the Weimar era, as well as mobilization of this mature political philosophy to critique the inability of the abstract rationalism of American social science to account for the reality of illiberal political structures and agencies in world order at large.

In *Scientific Man*, in order to make sense of the existential nature of the 20 years crisis, Morgenthau (1974: 5) broke human nature down into three dimensions: biological, spiritual and rational. The struggle for existence was biological to the extent that man required scarce resources for reproduction of the self. However, this dimension was not so important to Morgenthau as was that of the spiritual – the lust for – the will to – power (ibid.: 192). Arguing against Schmitt, and affirming Weber's ontological position, Morgenthau claimed that domination was not to be understood as the act of violence but rather as the positing of a sanction, namely, a threat that operated on a psychological level by bending the mental will of another individual.<sup>14</sup> Crucially, this ontology worked to deny any universal truth, for all truth was the attempt by one individual to bend another's will. Morgenthau then factored in a third dimension of human nature. Reason was the faculty that, by selecting from a plethora of irrational impulses, provided the technique to obtain the objective of the will to power. Reason rationalized irrational interest and in so doing created ideology – a justification, or smoke screen for the lust for power (ibid.: 155, 158, 160).

In fact, Morgenthau claimed that Liberalism was itself an ideology. In a liberal society acts of domination were pursued exclusively in the private, economic domain. And in order to enable this pursuit of interest it was necessary for the middle class to construct a public domain wherein social action was dictated by consensus and common values. In this way, liberal ideology could obfuscate the will to power of the middle classes

by rendering formal politics in the liberal state consensual, while hiving off acts of domination into the putatively non-political economic domain. Moreover, liberal ideology made a historical claim regarding this process – the confluence of the political and the public belonged to pre-liberal times. By this reasoning, foreign policies of domination could be considered atavistic residues to be subsumed, in time, by the outward expansion of the liberal public domain (ibid.: 19, 22, 28, 32, 39, 45). Referring to his DPhil dissertation, Morgenthau admitted that in practicality the international domain did differ from the domestic domain to the extent that the former exhibited no parallel public institutions through which to pursue Reason and consensus (ibid.: 108). Nevertheless by revealing the ontological separation of the domestic and the international to be an aspect of liberal ideology, Morgenthau was primarily attempting to lay bare the specific nature of the will to power practiced among the middle classes.

This being achieved, the essence of the international domain could be exposed as the real human nature that had been obfuscated by the liberal myth: in other words, ontologically speaking, human nature was revealed to act the same within both the domestic and the international domains (e.g., Morgenthau 1952a: 13, 391). To guard against surrendering to the liberal myth, Morgenthau compartmentalized the study of the political away from, for example, moral philosophy and economics (ibid.: 13–15).<sup>15</sup> It was against an acceptance of liberal self-delusion that Morgenthau (1974: 17) posited *power* – especially its bio-psychological drives – as universal in time and space. Exposing ‘political man’ (Morgenthau 1952a: 13–15), therefore, was a strategy to remind the student of international relations, contra the everyday assault of liberal ideology, that the political dimension of human nature – the will to power – was an ever-present feature of human intercourse. Morgenthau believed that the administering of this intellectual antidote was now urgently required because liberal ideology reached deeper than even the middle class suspected. For in pursuing the general will, the middle classes themselves believed that they were taking part in a politics of Reason backed by consensus, rather than actually following their individual lusting for power. Deluding themselves with their own liberal ideology, the middle classes necessarily fetishized the nation.

Morgenthau made a world-historical claim about this fetishization: the nation, from its inception in the French Revolution, had progressively diminished the existing institutionalized moral restraint of the will to power in pre-modern aristocratic international relations.<sup>16</sup> Owing

to the *supranational* character of the ideology that upheld the aristocratic pursuit of power, that is, divine right and natural law, and because of the personal ties of blood relations that the European aristocracy shared, classical international society was coherent enough to contain the excesses of the will to power through diplomacy. It was precisely this supra-national glue that started to dissolve when the ideology of international society shifted from natural law to the positive law of nations, and when aristocratic diplomacy shifted to mass politics – in short, when the nation became the means and ends of political power (ibid.: 184–190).

Herein, for Morgenthau, lay the fundamental danger for modern times. Echoing Weber's warnings regarding the discourse of *Deutschum*, Morgenthau claimed that rendering the nation in anthropomorphic terms as a general will, rather than as a collection of egoistic individuals, had the effect of obfuscating the continued power struggle between these individuals.<sup>17</sup> With this, a particular set of values and interests could be mistaken for the universal Value and Interest, and in doing so, unlike the politics of classical international society, the modern nation-state released all psychological fetters on the will to power so as to place humanity in an age of crisis (ibid.: 192). This 'nationalistic universalism' (ibid.: 267–269), born of the French Revolution, had found its ultimate expressions in National Socialism (ibid.: 76–78), and then, in the aftermath of the World War, had metamorphosed into the ideological battle of the Cold War.

Morgenthau believed that the present-day middle classes could not themselves address the dangers of nationalistic universalism because the political agency they currently employed was 'decadent' by their own liberal standards (Morgenthau 1974: 69; see also Frei 2001: 158). Looking back to the rise of the middle class, Morgenthau noted that, as part of their ascendancy, they had prescribed an interventionist foreign policy in order to spread the rights of the individual. In other words, in their heroic heyday, the middle class had used *Realpolitik* – illiberal means to arrive at liberal ends. But now, having won the battle against the *ancien régime* they seemed to have refuted this heroic agency by re-branding it as atavistic when compared to what was expected from the liberal public realm of consensus. By refusing to countenance any kind of evil in their prescriptions, the unreflexive liberal internationalists had allowed the worst excesses of their own ideology to mold a political landscape unforgiving to the promises of individual freedom – a world of nationalistic universalism (see Morgenthau 1974: 45–46, 61, 69–72). Morgenthau thus charged the liberal project with spawning a monster

that it could not control.<sup>18</sup> Tragic, indeed, was his assessment of this crisis:

...carrying their idols before them, the nationalistic masses of our time meet in the international arena, each group convinced that it executes the mandate of history, that it does for humanity what it seems to do for itself, and that it fulfils a sacred mission ordained by providence, however defined.

Little do they know that they meet under an empty sky from which the gods have departed.

Morgenthau<sup>19</sup>

In order to find a non-liberal mechanism to contain these crusading liberal spirits, Morgenthau made use of a comparison between the nationalistic universalism of decadent liberalism and the pre-liberal art of classical diplomacy. No doubt, the aristocracy possessed their own universalistic ideology; but at least they had not allowed this to blind them to the will to power inherent in all political actions. By resurrecting the art of diplomacy Morgenthau (1952a: 431–448) thought it possible to re-employ Reason, not in an attempt to remove the biopsychological root of human nature, but to minimize its harmful effects. And the tool with which to cultivate this ethics of political judgment was none other than the ‘balance of power’.

The utility of the balance-of-power tool for Morgenthau lay in its ability to shed light on a fractured humanity composed of a multiplicity of antagonistic interests (Morgenthau 1952a: 159, 1974: 103; see also Ashley 1984: 269; Williams 2005: 121–124), and in so doing, to function as a detector of universal ideologies emanating as much from within the political community – that is, from the middle classes – as from outside.<sup>20</sup> Armed with this tool of self-enlightenment, the statesman embarked upon courses of foreign policy fully cognizant of the ultimate particularity of interests and ideology. The statesman would therefore be resigned to the fact that he could only honestly pursue the national interest and not universal truth. In mitigating the worst excesses of the liberal will to power the statesman acted as the ‘prototype of social man himself’ (Morgenthau 1952a: 444; 1974: 221).

Furthermore, the shift of crisis from the containment of Nazism to the containment of Communism propelled Morgenthau to fully expose the ethical value of the balance-of-power tool. The new cold-war articulation of existential crisis centered upon the nuclear question and



specifically the co-option of the national interest by the military mind (Morgenthau 1952a: 430). The danger with this martial mentality was that it only pursued the will to power; it could not understand that this pursuit could be ultimately self-defeating by unleashing the destructive and irrational energies of humanity back onto the nation to be defended. Morgenthau's wariness of the military mind suggests that he believed the utility of the balance-of-power tool was not to be found simply in its technical operation, but rather in its very *retention* within policy-making circles. Even though only a relic from the yesteryear of aristocratic international society, the logic of the balance of power was the only resource that might combat irrationalism and ideological blindness in the pursuit of the national interest.

Morgenthau therefore re-defined the political agency of the intellectual, *Bildung*, by reference to the task of cultivating a 'social man' sensitive to the existential crisis of humanity created by decadent liberalism. The vocation of the social scientist was still essentially Weberian in substance: aware of the necessarily particular nature of his own truth claims, yet, because of this self-awareness compelled to problematize his own particular interests, the scientist had to attempt to satisfy both the interests of his own society and his own critical consciousness by retaining autonomy of his knowledge production (Morgenthau 1974: 165). However, Morgenthau had long since revoked that element of Weber's political philosophy that had presented the demagogic politician as a substitute agent for the backward middle classes. Rather, the scientist had to become institutionally involved in the vocation of politics, spreading *Bildung directly* within the halls of foreign policy through the balance-of-power tool (see Turner and Factor 1984: 172, 176; Frei 2001: 152–153).

Most importantly, for Morgenthau, the enemy of *Bildung* was no longer a general will conceived of (as in Weber's *Realpolitik*) as an atavistic ideology of the nobility or aristocracy. Rather, the enemy was now the global *Bürgertum* itself, by virtue of the way in which the middle classes had fallen for their own ideology of the consensual general will. Unlike Weber, Morgenthau believed that the general will could not function as a means to instantiate an ethical individual freedom by cultivating a 'nation of masters'; rather, the general will functioned as the means by which to unleash the tragic end of such freedom – the super-egoism manifested in nationalistic universalism. Therefore, despite acknowledging that the nationalist collective spirit was perhaps the most critical element to mobilize in the pursuit of the national interest (e.g., Morgenthau 1952a: 96–104), Morgenthau was adamant

that this mobilization should not end in a democratic command of the masses over foreign policy: precisely this process had tragically produced the anti-*Bildung* ideology of nationalistic universalism.

Instead of individuals *en masse*, instead of the middle classes, and instead of the demagogic politicians in particular, Morgenthau posited the intellectuals as the direct agents of progress. Tempering Hegel's philosophy of Revolution with Weber's *Realpolitik*, and tempering this further in light of the threat of nationalistic universalism, Morgenthau quarantined the use of *Bildung* to a policy-making elite institutionally buffered from direct political responsibility to follow the will of the masses. Presenting the fate of Liberalism as tragic *in its own world-historical unfolding* is therefore what ultimately gave Morgenthau's re-formulated 'liberal' project its conservative quality.

### Legacies of a consciousness of backwardness

*It is a dangerous thing to be a Machiavelli. It is a disastrous thing to be a Machiavelli without virtù.*

Morgenthau<sup>21</sup>

To arrive at his realist re-formulation of the 'liberal' project of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, Morgenthau used comparisons and substitutions that assumed an existential crisis in the becoming of individual freedom, rather than comparisons and substitutions that proceeded from the basis of comparative backwardness. Specifically, Morgenthau compared a decadent modern middle class with a self-aware pre-modern aristocracy. And for this decadent middle class and their egoistic unleashing of nationalistic universalism, he substituted a policy-making elite wielding *Bildung* through what were once aristocratic political tools.

However, Morgenthau performed these existentialized comparisons and substitutions having already inherited and internalized the frameworks of prior political philosophies produced through the context of German backwardness. In fact, Morgenthau's tragic narrative retained the world-historical framework, constructed by Hegel's revolution of Philosophy, of a universal and singular liberal project driven by the dialectic of egoism and *Bildung*. In this respect, Morgenthau accepted Hegel's conjoining of the progressive liberal value of *Bildung* with the political agency of the intellectual. Furthermore, by using Weber's neo-Kantian/Nietzschean epistemology of multi-linearity as irreducible difference, Morgenthau filtered the Hegelian inheritance through the ethical limitations that Weber had placed on the political agency

of *Bildung*. It was from this historical–philosophical baseline that he made sense of a putative existential crisis of Liberalism. The particular political condition of a *decadent* (rather than, as in Weber's case, a developmentally arrested) middle class was judged by reference to a universal archetype of the middle class's existential struggle over the egoistic and self-reflexive (*Bildung*) attributes of the liberal subject – the impersonalized individual.

The point is that the intellectuals of the 'liberal' project that Morgenthau sought to re-formulate for the post-Weimar – post-*liberal* – world had consistently been unable to recognize that in engaging with their context of backwardness they themselves were generating *both* the particular political condition *and* the universal criteria by which this condition could be judged to be progressive or backward. By turning this developmental backward–advanced problematic into a life–death problematic of modern humanity *per se* Morgenthau did not solve, but rather intensified, the failure that ran through this intellectual 'liberal' project: the failure to recognize the impossibility of occupying an objective vista from which to view the universal archetype of liberal political structure and agency.

What, then, was the status of the impersonal collective in Morgenthau's narrative of a universal tragedy of liberalism? To be fair, Morgenthau did note, as had Weber, that the pursuit of particular political interest required the mobilization of the national spirit for one's bidding. Because of this, invocation of the Jacobin spirit was, for Morgenthau (1952a: 96–104), perhaps the most critical element to investigate in the pursuit of the national interest. In addition, Morgenthau claimed that liberal man had spawned a *contending* value system that now threatened to *undermine* the progenitor. In this sense, there is at least an intriguing *description* of the generative effect of the international dimension of social transformation that had produced the impersonal collective as a meta-subject of modernity.

But it was only a description. The Jacobin general will manifested itself analytically in Morgenthau's political philosophy as the ideology of nationalistic universalism. And Morgenthau was convinced, as had been Weber, that the general will was the great *illusion* of the era, an illusion required to cover the actual pursuit of interest by particular groups of *individuals* (see, e.g., *ibid.*: 73). In other words, for Morgenthau the impersonal collective existed in modernity not as a political subject, but only as an ideology to disguise the egoism of the impersonalized individual as *the* modern political subject. Prescriptively, let us remember Morgenthau's claim that the scientist statesman was the

prototype of social man, a prototype that excluded the Jacobin subject entirely. For Morgenthau, there was not, and there *should* not be, a *Bildung* of the masses because such a project would necessarily produce the anti-individualist un-self-aware ideology of nationalistic universalism.

Thus, the Jacobin subject was denied twice in Morgenthau's political philosophy: once analytically and once ethically. If Morgenthau's historical narrative *described* the 'mutation' of liberalism, analytically, this mutation was *explained* as a logical outcome of the *internal* contradictions – philosophical and political – of the liberal individual. Alternatively, the general will presented itself as *the* obstacle, produced by the destructive aspects of the modern condition of individual freedom, to any institutionalization of its positive aspects. For Morgenthau, the impersonal collective was not a means to liberal ends, but a means to the tragic end of liberalism and the start of an existential crisis of humanity.

Let us return, then, to Rengger's provocation. The criteria by which Morgenthau could judge the liberal condition to be tragic was an existentialization of the problems associated with institutionalizing individual freedom in a comparatively backward society. It was an existentialization that inherited the assumptions of a universal archetype of liberal political structure and agency that had never existed. To repeat a point that I have made a number of times before, and a point that was cumulatively obscured in the consciousness of backwardness running through and propelling the political philosophies of Kant, Hegel, Weber and ultimately Morgenthau, the 'liberal' subject, the impersonalized individual, had *never* translated with fidelity across borders. It was not 1848, 1918 or 1933, but 1789 that marked the post-liberal moment in modern world development. *From the French Revolution onward*, the capitalist political subject had traveled through processes of substitution that had produced a new meta-subject of modernity, intimately related to the impersonalized individual owing to the international dimension of social transformation, but at the same time qualitatively different because of the transformative nature of this dimension. In terms of universally applicable values, there was never *a* modern age of impersonalized individualism. Modernity was always already composed of the contention between two related yet radically different sets of rights and duties encoded in two meta-subjects – the impersonalized individual and the impersonal collective – through which the decorporation and re-corporation of social relations of production proceeded.

All this was a historical secret denied to the Weimar intellectual world and Morgenthau especially. Consider, for example, a (in)famous statement in *Politics Among Nations*:

International politics, *like all politics*, is a struggle for power. . . . Regardless of particular social conditions, the decisive argument against the opinion that the struggle for power on the international scene is a mere historic accident can, however, be derived from the nature of domestic politics. *The essence of international politics is identical with its domestic counterpart* [my emphases].

Morgenthau<sup>22</sup>

This sentiment can, and has been, used critically to break down the dichotomy of ethical-domestic versus amoral-international domains. Yet it is an engagement, by way of a domestic analogy, with the relationship between ethics and politics that could only be made by eliding the international dimension of social transformation from the investigation of modern world development. As such, and redolent of Weber's *Realpolitik*, Morgenthau's criteria of a tragic modern condition could only be made by eliding this dimension. It is this elision that allows Morgenthau's critical thought to be general enough so as to be utilized by conservatives, liberals, and radicals alike.

To finish this investigation it is apposite to turn back to Morgenthau's American context. For, herein lies the most direct textual evidence of Morgenthau's ethical position as an intellectual speaking truth to power. Nevertheless, Morgenthau's American project was built upon the elisions uncovered above.

### ***Bildung* in America**

*When we speak of the atrophy of government, we obviously do not refer to the quantity of institutions and their activities. . . . What we have in mind is a subtle quality which is vital to a democratic government: its quality as a teacher and leader.*

Morgenthau<sup>23</sup>

I have made the case above that Nazism itself was a product of the international dimension of social transformation, and therefore cannot be seen as either a pre- or an anti-modern form of collectivity, nor as a result of the internal logic of the liberal individual subject. But for a tradition of thought that had never managed to come to terms with the international dimension of social transformation in the attempt to cultivate liberalism within a comparatively backward context, Nazism could only be read as either pre- or anti-modern, or – and as Morgenthau would explain it – as the tragic result of the development

of the liberal individual itself. On this misreading, Morgenthau would ultimately expand his world-historical narrative of liberal tragedy to incorporate the history of the New World too.

As I have noted, cognate of the delicacy required in presenting a German-made political philosophy in US academia in the era of Nazism, Morgenthau had proceeded, upon arrival in the new world, to Anglicize the sources of his arguments, thus making German philosophy speak predominantly through the mouths of British and American historical personalities. However, Morgenthau (1960) also began to re-interpret the founding myths that constituted the American psyche – American exceptionalism, the American dream, and the American frontier – as part of the grand-narrative of the tragedy of liberal individualism that he had formulated out of his Weimar experience. This is not to deny that in the post-war world Morgenthau might have genuinely believed American Republicanism to be humanity's best and only savior. The more salient point is that rather than approach the American political tradition as a New-World alternative to the failures of the old, he *re-constructed* this tradition in the light of his Old-World political philosophy. In this way, Morgenthau claimed that the purpose of American politics was to occupy the vanguard movement of a singular world-historical Liberal project.

For Morgenthau, the forging of a New-World society proceeded on different terms to those of the Old World (*ibid.*: 11–33). Individuals escaping persecution arrived on the American continent seeking to build a society around an ideal of 'equality in freedom'. But as pioneers entering into an 'empty space' the pilgrims' ideal was not tainted with any existing historical political legacy. There was, Morgenthau proposed, a unique purity behind the building of American society which lay in the fact that the purpose of American politics was not to ensure the survival of any one specific interest; rather, it was to ensure through constitutional balancing that no one permanently possessed political power, in order to allow each individual to possess the permanent opportunity to exercise power.

The problem was that the permanent ability to exercise one's will to power threatened the ability of others to do the same. In the Old World, this dilemma was a mute point: most individuals were born into a society already dominated by a specific will to power along with its claim to be the singular truth of politics. However, Morgenthau conjectured that the vast 'empty' spaces of fertile land in hemispheric North America, combined with the existence of no real geo-political threat to this hemisphere, allowed individuals to *escape* such domination by moving

to, and thus expanding, the *frontier*. In short, an individual could simply start again. Thus, the frontier acted to continually allow for a multiplicity of will to powers to operate at the same time without one dominating all others. This unique environment made the purpose of American politics to be the institutionalization of a plurality of truths, rather than the dominance of one interest as *the* truth; American politics was monistic in its constitutional form, but multiple in content.<sup>24</sup> Morgenthau therefore understood American exceptionalism to lie in the structure of its political system that allowed a realization of *both* aspects of individual freedom: egoism, the unrestrained will to power, *and* self-reflexivity of the limits to truth of the individual will to power. In fine, the exceptional purpose of American society was to keep a space open for *Bildung* even in the midst of encouraging the pursuit of egoism.

But, for Morgenthau, this did not mean that America should be considered in actual fact as the perfect society; to do so would be to fall into the trap of nationalistic universalism – that is, presenting a particular collective expression of humanity's telos. He therefore pointed out that (a) in its historical development, American society had not been able to practically manifest its purpose directly on earth, and furthermore (b) this purpose itself existed in a geo-political pluriverse of contending purposes.

With regards to the former point, Morgenthau reminded Americans that the expansion of their frontier had been a tragic process. The Civil War, while expanding the principles of freedom held by the Union at the expense of the slave-holding South, had nevertheless led to the internalization of racial inequalities within the triumphant Union, inequalities at odds with the principle of 'equality in freedom'. Hence, American society, over time, could only reach a *modus vivendi* between its purpose and its achievements (Morgenthau 1960: 37–38). It is with regards to the latter point, especially, that Morgenthau's comments on contemporary international relations were directed. When American policy-makers had stepped out of isolation and into the world during World War II, they had expected their relations with other political communities to be mediated by the same form of politics that at home allowed for a consensual multiplicity of truths. The negotiations at Yalta, and other ugly moments of power politics, offended such sensibilities and, disillusioned, America threatened to return to the isolation of yesteryear.

Nevertheless, a retreat into isolationism was no longer a viable option owing to the novel challenges now confronting American foreign policy. The Communist threat, in and of itself, was of an imperial nature and therefore nothing new. Yet the Asian world, especially Korea and

China (and soon, Vietnam) had launched independence projects that enjoyed popular support but promoted values of political freedom qualitatively different to those of liberal America. On top of that, in order to postpone nuclear Armageddon at the irrational hands of nationalistic universalism a novel re-ordering of the constituency of world politics was required, namely, the inauguration of world government (see Morgenthau 1970: 50).<sup>25</sup> Owing to the nuclear issue, the preservation of American society required the purpose of American politics to be pursued at a higher level: as integral to the human purpose, or at least to the survival of humanity. Yet in necessarily having to expand its frontier across the world, American society was confronted, in Asia especially, with the fact that its own political purpose was not received by humanity *in toto* as the truth.<sup>26</sup> Structuring the new world order by the requirements of the American purpose ran the risk of this purpose being corrupted by nationalistic universalism, namely, the conflation of a particular interest to a general will, to the will of humanity, and with this, totalitarian domination leading to existential crisis rather than preservation of the freedom of the individual.

What is more, Morgenthau believed that the risk of a tragic turn in the expansion of American society was heightened by the fact that the psychological and political institutions that supported a multiplicity of truths and thus supported the political agency of *Bildung* were presently being eroded from *within* American society. To highlight this crisis, Morgenthau re-formulated his narrative of the universal tragedy of liberalism into a historical comparison of the development of liberal democracy palatable to Anglo-American sensibilities. The English/Lockean version of liberal democracy only allowed the majority consensus to select the ruling politicians; buffered from the direct demands of the masses, *Bildung* could still be pursued by elites within the halls of power. Alternatively, the French/Rousseau version of liberal democracy produced the fetish of the general will by institutionalizing direct rule of the majority. America had originally based its governance system on the English version, but now the French version was rising to supremacy (Morgenthau 1960: 243–258).<sup>27</sup> *Deutschtum* versus *Bildung* was now translated into a New-World vocabulary.

Specifically, Morgenthau argued that the American government had been increasingly allowing policy-making to be dictated by public opinion polls without recognizing that there did not exist such a thing as a general will that was not in fact a smokescreen for a particular private interest. In this way, the purpose of American politics was being



corrupted by passively allowing the domination of one particular will to power – one particular political truth – rather than ensuring freedom of the expression of all wills. Monistic in its constitutional form, American politics was fast becoming monistic in content too; Morgenthau considered McCarthyism and its production of a conformity of opinions among the administration and intellectuals to be an important moment in this slide toward nationalistic universalism (Morgenthau 1958: 311–320; 1960: 144–156). Eisenhower's election platform, which espoused general and vague aspirations of the general will, obfuscated the reality of formulating policy in a polytheistic world. And Johnson was even more guilty in this respect for allowing no intellectual contestation over the content of American values and the extent to which, and the way in which, these might best be pursued in the context of a Vietnamese civil war.<sup>28</sup>

To inject *Bildung* as an antidote agency to the tragic dynamic of the liberal project, Morgenthau (Morgenthau 1960: 222–231) called for a renewal of the 'objective standards of excellence' in education and public debate. These standards, in the sense that Morgenthau was employing them, did not accord to a correspondence theory of truth but rather referred to the ability to suspend conformity and common sense in order to launch self-critiques of one's own society. Of prime importance in this rejuvenation was the recovery of the institutionalization of hierarchies of knowledge production. For, if nationalistic universalism was to be contained, the government, Morgenthau affirmed, had to rise above the liberal smokescreen of the general will and its co-option by particular political and, especially, economic interests so as to take back the role of teacher and leader.

Effectively, Morgenthau argued for the cultivation of *Bildung* via an 'aristocracy' of knowledge production.<sup>29</sup> A re-integrated intellectual elite of academia and administration would frame the issues of foreign policy in such a way that demanded individuals to recognize that compromise – a *modus vivendi* – was required between liberal ends and the illiberal practical politics of best pursuing these ends in a polytheistic world of contending national purposes. Re-gaining his responsibility to act, the executive, in consultation with the intellectual elite, would have to persuade the *populus* of the need to choose policies that in a polytheistic world would be to some extent illiberal and at least in their immediacy counter to the crusade of spreading American liberal democratic values worldwide. Indeed, in finding a compromise between such rational requirements of foreign policy and the emotional preferences of the public, the intellectual elite might even have to cast a smokescreen

over their own will to power, as it were, by presenting rational foreign policy in the language of public opinion.

All in all, then, Morgenthau claimed that American society was exceptional in its potential to cultivate (a) a self-awareness among the citizens of the limits of their own truth claims and of the disasters that would follow from not accepting these limits; and (b) the need for an executive elite institutionally buffered from direct responsibility toward the general will. Indeed, Morgenthau believed that the American aristocracy of knowledge production could be differentiated from the old political aristocracy of Europe precisely because the American purpose was to engender a reasoned acceptance *by the masses themselves* of the ethical necessity of this hierarchy. A new American frontier (Morgenthau 1960: 301–310), a cultural frontier, would expand the ‘objective standards of excellence’ into all spheres of social life thus providing the extra social space needed for the cultivation of *Bildung* by allowing the ethical pursuit of knowledge of the individual self to flow, not restrained by particular political wills, into all spheres of social life. In this way, Morgenthau posited a resolution to that struggle long agonized over by previous generations of German intellectuals, namely, the struggle to institutionalize in society at large an individual freedom that tempered egoism with *Bildung*. This struggle would be won – if only imperfectly – in favor of the latter value, on American soil. And as the first ‘high’ and ‘creative’ mass liberal culture in history, America would now (imperfectly) direct the new world order through pragmatic example rather than tragic crusade.

In their cumulative narration of a rise and fall of *Bildung*, Hegel, Weber, and Morgenthau all made a *faux pas* into universalism: they assumed that they could directly compare their particular political environment to a universal archetype of liberal structure and agency in order to prescribe projects to make this environment accord best to the ethical promises of individual freedom. Kant stands alone as not falling into this trap; but Kant’s political philosophy refused to give this universal archetype a phenomenal existence. From this historically sedimented *faux pas*, and its associated conceptual collapsing of a multi-linear modern world development into a uni-linear dialectic of a singular liberal political subject, ultimately arises Morgenthau’s ethical criterion of the tragedy of the modern human condition. In context, this is why Morgenthau, who posited a world of irreconcilable political difference, could paradoxically claim American liberal society as the vanguard of a singular world-historical Liberal project.

# 9

## Conclusion

In conclusion I wish to return to the three major points that, in the introduction, I claimed would arise from this investigation. These points draw focus to the ongoing interrogation of the relationship between Liberalism and Realism in IR along with the attendant critiques of their dichotomous worldviews. And these points are also of pertinence to historical–sociological investigations of the relationship between liberal ethics and illiberal politics in modern world history, investigations the narratives of which are never far removed from the interrogation of modern political thought.

The first point pertains to the practice of historically contextualizing political thought. In all the intellectuals studied above, international relations was present not simply as an object of enquiry; rather the problem of inter-societal difference, and especially its manifestation as an experience of comparative backwardness, was constitutive – in a historically cumulative sense – of the way in which these intellectuals attempted to fuse ethics and politics in order to launch a critical investigation of the potentialities of individual freedom in a world of illiberal politics. Kant's famous investigation of the tripartite ethical relationship between the individual, the state and humanity was driven by an attempt to discipline the radical phenomenal instantiation of the impersonalized individual in the French Constitution through the existing political–philosophical lens of the German corporate Enlightenment. Hegel's *Geist* was born of his need to combine the French political form with German subjectivity. His resulting dialectic of social transformation, *Aufhebung*, possessed an international dimension. Yet in order for backward Germany to catch up and surpass the condition of individual freedom in France, Hegel necessarily placed this dialectic within a philosophy of world history that preached a rapprochement

of social forms, hence *Geist*. Weber did not merely survey a world of 'difference' and produce vocations of science and politics which provided an ethico-political guide to this fractured world. Rather, his fusion of ethics and politics into a *Realpolitik* depended upon a value comparison made across cultural systems: Weber saw exemplified in the historical rise of the English middle classes a universal archetype of liberal political agency against which the German middle classes were judged historically backward. Finally, Morgenthau's Realism derived from a deep internalization of prior intellectual engagements with backwardness upon which he turned the developmental backward/advanced problematic into a life/death problematic of modern humanity *per se* driven by the egoistic impulses of the triumphant liberal middle classes. In all these cases – directly or indirectly – intellectuals made sense of a liberal project and illiberal politics from a historical context cumulatively delineated by the problem of alterity, or more specifically, the interaction between differentially developed societies manifested as an experience of comparative backwardness.

Through tracking the cumulative rise and fall of *Bildung* in the above investigations I have made the general case that, rather than simply as an object of political thought, the 'international' has to be posited far more foundationally as constitutive of the construction of that thought. There is an international dimension to the production of knowledge, especially to the construction of a relationship between ethics and politics. And this dimension is conceptually obfuscated when the context to which political philosophy speaks is assumed to be either self-referential to a specific society or universal to the community or condition of humankind.

The second point pertains to the project of using historical-sociological approaches to account for the international relations of modernity. In the above investigation I have charted the shifting yet cumulative development of a consciousness of backwardness by investigating the way in which each author placed the political subject initially produced in the French Revolution – the impersonal collective – in relation to and against the political subject originating in British capitalism – the impersonalized individual. Evidenced in the above narrative I submit that the historical-sociological challenge regarding international relations is to explain the nature of the relationship between these meta-subjects of modern world development without recourse to conflation or functionalism. This relation, as I have presented it here, was constituted by the international dimension of social transformation, and therefore cannot be represented in thought by reference to domestic

analogies or pre-social understandings of the 'international' as a 'state of nature'. To expand upon this point, but at the same time aware of the dangers of abstraction that necessarily arise, I shall conjecture a grand narrative of modern world development sensitive to the international dimension of social transformation.

Modern world development has been propelled by a constant relational tension between the imperatives and exigencies of two meta-political subjects: the impersonal collective and the impersonalized individual. This core tension of modern world development was initially created by processes of comparison and substitution, wherein attempts were made to graft aspects of the impersonalized individual onto an existing personal collective political authority, the combined result being the impersonal collective. This means in more concrete terms that the capitalist world market has never expanded without this expansion giving rise to opposing political projects (non-derivative of, but intimately related to, capitalist social relations) that themselves affect the course of capitalist development; *but at the same time*, neither have the opposing projects managed, as a substitute, to produce a viable alternative able to match, in terms of the comparative stability of political authority, the extensive and intensive social metabolic rate of capitalist production. Substitution projects burn brighter, but also faster (witness, for example, Robespierre, Napoleon, and Hitler). Nevertheless, the resulting radiation, even if comparatively brief, courses into existing struggles (from above and below) over the expansion of a capitalist world market *and* triggers further unexpected developments. By this reasoning, the movement of modernity cannot be understood as the effect of the expansion of any one political subject; in this grand narrative our world-historical epoch is not, in its maximum effect, the epoch of individual Reason, of Capital, or of the becoming of the 'liberal individual' (triumphant or tragic), or of 'instrumental-rationality', or of any process ultimately driven by the exigencies of *one* modern political subject, especially the impersonalized individual. It is an epoch shaped by the relationship between the advance of the challenge of capitalist social relations and the substitution projects to escape backwardness. Movement of one cannot be subsumed under that of the other: both must be conceptually held in tension.

Finally, as a third point I wish to connect these two issue areas – the history of political thought and historical sociology – in order to underline the general importance of the preceding investigation to the thinking through of the Liberalism–Realism relationship in IR today, and especially to the way in which the modern relationship between

ethics and politics is conceived and debated. Kant, Hegel, Weber, and Morgenthau, though all critically engaged with the relationship between liberal ethics and the illiberal reality of politics, nevertheless imagined this relationship in a way that elided an engagement with the international dimension of social transformation. It is this elision that produced the cumulative contour of their 'liberal' project, namely, a world-historical rise and fall of *Bildung*. With this in mind, questions must then be raised regarding the adequacy of any critical engagement with the relationship between ethics and politics in IR that implicitly assumes this relationship to be constituted through a *singular* modern political subjectivity, itself to be contested through singular and universally understood political–philosophical positions, for example, Liberalism and Realism.

In conclusion, I have argued that the struggles over rights and duties of social reproduction in the modern world is framed by the contentious quality of *impersonality*; and I have argued that there is no universal form of impersonality that represents a singular modernity. To be more precise, I have suggested that at the maximal level of abstraction, modern world development is defined by the social struggle over how impersonality is politically rendered, and has cumulatively revolved around two contesting (though intimately related) political projects relating to the transformation of social reproduction: (a) the rights of the asocial individual and (b) the duties of the individual toward securing the welfare of the social whole. This acknowledgment reveals some historical political projects to be far more novel and radical than they have often been given credit for. In this light, our common-sense chronologies of modern world history – chronologies that also inflect certain structures, agents and processes with normative content – might need to be rethought.

More specifically, I would suggest that we must dissolve the conceptual glue that congealed the narrative of the coming to being of a singular modern subject and that has since stuck together the sovereign individual (usually of 'capitalism') and the sovereign collective (usually of 'nationalism'); instead, we should place these two 'sovereign subjects' of differential (but relational) historical-geographical origins in cumulative struggle with each other. This, it should be noted, is singularly what Kant's philosophy of limits, Hegel's revolution of Philosophy, Weber's *Realpolitik* and Morgenthau's Realism failed to do. This recognition, however, gives rise to what, for some, might be an uncomfortable admission. When we approach the historical record by means of investigating the substitution processes of revolutions

out of backwardness, we might find that articulations of the impersonal collective, far from being the stratifying, stultifying and 'out of date' nationalist collectivities of folk-lore, or, alternatively, simply the other side of the Janus face of the sovereign individual of capitalism, have rather been dynamic and creative responses to the problem of institutionalizing impersonal rights and duties adequate to the task of reproducing political authority in the modern geo-political milieu. At a minimum, we would certainly need to rethink the tidy stadial-developmental narrative of national to post-national constellations that is currently fashionable in many debates in IR.

It goes without saying that such things as the 'general will' have bred as many horrors as has the 'egoistic individual': this cannot and should not be denied. Yet it is for this very Reason that the ethico-political service we must perform for modern world history, and all those living subjects who have been swept up in its maelstrom, is to critically analyze and find ethical negotiations of its dynamics that do not internalize a world-historical sense informed by the narrative of a coming to being of a singular political subject (albeit dialectical or contested). In the long run, assuming a singular Liberalism and a singular Realism as the basis of ethico-political engagements with the problem of international relations hinders us in this endeavor. An alternative viewpoint might be reached. But for this endeavor we would need to contextualize the history of political thought on the condition of individual freedom by reference to its international dimension.

# Notes

## 1 Introduction

1. For standard recounting see, among many examples, Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (2001: 13–14); Banks (1984: 6–7) and Vasquez (1983: 13–23).
2. On this symbiosis of Realism and Liberalism see Digeser and Miller (1995: 333) and Guzzini (1998: 30–31).
3. In IR, there has been much innovative work done on the ethico-political meaning of liberalism. See, for example, Griffiths (1992); Spegele (1996); Murray (1997) and Williams (2005).
4. Though often by implicit means of leaving the boundary of context undefined.
5. See the next section for the related literature.
6. See the next section for this literature.
7. This is not to say, of course, that it is only in the German context where one historically finds such a theory.
8. To signify its non-particularity and non-universality, I enclose the adjective liberal in quotations when I refer to this project.
9. For overviews of the school, see the recorded symposium in Skinner et al. (2002) and Boucher (1985).
10. On Skinner's anti-anti-antiquarianism, see (1998: 107–111) and Skinner (1969). There has developed an interest in Skinner's method in IR theory. See, for example, Holden (2002) and Bell (2003).
11. For overviews of the project, see Richter (1986); (1987). The *Begriffsgeschichte* literature is still overwhelmingly in German only.
12. Koselleck has hinted at this challenge. See (1989: 658–659).
13. But not only there. See, for example, the suggestive work of Pocock (1999; 1999a).
14. On the former, see Porter and Teich (1981); Castiglione and Hampsher-Monk (2001); Parel (1992) and to some extent Dallmayr (1999). On the latter, see Bayly (2004: 284–324); Euben (2004); but especially Liu (2002).
15. See, for example, Foucault's (1986) comments on his moving from Archaeology (investigating the 'official' Archive) to Genealogy (the disciplining, or self-constitution, of subjects through various mechanisms negotiated in everyday life). See also Antonio Gramsci's (1998: 5–16) famous remarks on the 'organic intellectual' – a manager, for example, who as part of a social intercourse of technical functioning unconsciously disciplines his/her subordinates with the values of the ruling strata.
16. See Foucault's (2002: 112–116) comments. Of course, knowledge production of the political subject is only one aspect of the wider mental activities of the intellectual stratum. It should be remembered that the splitting of natural and social sciences is itself a historically specific categorization. Here I concentrate on knowledge production in terms of the political subject; but



in the following discussions I shall occasionally link this form of knowledge production to wider scientific activities.

17. This point would resonate with Skinner's concern for 'convention' (1974: 283, 1988: 77 and 1988a: 94); Pocock's (1981) concern for 'political language' and Koselleck's (1985) interest in the transformations of concepts associated to words.
18. It is in this sense that I take John Gunnell's caution (followed by Brian Schmidt) against simply assuming that shifts in disciplinary debates directly correspond in their character to 'real-world' changes. See Gunnell (1998: 6, 169) and Schmidt (1998: 37–39).
19. It is because of this *proxy* engagement that I do not speak of an intellectual 'class' in the strict Marxist sense of the term.
20. *Contra* Skinner (especially) and Pocock.
21. On the theory of uneven and combined development, see especially Trotsky (1969a and 1997, chapter 1). The following reading of Trotsky has been influenced by Knei-Paz (1978) and Rosenberg (2006). For my own interpretation of the strengths and weaknesses of the theory, see Shilliam (2004). I have been especially influenced by the historical sociologies of backwardness presented in Bendix (1967) and Gerschenkron (1966). For the comparative literature on 'translation', see above.
22. While I hold to this claim, any deeper investigation of the international dimension of modern social transformation must incorporate the wider and prior global context of colonialism, especially lubricated at this point by the Atlantic slave trade; see Shilliam (2006, 2009). However, recognition and incorporation of the colonial context should not be used as an injunction to avoid detailed investigation of contemporaneous intra-European dynamics – and, crucially, vice versa.

## 2 1789: The Revolution of Backwardness

1. On Skocpol's generation, see Goldstone (1980).
2. Notable works in this lineage include Furet (1981); and Hunt (1985). For a review of this cultural turn, see Spang (2003).
3. Teschke (2003) is an important exception here.
4. In addition, as Teschke (2003: 257) asserts, the capitalist British state did not mature in a pristine environment, but in a wider geo-political milieu characterized by *pre-existing* empires and absolutist states. Regarding the specific purpose of this chapter, these considerations do not undermine the nature of the relationship between capitalist Britain and Absolutist France that I address here. However, more substantive investigations of eighteenth century capitalist development in Britain cannot afford to ignore Teschke's point.
5. I take this term from Teschke (2003).
6. Cited in Hay (1975: 18–19).
7. For a list of the main tenure rights, see Lachman (1987: 38–39).
8. Neeson (1996: 320).
9. This term is derived from Marx (1993: 158).
10. Already by the end of the Civil War less than half of freeholders and copyholders had managed to hold onto customary rights; Lachman (1987: 33).

11. 1597 saw the last parliamentary act against enclosure; 1624 saw the statutes against enclosure repealed; and 1710 saw the first private bill on enclosure. See (Macpherson 1975: 109; Hill 1967: 51).
12. On this broad point, see, variously, Hill (1967: 52); Macpherson (1975: 105); and Aylmer (1980: 93). E.P. Thompson (1991: 135) notes that this shift in definition is historically unprecedented.
13. On the importance of the French Revolution rather than, for example, the Scottish political-economy tradition as the context for modern intellectuals' articulations of social welfare, see Fleischacker (2004); and G.S. Jones (2005).
14. By the latter half of the eighteenth century such opinions were being expressed in reports from the Board of Agriculture; see Hill (1967: 222).
15. Robert Brenner (1985: 318) asserts that by 1700 general subsistence crises – i.e., chronic famines – were already a thing of the past in English agriculture, which had become one of Europe's largest grain exporters.
16. In the 'apolitical' sphere of the home, the impersonalized individual did not exist. But by now the home had been separated from the arena of civil society: the functional importance of the home's social reproductive functions in capitalist society at large would remain, even up to the present, nebulous.
17. With the Act of Union in 1707.
18. The analogy is to Rosenberg (1994).
19. Cited in Acomb (1950: 121).
20. Necessitated by the terms of the Glorious Revolution, Hanover, as an electorate of the King, remained the only direct British interest in Europe.
21. Including, by this time, the treaty of Asiento that allowed British ships to carry the Portuguese slave trade.
22. I take the term geo-political accumulation from Teschke (2003).
23. It should be remembered, for example, that French St Domingue was the fastest and largest growing plantation economy in the Caribbean, producing double that of the entire British West Indies, and responsible for two thirds of France's foreign trade. See Geggus (1983: 27–29).
24. Dickson (1967: 10) notes that Britain's public debt rose from £16 million at the start of the eighteenth century to £670 million by the end of the Napoleonic wars.
25. This is Bourde's (1953) conclusion.
26. McNally (1988: 260–263) notes that Adam Smith, unlike the Physiocrats, could find the general interest secured in the sum of egoistic actions.
27. Parker (1996: 212) notes that by the late 1780s grain prices had soared and the French peasantry, whose landholdings had continued to shrink, faced a subsistence crisis. See also Rudé (1978: 73).
28. See Grieder (1985) and Bourde (1953). Such comparisons had begun before the Seven Years War; see, for example, Marquis d'Argenson in 1751: 'There is a philosophical wind blowing toward us from England in favor of free, anti-monarchical government', cited in Barker (1982: 208).
29. See 'The Fourth of August Decrees' in Anderson (1967: 11–14).
30. Marx and Engels (1956: 166).
31. On this point, see the famous tract by Abbé Sieyès (1963). See also Singer (1986: 95).

32. See, for example, article 1 in 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen' in Anderson (1967: 59), wherein the only permissible social distinction is that based upon 'public utility'.
33. 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen', articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 17.
34. 'Constitution of 1791' in Anderson (1967: 59–60).
35. *Ibid.*, 60, article 13.
36. 'Constitution of the Year I', especially articles 16–19. See also Gross (1997: 152–153).
37. 'Constitution of the Year I', 171, 173.
38. Incidentally, Cobban (1968: 146) notes that Robespierre contrasted his Constitution to the corrupt English 'aristocratic' system.
39. On Jacobin welfare policy in general, see Gross (1997).
40. On the maximum, see Sewell (1994).
41. On the Agrarian Law in general, see Jones (1991).
42. For a stronger version of this viewpoint, see Talmon (1961).
43. The term *déravage* was introduced in Furet and Richet (1970).
44. On the Jacobin sense of the general will, see, for example, Cobban (1968) and Hampson (1988).
45. On the continued importance of these public celebrations, even in the post-Thermidor era, see Woloch (1988).
46. See also 'Constitution of the Year I', the section: 'Of the Forces of the Republic'.
47. In fact this shift had already been proclaimed in the Constitution of 1791, Title IV, 91–92.
48. 'Decree for the Levy en Masse' in Anderson (1967: 184).
49. During the eighteenth century in Britain, by contrast, talk of a militia was centered purely upon an intra-ruling-class tension between the King and the 'country' interest. Self-enfranchisement of the masses did not figure in the debate. Furthermore, recruitment of volunteers in Britain at this point in time took advantage of a floating population *already* 'set free' from communal ties by primitive accumulation. Only as a result of the Revolutionary wars in the 1790s did British government start to implement a citizenship-based welfare system for common soldiers in order to encourage recruitment. On these issues, see Skinner (2000); Way (2003) and Lin (2000).
50. 'Constitution of the Year III' in Anderson (1967: 215, 244). However, a mechanism was authorized in 1800 that gave the propertied family a way out of conscription: a replacement conscript could be paid for. This replacement system, nevertheless, consistently caused friction in the Napoleonic regime, owing to its undermining of the principle of universal military obligation. See Woloch (1986: 111).
51. True, Robespierre had, by 1793, already embraced an expansionary foreign policy. Yet this still exhibited a commitment to expanding the universe of natural right, rather than simply an aggrandizement of French geo-political power. See, for example, Higonnet (1998: 251) and Gauthier (1988: 33). See also Furet (1996: 254–255).
52. This, for example, is the era of Babeuf's 'conspiracy of equals'. Crook (1998: 21) provides a good narrative of this contestation.
53. The precedent had already been set in 1792 when the Convention decreed that those wanting to be freed had to pay for this kind service.

54. By 1795, the revolutionary war had definitively shifted to the offensive; Stone (2002: 212).
55. I am indebted to Benno Teschke for reminding me of this similarity.
56. Crook (1998: 25) notes that Napoleon was aware that war was the only way to maintain his power.
57. One that was nevertheless radically different to that of absolutism. Woloch (1986: 101), for example, notes that while the interface between state and civil society in absolutism was tax, for the Napoleonic empire, it was conscription.
58. On this point, see, for example, Gordley (1994). For the different concept of private property in the Code see Léwy (1956).
59. At least, outside of the 'apolitical' family structure.
60. On this see E.P. Thompson's (1968) classic work on the formation of the English working class. On the wider influence of Jacobinism, see Saull (2002).
61. Mohamed Ali's Egypt and the wars of independence in Saint Domingue were contemporaneous contexts that, in any wider investigation, would need to be addressed with regards to the claims of this sentence.

### 3 Kant's Corporate Enlightenment

1. Important also in the academic revival of Kant's political thought was Hannah Arendt's (1982) set of lectures at the New School, New York, at the start of the 1970s.
2. Cited in Rosenberg (1958: 194).
3. The regulatory institutions of these commercial pursuits, the guilds, were also ranked in a succession of prestige; Vierhaus (1988: 50–57).
4. On *Junker* paternalism, see Berdahl (1988). For a critique of Berdahl's use of the ideology of Paternalism as the causal category of historical investigation, see Melton (1994).
5. The term was originally coined by Otto Büsch; see Schissler (1991: 103).
6. In fact, this conflation of nobility and honor was far stronger than in absolutist France: as a rule, Frederick did not practice venality, and indeed feared venality as a practice that might usurp his paramount political position; Behrens (1985: 57); and Ritter (1968: 157).
7. This statement goes against Hans Rosenberg's famous thesis (1958). For a critique of Rosenberg, see Simms (1997: 305–315). For the general debate, see Jones and Retallack (1993).
8. For a more detailed analysis of the term, see Kocka (1990).
9. Ministers, for example, were guaranteed no legal protection whatsoever.
10. Cited in Berdahl (1988: 101).
11. On German dualism see Verhaus (1988: 135–143); and Simms (1998).
12. On Frederick's relation to his cabinet, see Ritter (1968: 152–154).
13. Cited in Beiser (1992: 7).
14. Kant's university at Königsberg, for example, was a preferred institution in which to train Prussian administrators. See also Simms (1998: 32) who states that over 95% of the *Aufklärer* were administrators and bureaucrats.
15. For a cognate contextualization to that presented here, see Mehigan and De Burgh (2008).

16. For examples see Möller (1990) and Hof (1990). Often such associations were formed as Freemason lodges and followed English models; Vierhaus (1988: 85).
17. On the history of the term within the *Aufklärung* project, see Nordenbo (2002). See also Ringer (1989).
18. The English civil war, it should be noted, was either skipped over or painted in religious, and not political, tones; McLelland (1971: 35).
19. 'I find a half-barbarous language, which breaks down into as many different dialects as Germany has provinces.' Cited in Elias (1994: 10).
20. Kant (1991: 55).
21. In fact, Kant's best friend, Joseph Green, was a British merchant; Kuehn (2001: xi).
22. Kant's dissertation was an attempt to justify the idiom of German metaphysics the Newtonian natural system; Reiss (1991: 2).
23. For a detailed discussion on the relation between Kant and Hume, see Kuehn (1983).
24. The first reviews of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* accused him of being too much of a Humean skeptic; Kuehn (2001: 250–252).
25. On Hume's context in this respect see especially McNally (1988: 157–174) and also, in general, Hirschman (1977).
26. On Rousseau and Kant see Shell (1997). Kuehn (2001: 131–132) asserts that Rousseau's importance to Kant was by no means as great as the challenge laid out by Hume.
27. On the radical nature of this statement regarding existing natural-law theories, see Beiser (1992: 31) and Tuck (1999: 114–115).
28. See, famously, the 'Appendix to Transcendental Dialectic' in Kant (1993). On the *Critique* as an implicit political program see O'Neill (1992).
29. The *Critique of Judgment* was published only during the first year of the Revolution. It should therefore be taken as a pre-revolutionary text of Kant's oeuvre.
30. Cited in Blanning (1989: 141).
31. Blanning (1989: 139) takes the crucial moment to be the invasion of the Rhineland.
32. In fact, the Abbé Sieyès organized a colloquium on Kant's philosophy with Wilhelm Humboldt in 1798 and in 1801 Napoleon demanded the expertise of the first translator of Kant's works into French, Charles de Villers; Fehér (1990: 202–203).
33. A position taken to various degrees by various authors. See, for example, Habermas (1974) and Kouvelakis (2003).
34. Kant famously responded to Frederick William as 'Your Royal Majesty's most submissive and obedient subject'. This, in Kant's eyes, did not compel him to continue such censorship under a successor. For Kant's letter see Zweig (1967: 217–220).
35. On Kant's plea for political action to accord to Practical Reason, see the two appendices (1991f: 116–130). On Kant's justification of *Perpetual Peace* through his universal history, see the First Supplement (108–114).
36. The sedimentation of this consciousness in Kant's thought can be seen in one of his last major texts, an anthropology of the human species that especially breaks down the national differences between French, German and British.

Here Kant explicitly notes the comparative backwardness of the German spirit (1974: 176–180).

37. Kant mentions the national debt in (1991c: 51; 1991e: 90; 1991f: 95).
38. See for example Kant's discussions in (1991e: 99).
39. Cited in Gooch (1965: 260).
40. On the Europewide antipathy to Britain in this period, see Harvey (1978).

#### 4 Hegel's Revolution of Philosophy

1. On this tension understood as the State–Civil Society relationship, see, for example, Pelczynski (1984), Riedel (1984) and Cohen and Arato (1999). For the wider landscape of Hegel's impact upon IR, see Vij (Forthcoming).
2. On the importance of Hegel's 'constitutive' approach to the Constructivist approach in IR, see Wendt (1999: 171) and Jackson (2004: 281–282).
3. The term is from Beck (1995: 151).
4. Hegel (1999b: 183).
5. The case is made by a number of commentators. See, famously, Ritter (1982). The Haitian Revolution, at least up until his writing of *Phenomenology*, was also of contemporaneous interest to Hegel although it in no way displaced the central importance of the French variant. See Buck-Morss (2000). For a suggestion as to why the Haitian Revolution disappears in Hegel's work, see Fischer (2004).
6. On the Romantic idea of 'organism' see Aris (1965: 294).
7. This assessment stayed unchanged throughout Hegel's life. See for example, Smith (1990: 224) and Hegel (1977: 355; 1999c: 215).
8. On Hegel's intimate following of the Jacobin Republic, see Comay (2004) and Schmidt (1998a). For later commentaries, see Hegel (1977: 355–363 the section: 'Absolute Freedom and Terror'; 1999c: 217–219).
9. On the ascendancy of France in the Reich see Epstein (1966: 597–603).
10. Hegel, writing this in Jena, was present at the time of the French 'liberation' and observed Napoleon on horseback riding through the town. On Napoleon as a 'world-historical' individual, see Berry (1981).
11. I shall return to this point later.
12. 'Hegel set up the problem as one of combining "Germanic" freedom, Scottish commercial society, and French Revolutionary politics.' Pinkard (2000: 196).
13. On inter-subjectivity see also Plant (1977: 86–87) and Teichgraber (1977: 56–57).
14. Hegel seems to fasten the woman's vocation to natural ethical life, within the household (1991: 206 §166) *Aufhebung*, it seems, does not enfranchise all genders. For a critique see Hutchings (2003).
15. Hegel seems to have superimposed Stuart's moral-economy argument of classes onto the conditions of the German estates system; Waszek (1988: 171–179). Hegel modified his typology of estates a number of times before the *Philosophy*; see Hegel (1979) and (1983: 163–170).
16. Famously, *ibid.*: 266–267 §243–245.
17. This lacuna has been well commented upon. See, for example, Teichgraber (1977), Avineri (1972: 147–154) and Harvey (2001).
18. Meaning pre-March, i.e., the decades leading up to 1848.

19. On the monarch in Hegel, see Brooks (2007).
20. Hegel must have had in mind here the English example, especially transmitted through the popular German reception of *Montesquieu*.
21. In his 1810 Inaugural Address at his Gymnasium in Nuremberg, Hegel also spoke of the fundamental importance of the family educating the child before school; Pinkard (2000: 288). Moreover, Hegel was critical of child labor in England precisely because it denied the individual this foundational moment of *Bildung* (ibid.: 482).
22. Hegel (1983: 169) even describes the businessman, in his Jena lectures, as 'part scholar'.
23. On the terminological issues behind the idea of 'bourgeois' as a moment of *Bildung*, see Schmidt (1981).
24. This, of course, was part of a wider German neo-Humanist project to substitute philosophical revolution for political revolution. See in general Kouvelakis (2003), Habermas (1974) and Mah (1990). On Humboldt's famous neo-Humanist expression of *Bildung* see Sorkin (1983). Unlike Hegel, however, Humboldt did not place *Bildung* within a model of social development that embraced its international dimension.
25. Berry (1981: 160) notes that even when Hegel raised a monarch to the status of a 'world-historical individual' (for example, Alexander, or Napoleon), it was still the philosopher who enabled the comprehension of the actions of these sovereign powers. As such, for Hegel, the agency of the world-historical individual is *incomplete* without the philosopher.
26. On Hegel's movement towards historicizing philosophy itself, see Zaborowski (2003).
27. Hegel (1969: 32) who had once dismissed the inadequacy of German as a language, now claimed that its structure was well-suited to *encode* the dialectical content of *Aufhebung*. See also Plant (1983: 31).
28. Cited in Simms (1998: 76).
29. See, for example, Carl von Clausewitz: 'Honor is of psychological interest but has no intrinsic value as an ideal.' Cited in Sheehan (1989: 231).
30. Note Hardenberg's preface to the Edict: 'The most pressing concern is the complete fulfillment of our obligations to France.' Cited in Simms (1998: 79).
31. Henderson (1975: 33) notes that: '...20 years elapsed before Peel's fiscal reforms gave Britain a tariff as liberal as that of Prussia.'
32. On these issues of comparative cognitive dissonance, see also Brose (1993: 37), Gagliardo (1969: 227) and Sperber (1985: 286).
33. The term given to the process of negotiating the release of peasants from dues and obligations owed to their lord.
34. Many East Elbian *Junkers* curiously joined voices with those demanding a constitution. They did this, however, with the hope that a constitution would bolster the importance of the *Landtag* within the governing apparatus. See Carsten (1989: 95).
35. On the *Burschenschaft* see Lutz (1971), Düding (1987: 28–33), Pinkard (2000: 395–399), Giesen (1993: 104) and Mosse (1975: 4).
36. Jahn's contemporary, and university professor, Ernst Moritz Arndt proposed in 1814 the founding of a German Association (*Deutsche Gesellschaft*) to celebrate, through holy festivals, the Battle of Leipzig (among other items); see Mosse (1975: 75).

37. Clausewitz (1992: 257).
38. Thomas Mertens (1995: 680–691) lists a number of Just War criteria evident in Hegel's discussion on war that underpin further the ethical nature of the geo-political moment.
39. See for example, Hegel (1999c: 210, 212) where he comments that in Catholic France, Enlightenment posited religion against the state, whereas in Protestant Germany this antagonism never matured. See also Hegel (1991: 379 §358).
40. On Hegel's treatment of the Reformation, see Beck (1976).
41. See, for example, Hegel's topography in (1999a: 62–63); see also the editor's note in Hegel (1991: 379fn. 2 §358)
42. On the sources of Rousseau's Virtue and his lack of political theory, see Blum (1986).
43. Although soon after, Frederick, fearful of potential invasion of the Rhineland, and to the dismay of Metternich, recognized the new government of Louis Phillipe (Simms 1998: 114).
44. See, for an example of his anxiety, Hegel's (1984: 668–669) letters to Eduard Gans.

## 5 Interlude: *Vormärz*

1. Famously, Reinhart Koselleck terms this substitution project 'intra-administrative constitutionalism'. Koselleck's book that focuses on the bureaucracy, *Preussen Zwischen Reform und Revolution*, is yet to be translated into English. For a thorough and critical review, see Sperber (1985).
2. On these issues in general, see Gillis (1971) and Beck (1995).
3. On the history of German Studies see Bontempelli (2004).
4. Although by no means exclusively. For example, in 1821 Peter Beuth opened the first trade school in Prussia in Berlin. Here, British machinery was imported illegally for study at the school. See Kitchen (1978: 66).
5. On this contextualization of the Zollverein, see Kitchen (1978: 33–44) and especially Murphy (1991). The original economic thesis of the *Zollverein* as the start of Prussian industrialization can be found in Henderson (1959).
6. For this argument see Cain and Hopkins (1980: 477). For the British engagement with the Zollverein, see Gordon (1969) and Fremdling (1991).
7. On this incident see Anderson (1966: 88–109).
8. Schulze (1991: 65). It should be noted, however, that these voices now emanated most strongly from the southern German states.
9. See Jarausch (1975: 543).
10. Barclay (1995: 24–36) and Berdahl (1988: 327–328).
11. On these issues see Tilly (1966: 495), Brose (1993: 239) and Berdahl (1988: 312–313).
12. On this discussion of the Diet see Berdahl (1988: 334–347) and Hughes (1988: 82–83).
13. On the composition of the assembly, and the general importance of the business liberals in 1848, see Sheehan (1973: 589), Sperber (1985: 290) and Diefendorf (1980: 352).



14. On the composition of the Frankfurt parliament, see McClelland (1971: 80, 83–84) and Sheehan (1973: 585).
15. Many of the conferences during 1848 over reform were direct continuations of existing academic debates. See Jarausch (1982: 11) and Bontempelli (2004: 4).
16. On the *Junkers'* reaction to 1848 in general, see Carsten (1989: 100–107).

## 6 Weber's *Realpolitik*

1. For example, Hobden and Hobson (2000). Weber's influence has been most apparent in debates over Third World development regarding the legitimacy and capability of modern centralized state power. See, for example, Janowitz (1977) and Huntington (1968). See also the now burgeoning literature on 'failed states'.
2. A clear example in IR is Hobson and Seabrooke (2001).
3. Cited in Krieger (1957: 354).
4. Frederick's reign *post* 1848 was not directed by a conservative court camarilla. On this see Barclay (1993).
5. See for example Gillis's (1971: 183–187) discussion on the relationship between Frederick and Karl Ludwig Friedrich von Hinckeldey, the chief of Berlin police.
6. This is the translation of *Realpolitik* given in Krieger (1957: 354).
7. On the various strategies undertaken see Kitchen (1978: 94, 99), Fischer (1963: 85, 88), Fremdling (1977: 591, 596), Tilly (1996: 106), Schulze (1991: 80) and Sheehan (1989: 735).
8. See the seminal essays by Alexander Gerschenkron (1966). For the 'leading-sector analysis' of railroads, see Fremdling (1977). Economic histories of Germany that also revolve around this hypothesis include Kitchen (1978), Trebilcock (1981: 41–102) and Tilly (1996).
9. For overviews of the *Sonderweg* debate see Jarausch (1983), Fletcher (1984), Kocka (1999) and Beck (1995: 242–260).
10. The term, 'white revolutionary' is taken from Kissinger (1968).
11. Cited in Carsten (1989: 119).
12. Hans-Ulrich Wehler famously described this policy as 'negative integration'; Seligmann and McLean (2000: 21).
13. Bismarck had no problem with dispossessing the monarchies of Hanover and Nassau.
14. For figures see Carsten (1989: 85), Sheehan (1989: 763) and Tilly (1996: 117).
15. Articulated especially in the Conservative Party's Tivoli program in 1892; see Carsten (1989: 138).
16. See, for example, the aims of the German Colonial Society in Forbes (1978: 384–385).
17. For relevant interpretations of these issues, see Eley (1980: 339) and Seligmann and McLean (2000: 76–89).
18. Note, for example, that early on in his reign Wilhelm allowed Bismarck's Reinsurance Treaty to relapse, a treaty which had heretofore guarded against the possibility of a Franco–Russian flanking movement.
19. Cited in Schluchter (1981: 21).

20. Hegel, of course, would have been mortified by this assessment.
21. See Schnädelbach (1984: 43).
22. On the association's composition, see Smith (1991: 180) and Ringer (1969: 146–151).
23. On the Heidelberg School, see Rintelen (1970: 21–29) and Oakes (1988).
24. On Neo-Kantianism in general, see Köhnke (1991), Schnädelbach (1984: 56–58, 103–108) and Rintelen (1970: 12–16, 21–29).
25. On Weber's very first influences, see Mommsen (1984: 1–11).
26. On the importance of *Menschentum* for Weber, see Hennis (1983).
27. This concern was reflected in Weber's joining two organizations simultaneously: the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*, where he took part in investigating the practical transformations of East Elbian agriculture, and the *Evangelisch-Soziale Kongress*, a Lutheran movement interested in the spiritual effects of such transformations.
28. Weber (2003: 78); see also Weber (1982c: 147)
29. On the intimate relation between the two vocations, see the illuminating article by Myers (2004).
30. See, for example, Weber's famous comments on political economy (2003a: 13–16). On this tension see also Hobson and Seabrooke (2001).
31. Weber borrowed the notion from Menger's search for 'exact types' of economic action, but lifted the term from Herder's vocabulary; Koch (1993: 132).
32. Peter Baehr (2001: 156) notes that Talcott Parsons chose to translate the term as 'correlation' and that this obfuscates the type of relation that Weber was attempting to circumscribe.
33. Weber (2003d: 144).
34. While such ideas are present in the Freiburg Address, they are repeated by Weber with more clarity in a later set of articles collated in (2003d: 135–144).
35. See Weber's 1895 Freiburg Address (2003a), and a later set of articles collated in (2003c: 135–144).
36. On the inadequacies of the parliamentary system, see Weber (2003c: 163–174, 239–240). See also Weber (2003d: 163–174).
37. As late as 1908 Weber considered emigrating from Germany after many episodes of mental trauma.
38. In fact, at the start of the century Weber (2003c: 71) briefly considered that only two areas remained peculiar enough to effect their own specific kind of liberal revolution: the United States and Russia.
39. Weber (1982d: 280).
40. Weber (1982d: 280).
41. Thus reflecting Weber's understanding of social power as willful domination.
42. Famously, Weber's invocation of Benjamin Franklin's maxims of frugality in (2001: 14–16).
43. Note that Weber asks the economic determinists how it was that in the backwaters of Pennsylvania, the ethos of 'capitalism' could develop in the absence of advanced technology (2001: 36). See also Weber (1982a: 309).
44. See especially Weber's (1982a) discussion on credit worthiness and church membership in Protestant America.
45. On the preference of the phrase 'shell as hard as steel' instead of 'iron cage', see Baehr (2001), who notes that the former translation more accurately

conveys Weber's sense of instrumental-rationality as a historical construction of social meaning and conduct.

46. Weber (2003d: 187).
47. Cited in Mommsen (1984: 140).
48. Regina Titunik (1997) notes how Weber deemed both traditional and modern rational political authority to be 'caste-like'.
49. Weber (2003d: 269).
50. The polar night, for Weber, could end. To take it that for Weber history *stops* with the global triumph of instrumental rationality is a serious misreading of his method and narrative (Baehr 2001: 154).
51. This was especially notable in the works of the doyen of *Deutschtum* Heinrich von Treitschke (Metz 1981: 270–271). Further detailed investigation of Weber would require sensitivity to the increasing importance of developments in both the United States and Russia to the way in which the German intellectual understood his/her own context. This, however, does not take away from the immediate importance of Britain in Weber's geo-cultural imaginary.
52. For example, Weber (1978: 133; 1978a: 977, 987; 2001: 117; 2003a: 98, 111, 347). It was in England that Weber witnessed firsthand what he believed to be the most extreme dissolution of social bonds brought about by agrarian capitalism (Berman 1986: 34–35). However, this experience was probably framed by Weber's prior close reading of Marx's argument of primitive accumulation in *Das Kapital* where England was cast as the home of capitalism (Szokolczai 1998: 104; Sumiya 2001: 128–131). Weber's experiences in the United States did affect him significantly; however, he rather unsatisfactorily collapsed the religious associational life of the American petty bourgeoisie into his existing understandings of the character of the European middle classes.
53. This, despite all Weber's (1990: 32, 49) cautions against naturalizing the 'individual'.
54. Weber's 'irrational' valuing of liberal individualism has been well noted. See, for example, Titunik (1995: 118).

## 7 Epilogue: *Weimar*

1. The SDP infamously voted for war credits in 1914.
2. 'The Weimar Constitution of 1919' in Hucko (1987: 174–175), articles 109–118, 151–153.
3. For example, article 119 states that motherhood had a claim upon the care of the state, and article 161 establishes the need for a social security system (ibid.: 176, 185). In general, see Hong (1998: 33).
4. In Hucko (1987: 183).
5. For the importance of world-historical conjuncture in the rise of Fascism in Germany, see Eley (1983).
6. The *directness* of this domination is what differentiates the World War I from the colonial contest between France and Britain 150 years prior.
7. This interpretation of the *Führerprinzip* is derived from Kershaw (1989: 14–19), Frankel (2003) and Welch (1993: 82–89).
8. See also Frei (1993: 170–174).

9. Knox (2000: 815) points out that Hitler mourned the SA; he considered the military authority too traditional in contrast to the para-military.

## 8 Morgenthau's Existential Crisis

1. For a collection of essays representative of the contours of the revival of interest in Morgenthau in IR, see Williams (2008).
2. On Morgenthau's German context, see Amstrup (1989), Honig (1995), Mollov (2002), Frei (2001) and Haslam (2002). For his Weberian, Schmittian and Nietzschean roots, see Barkawi (1998), Peterson (1999), Frei (2001), Pichler (1998) and Koskenniemi (2000). On Morgenthau's battle against the American 'applied enlightenment', see Honig (1995), Söllner (1987) and Frei (2001: 181). On the general retrieval of the moral dimension of Morgenthau's thought, see, for example, Russell (1990: 161–171), Murray (1996), Pangle and Ahrens Dorf (1999: 219–228), Bain (2000), Molloy (2004), Williams (2005) and Cozette (2008).
3. Cited in Gay (1968: 86).
4. This was especially noticeable in the development of the Sociology of Knowledge discipline. See Frisby (1983).
5. The following interpretation of Treitschke's political thought is derived from Megay (1958), Metz (1982) and Aron (1962: 586–601).
6. For the 'Ranke renaissance' and its foundational importance to Realism, see Farrenkopf (1991). But see in contrast Rengger (2000: 40–41).
7. The interpretation of Schmitt presented here is informed by Wolin (1992), McCormick (1994), Mouffe (1999) and Pichler (1998).
8. Even among more sympathetic intellectual voices, the British/German comparison had become rife in the late Wilhelmine period. For example, Otto Hintze placed Prussia-German development within a core/periphery comparative model whereby the core, meaning the Feudal heartland, produced 'warrior' states as opposed to the less 'crowded' periphery, which produced 'industrial' states. Germany and Britain were the examples of this typology *par excellence*. See Gerhard (1970) and Page (1990).
9. Cited in Frei (2001: 157).
10. On Morgenthau's 'jewishness' see Mollov (2002). As Mollov himself suggests, Morgenthau's Jewish identity is of secondary importance in exploring his thought, but it is no less important for that. In Germany, especially, the political philosophy tradition was always challenged and transformed by German Jewish intellectuals by reference to their liminal enfranchisement within the various German polities. On this see Goetschel (forthcoming).
11. Frei (2001: 167–170) identifies Morgenthau's ultimate values more generally as stemming from the 'humanist liberal' tradition.
12. In the few cases where it was not translated flatly, interesting new philosophical positions developed. See, for example, John Dewey's transformation of Hegelian idealism into pragmatism.
13. Morgenthau (1974: 155).
14. Morgenthau had developed this point in his DPhil work. See Morgenthau (1977: 15), Scheuerman (1999: 225–251) and Frei (2001: 134).

15. See also, for example, Morgenthau (1948: 128): '[The blindness to the reality of international affairs] manifests itself in Neville Chamberlain in the conviction that all men will act like businessmen from Birmingham and that international politics is in its essence a series of business transactions among peoples speaking different tongues.'
16. On the importance of the French Revolution, see Morgenthau (1952a: 76, 1974: 61).
17. The parallels with Weber's method are remarkable here. See for example, Morgenthau (1952a: 73–75, 1974: 128).
18. This seems to be Morgenthau's basic world-historical narrative. See, for example, its mobilization to make sense of the Jewish Question (1962).
19. Morgenthau (1952a: 196).
20. The stakes at play in retaining this balance-of-power tool become raised in the increased militarization of political authority in the nuclear era; Morgenthau (1952a: 430).
21. Morgenthau (1948: 134).
22. Morgenthau (1952a: 13).
23. Morgenthau (1958: 289).
24. On the monopolization versus multiplicity of truth in a democracy, see Morgenthau (1958: 289–293).
25. On the importance of the nuclear dimension to shifts in Morgenthau's political philosophy, see especially Craig (2003).
26. Especially important in this respect is Morgenthau's discussions on a purported monolithic communism and the question of Third World independence. See especially Morgenthau (1965).
27. This re-formulation was no doubt prompted or aided by de Gaulle's belligerent turn in the late 1950s.
28. On Eisenhower, see Morgenthau (1958: 295–304, 1970: 48–49). On Johnson see especially Morgenthau (1970a: 18). On Morgenthau's ostracism from the policy-making elite over his opposition to Vietnam, see See (2001).
29. The following discussion on elitism and the 'new aristocracy' is an interpretation of Morgenthau (1958: 288–294, 1960: 222–242).

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