

## Weber and the Sociology of Revolution

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**ABSTRACT** Weber wrote about the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917 while they were in progress. Analytically, he held that revolution is a non-legitimate form of change, insofar as the source of legitimate power is the authority of military command in a community of fate organized for foreign war. He thus adumbrates some aspects of contemporary state-breakdown theory, in which revolution hinges upon geopolitical strain and fiscal crisis splitting elites. Yet Weber remained closer to classic Marxian theory of revolutionary interest groups mobilized from below. He broadened interest groups to include status groups as well as economic classes. His description gives leads for a theory of revolutionary process centered on alliances and splits, bandwagon effects and turning points, and the volatility of revolutionary ideas arising from the social organization of full-time political militants. Weber predicted structural change in Russia leading to bureaucratic dictatorship.

**KEYWORDS** communism, geopolitics, legitimacy, Russian revolutions, social movements, state breakdown

Can studying Weber contribute to current theoretical understanding of a phenomenon like revolution? Revolution is our example above all others of social dynamics in contrast to comparative statics, a process of sudden, dramatic social change. Looking for Weber's views on revolution points up, quite clearly, how much of his work concerns the comparison of structures or institutions, including worldviews (which we could just as well call cultural structures). He is a sociologist of social change, but typically at a distance, at telescopic range. His strength is taxonomic description, which is ultimately oriented towards showing what kinds of institutions and beliefs facilitate or impede changes from one structure to another; for the most part these are presented as massive and glacial.

Even when Weber (1968: 1115) speaks of charisma as a ‘revolutionary’ break from traditional and rational norms, his discussion is taxonomic. We see rather little in Weber of the flow of events, of actual struggles, confrontations, turning points. Perhaps all this is merely to say that Weber was not a historian, narrating historical events, but a historical sociologist; but even as such, his focus was on the comparison of structures and not on action *per se*. To be sure, Weber is often classified in abstract discussions of social theory as an action theorist, but this is on the strength of his methodological writings. When he actually engages in historical sociology, we see relatively little action, but instead comparison and assessment of structures and their potentialities.

What, then, can Weber add to our understanding of revolution, given that today we possess several decades of studies that tell us a great deal about revolutionary dynamics, and about the clashes of social movements generally? Perhaps it is time to admit that scholarship has gone considerably beyond Weber on many points. Where he remains unrivaled is in sheer scope, bringing all the world under one viewpoint (and into single works, like *Economy and Society* [1968, hereafter, ES], as well as the comparative studies of the world religions treated as a comprehensive project). Subsequent social historians have amassed more information and given better analyses on numerous particular parts of world history; but it is still to Weber that we go in looking for thematic vision that holds it all together. Weber provides this unity by asking analytical questions that require comparison of long-term sequences in order to frame an answer. In this sense we still read him because he is our great exemplar of how to go about using history on the largest scale, and our legitimator of our right to do so too. Thus one is tempted to say that Weber has become the totem animal for the tribe of comparative historical sociologists, and *Economy and Society* is the sacred object of our cult.

Nevertheless, Weber helps us to push the boundaries of our theory of revolutions, in several ways. His explicit treatment of revolution in ES is rather meager, but it serves to remind us that revolution should not be confined to the canonized modern cases (the French Revolution, the Russian, the Chinese, etc.), but should consider the medieval Italian city-states, as well as ancient Rome and Greece. In these writings Weber also forces us to consider more deeply what revolution reveals about the character of state power.

The second great resource Weber provides for us is his detailed analysis of revolutions in progress at the time he was writing about them. He became interested in the revolutionary upheavals in Russia in 1905–6, enough to learn Russian quickly and with the help of *émigré* circles in Heidelberg to follow primary information sources; the result was two long articles published in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*, ‘Bourgeois Democracy in Russia’ (1995a) and ‘Russia’s Transition to Pseudo-Constitutionalism’ (1995b). Again in 1917, Weber followed revolutionary events in the aftermath of the downfall of the monarchy and published two newspaper articles, the more extensive of which was titled

‘Russia’s Transition to Pseudo-Democracy’ (26 April 1917 [1995c]; before, of course, the Bolshevik seizure of power in November). In these writings (especially those on 1905–6) Weber frames his discussion, like the taxonomist he was, around what kind of political structures are at issue; but he also gives a detailed line-up of the interested parties to the conflict over these structures and comments on their tactics. It is still not quite history of events, but Weber moves us closer to the flow of political action in a situation of crisis and conflict than perhaps anywhere in his *oeuvre*. Together, these writings give us an opportunity to sharpen our theories of revolutionary dynamics, especially as Weber provides us information situating conflict in an unparalleled understanding of the structures that the conflict was about.

## Weber’s Analytical Treatment of Revolution

In ES Weber writes about revolution less as an event than as a way of characterizing a particular kind of structural change. Thus he refers to the ‘administrative revolution’ brought about by Athenian democracy (ES: 1314); or of bureaucratic rationalization as a ‘revolutionary force with regard to tradition’ (ES: 1116); and of course of charisma as revolutionary in transforming values (ES: 1115). Some of these usages are metaphorical and not entirely consistent with his chief analytical point, which is that revolution is a specifically non-legitimate form of change and produces illegitimate forms of power. We might wonder why revolution is not a form of charisma, insofar as it breaks with traditional or rational legal domination. But Weber takes the argument in a different direction, one that reveals the distinctive character of the core of state authority.

His discussion occurs in the section on ‘The Plebeian City’.<sup>1</sup> Writing of the Italian *popolo*, the political associations of entrepreneurs and handicraft workers that struggled against the rule of knightly families, most notably in Milan, Florence, Siena, Verona, Bologna, Perugia and elsewhere during the 13th and 14th centuries, Weber describes their organization as ‘“a state within the state” – the first deliberately nonlegitimate and revolutionary political association’ (ES: 1302). At first glance this seems puzzling. In one sense the *popolo*, with its own chief officials, militia and even statutes and tax system, was a version of what Trotsky (1932) called ‘dual power’, the parallel institutions or shadow government that appeared in revolutionary situations as a transition to taking full government power. But although a dual structure might be illegitimate from the point of view of the existing government, it might well become legitimate if it succeeded in becoming the new government. Of course it might never take full power; but Weber himself notes that the *popolo*, and analogous structures in ancient Rome (the tribunes of the people) and Sparta (the ephors), eventually became incorporated into the regular government structure and made up just one more complexity or division of powers within it (ES: 1307–11), by which time

they certainly should be considered legitimate. But Weber wants to bring out a different point, even at the cost of some consistency in his usage.

Why were the patrician knightly families (in the Italian city-states) and the patrician clans (in ancient Rome and Greece) legitimate in their rule whereas the revolutionary associations of the lower-ranking status groups were not? Weber gives two reasons: (a) 'the right to commune with the gods of the city', that is, to take the lead in religious ceremonies assembling the political community; and (b) 'the right to inflict legitimate punishment'; in contrast, the leader of the *plebs* (here Weber is using the Roman example) had 'the power to execute a sort of lynch law against anyone obstructing his official actions: without trial and judgement, he could have such persons arrested and executed by having them thrown off the Tarpeian rock' (ES: 1308). One point of this colorful example is that there are regular ceremonies (religious and judicial) that enact legitimate political authority. Still, one might wonder why this couldn't change over time, so that the upstarts become surrounded by their own ceremonial (as indeed did occur) and thus acquire their own venter of legitimacy.

Weber goes on to reveal the key point: the tribune held power only within the city, whereas the legitimate authority named the heads of the army, and their authority on military campaigns was absolute, and could not be mitigated by the tribunes. This reminds us that in another context, the key chapter on 'Political Communities', where Weber discussed the formation of territorial political associations, he noted that the source of legitimate power was the fact that people who bind themselves together for war put themselves into a community of fate. The state, thus constituted as military community, has life or death power over its members; they are not only obligated to obey commands in combat under pain of death, but this power extends to noncombatants and to members even in peacetime, insofar as their community is permanent and they are subjected to a common fate should they be victims of attack by their foreign enemies. The source of judicial power, the legitimate power to punish individuals in the name of the group, comes from the organization of the community for war. Thus both internal, domestic authority (as distinguished from sheer arbitrary power by consent to the very existence of the community) and authority of command in external, foreign affairs come from a common root. What is legitimate, then, comes from control of the army on behalf of the community; what is non-legitimate is any form of political power that is not delegated by this core association of the community, those bound together against other such communities, but arises from some other grouping that disputes this communal/military leadership.

Here Weber is an ancestor of the contemporary military-centered theory of the modern state, which traces the consequences of the expansion of standing armies for the organization of taxation, administration and penetration into society by government regulation (Mann, 1986–93; Tilly, 1990). The modern state, in Weber's famous phrase, is a claim to the monopolization of legitimate

force upon a territory; as I have argued elsewhere, everything in this definition ought to be treated as a historical variable and examined for its causes and consequences (Collins, 1999b). When Weber discusses ancient states such as the Greek cities or Rome, he is dealing with a period when *ad hoc* alliances among clans were being regularized into a compulsory territorial organization (ES: 1312–13); one consequence is that everyone who lives within the territory becomes subject to the legitimate authority of its rulers (which is to say, those to whom the community looks as its commanders *vis-à-vis* foreign communities). Weber goes on to sketch the struggles for political participation that followed from this compulsory territorial structure; for those who lived in the place, whether they belonged to the ruling clans (or other status groups who took the initiative in collective military action) or not, were *de facto* part of the community of fate, and became subject to its laws, constituencies for its ceremonies, and potentially subject to military mobilization on its behalf. Thus there was in some sense an inevitable drive towards the mobilization of ‘illegitimate’ movements for a share in political power. For example, in Rome, the struggle of the plebs *vis-à-vis* the patricians eventually became institutionalized in a routine sequence of offices for all political careers; this status-group distinction became eclipsed in practice by a new line of class conflict between, on the one hand, a newer nobility based on office-holding and wealth and, on the other, a politically excluded ‘bourgeois’ stratum (ES: 1309). In general, Weber notes that the more massive the military mobilization, the more it pulls disenfranchised groups into struggling for inclusion in political power; since they are already within (in regard to liabilities), they struggle to become full members (in regard to honors and procedures as well).

The organization of the state for war thus plays a key role in any revolutionary conflict. In discussing the plebeian city, in every instance Weber distinguishes between a legitimate ruling group, which are the military commanders in foreign wars (whether they are a military aristocracy, a patrician blend of knightly and mercantile life style, ancient clans making military alliance, etc.) and the ‘plebeian’ populace. When the latter put forward their demands, form their own ‘state within the state’, and even engage in violent struggle with the ruling stratum, their actions are illegitimate in the specific sense that they are struggling against the military-centered state. In a sense they can never win; they can be successful, but that means they become incorporated into the military-centered state and lose their revolutionary character, which existed only as long as they formed a rival organization against it. Once they take command (assuming a total revolutionary victory) they represent their community on the field of potential battle against foreign communities; they are revolutionary as they stand against the militarized community, but the very community within which they launch their revolution has this ultimately military character as a community of fate.

In a revealing phrase Weber notes how the Roman tribune of the people might become ‘the *de facto* highest power within the limits of the urban peace

district' (ES: 1308), while the patrician military command still held total authority on campaigns. The city is the 'urban peace district'; it is the borders within which affairs are domestic, not foreign. This applies to modern states generally, insofar as they are an expansion of the structure of the city (as noted by Roth, 1968: xciii). It is a pacified zone whose inhabitants are supposed to be allies for military purposes against potential threats from (or for incursions against) similarly organized neighbors. Thus a revolutionary movement, one that uses the threat of force to dispute power within this pacified zone, is attacking the very bond that makes up the state and constitutes its legitimate authority. I think this is what Weber was getting at in his somewhat tortured use of the concept of 'non-legitimate' associations and their power. One does not have to be sympathetic to the authorities to see that revolutionaries have a formidable task: it is not just the sheer strength of those who command the army that makes them hard to overthrow, but the feeling of most of the members of a political community that they are bound with this authority as a community of fate.

## **Contemporary State-Breakdown Theory and Classic Interest Group Theory of Revolution**

In recent decades much research has contributed to a theory of revolution that integrates with what we know about state development, social movements and the process of conflict. There are three main components. (a) In contrast to the earlier paradigm, which saw revolutions as surging up from below, contemporary theory sees causality as initiated from above, with a state breakdown (Collins, 1999a; Goldstone, 1991; Skocpol, 1979; Tilly, 1993). This generally occurs through a combination of geopolitical strain (defeat in war, logistical overextension) and financial crisis; states lose their instrument of coercion, their prestige and their ability to pay their bills, and especially their own personnel. (b) The elite splits over how to respond to the crisis; typically this takes the form of reformers willing to undertake major changes in order to restore finances, against a privileged class who resist paying for the cost of the reforms. (c) Social movements take advantage of the state crisis and elite split in order to mobilize around their own grievances. Here revolution theory meshes with social movement theory, which has documented the importance of resource mobilization (organizational and material conditions for assembling groups for action, publicizing an ideology, keeping the movement going during slack times) and of the 'frames' that a series of movements provide for each other in building up a tradition of workable tactics, ideological appeals and networks of recruitment (Tilly, 1978, 1995).

State-breakdown theory of revolution focuses on the conditions that lead up to the disintegration of state power. It leaves open two further questions. (d) The first is the process of revolution itself, the dynamics of action that come into play once the state has broken down and groups now struggle to put something else in its place; often there is considerable realignment of factions and the

emergence of new groups and factions during this time. Here we have some leads from general theory of conflict (summarized in Collins, 1993), as well as some discussions of revolutionary process itself (Goldstone, 1991: 421–36; Marwell and Oliver, 1993; Stinchcombe, 1978). These conflict dynamics involve processes of escalation and polarization, the effects of atrocities, critical mass and bandwagon effects, and factional alliances and splits.

(e) The issue of revolutionary outcomes is least specified under the new paradigm; revolutions now are seen as structural opportunities, a rending of the fabric of the old regime to open the possibilities of putting many different kinds of regimes in its place (including the possibility of restoring something resembling the old regime). In other words, it is no longer assumed that revolutions move inexorably ‘to the left’ or in historical ‘advance’ towards political liberalization or economic egalitarianism.

The new revolution theory paradigm is in pointed contrast to an older paradigm, of which Marx formulated the most famous version. That version saw revolutions as breaking through from below by an accumulation of grievances on the part of a social class that represented the future, as against the outworn social class attached to the existing state. In Marx’s paradigm, the key actors are economic classes; the prime mover is change in economic structure, which makes some classes rise and others fall; the crisis condition is an economic crisis, not of the state but of the entire economy; and the outcome is a shift both in the short run, in the class holding political power, and in the long run, in the system of property. Comparing the two paradigms, we can say that the Marxian model puts its emphasis on (c), the mobilization of grievances from below, which it sees as class interests (as compared to the broader and more inclusive set of disgruntled forces in the state-breakdown model); and on (e), where the Marxian model confidently predicts shifts in property relations as the principal revolutionary outcome.

Weber’s analysis of revolution, especially in his writings on the Russian revolutions, is explicitly critical of Marxism. Weber both disliked the Bolsheviks and polemically jabbed at the materialist theory. Nevertheless, in many respects he is closer to the Marxian paradigm than to the state-breakdown paradigm (not surprisingly, since the latter emerged some 60 years after his death). He lists at length the various contending interest groups, the actors on the scene, explaining the social bases of their interests; his analysis is broader than Marx’s in that he goes well beyond class interests (but includes class interests as well); he discusses the governmental structures favored by these various interests, then tries to assess the strength of the different factions and make an estimate of whose interests are likely to win out. Broadly speaking, Weber stays within the model of contending interests, which struggle to determine structural changes. Over the course of this exposition, he jabs away against the Marxian/materialist position, and thereby adumbrates some of the features of the later paradigm.

In what follows, I list the ways in which Weber builds from this interests-and-structures model into a broader, and implicitly more processual, theory of revolution.

## (1) Interest groups

Weber lists both economic classes and status groups as having interests pro or con the political status quo in Russia. Among classes are: the manufacturers, tied to the state to ensure labor discipline; the big landowners, politically conservative to ensure protection of their property from expropriation; workers, struggling over hours and working conditions; peasants, in 1905 united on demands for land redistribution, in 1917 split by intervening reforms into wealthier peasants and poor landless peasants; and the petit bourgeoisie, ambiguous in their leanings but antagonistic to the gentry (on grounds that shade over into status insults and interests).

Status groups are based on a different analytical principle, namely life style and thus relations of antagonism among different styles of life and principles of group honor. Among status groups, key divisions are among: the monarchy and its social circles, unwilling to compromise the prestige of autocracy; the aristocracy, split into a conservative faction focused on maintaining its social pre-eminence; and a liberal faction that stakes its prestige on being at the forefront of movements for modernity, for western standards, and thus for reform; the bourgeoisie, which as a status group is insulted by the petty intrusions in everyday liberty of action by an autocratic bureaucracy (internal passports, arbitrary searches and arrests); the bureaucracy itself, which enjoys the status of being able to harass everyone else; and the peasantry, hostile to bureaucratic regulation. Also among status groups may be counted the various nationalities of the Russian empire (the Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, etc.), who feel their national honor insulted at subjugation to Russian authorities, language laws, and the like; these status interests are complicated, however, by the fact that it is largely the higher classes of each national region that are politically mobilized, and as such have other interests and antagonisms that bind them to conservative positions.

Finally, Weber singles out the intelligentsia, the educated strata and especially those who work in the world of education, journalism and as lower employees of the *zemstvos* providing social services for the peasantry. He displays these people as both altruistic and idealistic in one respect, and opportunistic in another. Sometimes the intellectuals are close to the liberal reformers of the respectable and even aristocratic classes; sometimes they attach themselves to the peasants or the workers. Thus the intelligentsia, and more generally the whole altruistic wing of these Russian status groups, have considerable freedom of choice as to the direction in which they want to go; detaching themselves from their own class interests (or having little in the way of economic concerns of their own), they formulate programs that play up various solutions to the economic and status

problems they see around them. Some formulated a romantic ideal of the peasants as close to the soil, staking everything on an agrarian reform that would return to a peasant communism, and seeking to force the issue by a campaign of assassinations of government officials (this was the *Narodniki*, most active in the 1870s and 1880s); they routinized in the early 1900s as the party of Socialist (or Social) Revolutionaries. Others threw themselves into the *zemstvos*, the institutions of provincial and local self-government developed in 1864 during the reform period following the abolition of serfdom; Weber sees them indulgently as altruists, seeking moderate and gradualist solutions through established channels. We can see, of course, that their moderate stance comes from their standing as institutionalized reformers, having won concessions in previous rounds of struggle that make them a part of the routine organization of Russian government, even if structurally at odds with the central government. Yet others of the intelligentsia associate with the workers and their new trade union organizations; in keeping with ideas circulating in trade union networks in the West, they have socialist beliefs. The socialists exemplify a further principle of the differentiation of interest groups: they split not on the basis of class origins or institutional connections, but on questions of tactics; thus in 1903 the Social Democratic Workers' Party had split into the Bolshevik faction, favoring violent revolution, and the Mensheviks, favoring trade union struggle.

Weber treats all this in passing, but we can pause to underline an analytical point useful for the theory of revolution: interest groups are not merely preexistent, based on location in the occupational and organizational structure; they are also emergent as the process of mobilization takes place. This is a process of creating or activating SMOs (social movement organizations) so that there are new organizational positions for persons to attach themselves to, and from which vantage points they can formulate paths of action. Splits over tactics are, so to speak, splits over which kinds of organization a group of political actors project into the future; they are splits based not just on past organization but on imagined prospective organization. Thus very different kinds of organization will grow from decisions to engage in assassinations, or mass armed uprising, or labor strikes, or protest marches, or parliamentary assemblies.

Another version of emergent interest groups based upon prospective organizational forms are splits over which alliances to make; among persons initially equally radical, in the flux of maneuver some see advantage in allying with more moderate groups, while others from the same starting point throw themselves into the opposite stance and seek to maintain their purity of program and freedom of action. Similarly among conservatives: some find themselves shifting in the heat of the occasion to ally with what they perceive as moderate reformers, while others become militant hard-liners. These splits among adjacent stances are often the most bitter, not so much because they are adjacent to begin with but because they were identical, and thus are felt as a betrayal of group solidarity (as

noted by Coser, 1956).<sup>2</sup> What I am underlining here is the fluidity of revolutionary action. But I would not like this message to be read as: anything goes in the heat of conflict, hence it is unpredictable what anyone will do or how things will end up. Quite the contrary; I am arguing for principles that shape action within conflicts. But these principles are not to be found so much in the acting out of preexisting interests, as in the patterns of alliances and splits that make up the structure of opportunities in the field of action in any multi-sided conflict.<sup>3</sup> We see more of this in points (2) and (3) below.

## **(2) Alliances and splits; bandwagons and turning points**

In a sense, the entire crisis period of a revolution is a matter of who will ally with whom. The dominant alliance has broken down, or is at least in question, as different factions of the elite probe for where to place the blame and who to displace from the center of power; and the normal acquiescence of most of the rest of the populace has given way to widespread agitation. All the preexisting interest groups now seize the moment to present their own, self-interested diagnosis of the crisis and what policy should be instituted to rectify it (chief among which is addressing their own grievances); on top of this, an emergent structure of diverging interests appears based on new organizational arenas that grow up, and on the tactical opportunities that present themselves. This is why, from the canonical case of the French Revolution onwards, there has been a disjunction between the received categories of social division that analysts have tried to impose upon the struggle, and the flux of new factional lines that appear from month to month or even week to week. The classic instance is Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, where he scrambled to invent new labels for differentiated class factions in order to keep intact his vision of struggling interest groups. But this flux is precisely what the political crisis consists in; the crisis is resolved when it becomes clear that there is a dominant coalition, around which others will now join or acquiesce, and against which even the die-hards will suffer erosion of support and end up demobilizing whether they see what is happening or not. Political power is ultimately a matter of bandwagon effects; that is to say, the times of institutional stability are when the critical mass is so large that it is unmistakable, and even its opponents by interest or ideology see that there is no shaking it for the present. A revolutionary crisis begins when this critical mass is broken apart; it ends when some other coalition establishes a critical mass and the momentum of the new bandwagon becomes perceived as unstoppable.

In between these beginning and end points, the dynamics of the revolutionary situation consists in factional maneuvers to create alliances, sometimes by offering concessions in return for joint plans of action, sometimes by attempting to scare others into joining with them by fear of worse consequences if they do not.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, a faction loses out by a kind of reverse bandwagon effect, where they become perceived as incapable of winning power and no longer a focal point

for leading an alliance. One of the ways in which this happens is by undergoing splits that broadcast the weakness of the position.<sup>5</sup>

In this light, let us quickly review the progress of the 1905–6 Russian revolution. In 1904, the war with Japan became disastrous and confidence in the Tsarist regime plummeted. During the fall, liberals began to gather at private banquets and pass resolutions pressing for reform. In November, a congress of the *zemstvos* met to demand civil liberties and a parliament. In January 1905, demonstrators outside the Winter Palace were fired upon by troops, precipitating a mood of outrage and crisis. In response, the government offered several plans for a parliament (Duma) with limited popular representation, but these failed to quell the labor strikes, peasant rebellions and tax-resistance, military mutinies, and assassinations that swept the country throughout the remainder of the year. The mood darkened yet further in May when the Russian fleet was destroyed by the Japanese at the battle of Tsushima Straits. *Zemstvo* congresses met repeatedly in May, July, September and November to present liberal demands. By October, these troubles were compounded by national insurrection in the Ukraine, the Baltic, Poland and Finland, and by a general strike (12–21 October) set off by railway workers in Moscow and spreading rapidly to industry throughout the country. In the midst of this strike, the Prime Minister, Count Witte, persuaded the Tsar to issue a Manifesto conceding civil liberties and promising a legislative parliament with universal suffrage.

The Manifesto initiated the turning point; although agitation continued, with a general strike of workers in St Petersburg in November, and again in December in Moscow, the liberal reformers became split from the Marxists and the agrarian radicals. The December strike in Moscow escalated, under leadership of radical intellectuals, into full-scale revolutionary insurrection; this was easily put down by troops. Agitation (including widespread assassinations of officials, as well as peasant uprisings, which were put down in serious fighting) continued well into 1906; the mood of the country remained upset by counter-revolutionary lynch mobs promoted by officials (the ‘Black Hundreds’); by localized anti-Semitic pogroms in this inflammatory atmosphere; and by quarrels between the liberals and the government over the procedures by which the Duma was to be elected, and the scope of the powers which it was to have. The Duma finally met in April and eventually, having dashed liberal hopes, was prorogued by the Tsar. But now the crisis mood of fluid realignment was past, and the center of gravity swung back to the authorities, who eventually stamped out resistance.

During the upward swing of the revolutionary crisis, we see numerous examples of new organizations formed as alliances among smaller organizations. Thus in May 1905, a Union of Unions was formed, bringing together the liberal professional associations that had been springing up rapidly since the crisis had begun earlier in the year.<sup>6</sup> As the crisis mood intensified, this Union of Unions, which was initially looking for professional dignity and civil liberties, became increasingly radical; acting as a central meeting place and organ for liberal activists,

by the fall it was calling for union with the organs of the organized workers and the Peasant League into a 'General Union', and by November it was even endorsing armed revolt to establish a constituent assembly that Weber described as 'a monstrous central revolutionary tribunal' (1995a: 73). In effect it had taken over as the central organizing point from the *zemstvo* congresses, which were now being perceived as too moderate, weak or irresolute to push through reforms against the foot-dragging of the government.

Workers' organizations similarly mushroomed, and, for a period, centralized. In St Petersburg, a typographers' strike in September 1905 concerning their own labor conditions created a new organizational form, the Petrograd Council of Workers' Deputies. By October, the structure was, first, imitated by other types of workers, then amalgamated into a pan-workers' organization. When the general strike broke out on 15 October, this relatively small organization expanded to represent 113,000 workers within two days (1995b: 148–9). If this isn't example enough of how the crisis situation itself creates and expands organization,<sup>7</sup> there is also the dynamic of polarization that occurs as opposition is mobilized. Thus as the 'Black Hundreds' were stirred up to attack the workers in provincial cities across Russia, Councils of Workers' Deputies sprang up in numerous cities, and linked with the St Petersburg group by correspondence, thereby conceding its leadership by virtue of its centrality as a node of communications. As Weber commented, the counter-revolutionary attacks had the effect, at first, of 'demonstrating for all to see the need for the workers to stick firmly together' (1995b: 149).

Conflict produces solidarity. This is a well-known sociological principle (Coser, 1956); but it needs the proviso: *as long as the bandwagon effect is on its upward swing*, which is to say, as long as it appears that your coalition is growing and will be victorious. When the weakness of the coalition is publicly demonstrated and it appears that a rival coalition will be the victor, solidarity ebbs away. Weber provides materials to illustrate this too. Thus the alliance of the various insurgent organizations continued into fall 1905; with the Tsar's Manifesto in October, the moderates began to pull back from the radicals (although there were several months of uncertainty before it became clear that the Duma would indeed meet and on what terms), while government concession of civil liberties (temporary as it proved to be) allowed yet further groups to organize. In November the peasants made their boldest claim to national organization in the Socialist Revolutionary Peasant Congress meeting in Moscow (they had started with a smaller meeting of the Pan-Peasant Russian League in July). Escalating conflict increased both polarization *vis-à-vis* the government and alliances among insurgent groups. When the police arrested the board of the Peasant Congress for advocating tax obstruction, the remainder of the Congress allied with the Council of Workers' Deputies. Similarly, arrests of the leaders of the workers' councils and of the Union of Unions (who were advocating radical tactics such as bankrupting the government by rejecting all paper money and presenting all banknotes to be

cashed) pushed all these organizations into a projected grand alliance, and also into a tactical bid for complete power (Weber, 1995a: 73, 94; 1995b: 150). The response to the arrests was a general strike, which escalated into full-scale armed uprising in Moscow.

This now failed. The troops stood firm; the strike failed to spread beyond Moscow. Intended to eclipse the nation-wide general strike of October that finally brought concession of the Manifesto from the Tsar, this strike fell beneath it, palpably signaling the ebb of the revolutionary tide. The bulk of the liberals began to withdraw support from their own organizations, leaving the radicals in charge of their hulks. Weber acidly remarked: 'the present uprising in Moscow will be *very* beneficial to the discipline of the army' (1995a: 102). Nothing strengthens solidarity like victory at a showdown moment, passing the test of strength. Thereafter military mutinies (which had been concentrated mainly in the navy, the branch most badly defeated in the Japanese war) faded out, giving the government once again a reliable instrument that it used to crush the major challenges (the national/regional revolts and the peasant uprisings), although assassinations remained harder to eradicate and continued for some months.

I have sketched the rise and fall of organizational alliance among the insurgents. Let us add one example from the conservative side. The principal weakness of the Tsar, Weber forcefully argued (1995b: 176–8; 1995c: 244–5), was that the effectiveness of government organization was highest when he himself had least power of personal intervention in it. As long as the various government departments were 'a multitude of *Satrapies*' at odds with each other, the Tsar could intervene wherever he had the energy to do so; the alternative system, where all government reports are channeled through a council of ministers and passed by a Prime Minister, centralized power under the Prime Minister, and reduced the monarch to the power of veto of particular policies or of removing the PM. In a somewhat Machiavellian vein, Weber goes on to speculate that the Tsar would be better off if he had a constitutional regime,

. . . for then the bureaucracy could be dependent on the Monarch *against* Parliament and would have a *common interest* with him. Strange as it may sound, this would be the surest way for the Monarch to remain *de facto master* of the bureaucracy. (1995b: 178)

The Tsar's fatal weakness was his 'fatal insistence on *wanting to rule on his own*' (1995c: 244). Viewed in the light of our theoretical question of alliances and splits, the Tsar could control the bureaucracy only if it were internally split; but this weakness made it an ineffective instrument in relation to outside forces. The upshot of Weber's analysis is that, although reformers and revolutionists had weaknesses in keeping their alliance together, due above all to the transitory nature of the opportunity presented by a crisis situation, the autocracy also had its weakness in the form of a structural dilemma. In the long run, he reasoned, the

autocracy had to fall, because the structural split between personal rulership and effectively unified administration left it in a condition of ongoing agitation for reform, and vulnerable to any future crisis.

### (3) The significance and volatility of ideas

In his polemic against Marxism, Weber took frequent occasion to point out the importance of ideas as against material interests as a motive for political action. He refers to the altruism and commitment of upper-class liberal reformers, and indeed of the revolutionary intellectuals themselves (although viewing the latter as sect-like and dogmatic). Many of Weber's examples of the force of ideas come from the dynamics of alliance-making in the heat of multi-factional action. After describing how the December 1905 revolt had brought together a diverse coalition of organizations, he comments:

This example is evidence of what the power of an 'idea' which *unites* the classes, and the cooperation of broad strata of the bourgeoisie can achieve, and *how little* [the alleged material indispensibility of the workers] can achieve without that uncertainty in the established cadres of the existing social order which is brought about by such cooperation among bourgeois elements. (1995b: 150)

But a close reading shows that 'the idea' Weber is talking about is really an emergent mood, not so much an idea about what reforms are to be carried out, as the uncertainty of where the future of power lies; Weber himself says as much in this very passage.

Other cases of altruism, action in the defense of ideals, can be analyzed more deeply by locating them in the dynamics of crisis, the breakdown of authority and the bandwagon swings of mobilization. A characteristic pattern is the 'atrocities': that is, the situation in which the authorities use violence against protestors, which backfires because it mobilizes large numbers of sympathizers and erodes the regime's own supporters. Such was the case after 'the slaughter of 9/22 January [i.e. dating by old and new calendrical systems]' 1905, when, as Weber notes, the government was thrown on the defensive by its gunning down of petitioners at the Winter Palace, and sought to conciliate its outraged opponents by calling for representation by workers' deputies (1995a: 69). It thereby put itself another step down the slippery slope by encouraging its opponents to form organizations, which became vehicles for still more radical actions. One could say there is a general force to the moral ideal not to use violence against good people, and this constrains the government and mobilizes opponents, even causing conservatives to switch over to the liberal side. This happens regularly in any successful protest movement.

But just what sociological principle does it illustrate? The trouble with invoking the power of the idea/moral principle *per se* is that its influence is highly

situational. On other occasions, there can be even greater slaughter of protesters for a good cause (e.g. the large number of casualties and arbitrary executions of lightly armed students and workers in Moscow in December 1905 [Weber, 1995b: 151]), without comparable outcry of sympathizers and guilty offering of concessions by perpetrators. The difference is in the swing of momentum in the making and unmaking of alliances. Where the authorities are visibly falling apart in their response to crisis and thereby encouraging organization of their opponents, atrocities are widely perceived and moral ideals are strongly invoked; but where a test of strength has been undergone and the insurgents are becoming isolated, what happens to them becomes regarded as their just deserts, or at any rate moral outrage becomes privatized and eventually fades away into indifference.

It is the same in the case of procedural 'atrocities', when authorities go back on their word, or withdraw concessions previously offered. During the upswing of insurgent organization (and its correlate splintering of authority and its supporters), whatever the government does is seen as either outrage or weakness; during the downswing the scope of organization is narrowing within which outrage is felt against the same kinds of government acts (or indeed much worse). At these times, their outrage does not resonate outwards, and does not recruit more supporters; although it might still be emotionally very intense within the circles of the committed militants, those circles are becoming isolated. This explains those tragic manifestations of hopeless revolutionary courage when those within these narrow circles mistake their own feelings for those that were once more widely shared in the glory days of protest when the circle was widening.

We can improve on Weber's formulation for the importance of 'ideas'. Revolutionaries and liberals (and indeed conservatives) are intensely attuned to ideas; but ideas are not static, thing-like entities standing outside of situations, but are a mode of social action, communication within situations. This has nothing to do with whether or not the revolutionary orator is sincere; at the moment s/he is making the impassioned speech, what is significant as a sociological explanation is whether the network of listeners feels that it is expanding and making connections outwards, or, on the contrary, that it is losing contact and becoming isolated, as well as various situations in between these extremes that comprise the maneuvering for allies during the course of a political crisis. The content of ideas is important above all as points of reference around which their holders (and listeners) can estimate to what extent these views will be shared in the networks around them. Instead of just seeing ideas *per se*, as sociologists of revolution we ought to see ideas as rallying points for organizations: both organizations already existing and the all-important prospective and emergent organizations that are the vehicles of alliance in a political crisis.

This correspondence between ideas and the social structure (current or projected) of the revolutionary movement is illustrated by Weber himself. In discussing the various factions of populist radicals, he notes:

Where it is a question of 'ideals', one must *centralize*, and only where the interests of the mass, which recognizes no ideals, are directly concerned, should the local associations have control. With this Jacobin idea, well-known from the history of the French 'Convention' . . . [a populist ideologue] makes a pragmatic defence of the all-powerful state: a worrying foretaste of the *centralist-bureaucratic* path which Russia could all too easily take, under the influence of radical theoreticians. (1995a: 89)

We can reformulate: a radical political movement, arising in circumstances where the entire regime is in crisis and palpably up for reorganization, and living in an organizational milieu that consists of militants whose whole life-activities are devoted to politics, is just the kind of group that would raise its commitment to political ideas to the extreme; and such a group becomes committed to the type of government organization, should it become successful, that enables it to put its ideas into practice. The more universalistic the ideas, the more uniform their application, and hence the more centralized the authority structure they favor. On the whole, this was an excellent prediction on Weber's part as to the long-term structural possibilities of the Russian Revolution.

#### **(4) Geopolitics and foreign policy**

Geopolitical strains are a prime mover in the contemporary state-breakdown theory of revolution. Although Weber was an inspiration for this theory, his attention in analyzing the Russian revolutions was concentrated on organizational and constitutional questions, and he brings in the geopolitical side only occasionally. What he does say, however, casts further light on how geopolitical and foreign influences play into the domestic situation.

First of all, Weber stresses the importance of an intact military in preventing revolution. Writing while events were still up in the air early in 1906, he stated:

If even a tenth of the officer corps and the troops remain at the disposal of the government – and the fraction would be likely to be closer to nine-tenths – then any number of rebels would be powerless against them. (1995a: 103)

In a footnote he went on: 'Only in the tragic event of a *European* war would the autocracy finally be destroyed' (1995a: 142). (By the stress he apparently meant that the primarily naval war against Japan did not qualify as sufficiently debilitating to military discipline.) On the whole, this was one of Weber's better predictions.

Writing in the spring of 1917, as it was becoming true, he saw a more mixed situation. The bourgeoisie would certainly not be strengthened just because of their financial and industrial indispensability, he wrote, since

*How* this [liberalization] would ever happen if autocracy and bureaucracy had emerged with tremendous prestige from the war, by means of a victory over us, remained mysterious. It would only have been possible as the result of a crushing defeat. . . . For all that, revolution appeared extremely improbable. . . . The fact that the revolution has come after all is due, as well as to the success of our weapons, to the *purely personal conduct of the Tsar*. (1995c: 244)

Thus not only does national identification hinge upon the power-prestige of the state in the world arena (ES: 922–6), but so does the specific prestige of a ruler and a style of rule. However, Weber sees these geopolitical conditions as playing into what for him was the more significant domestic situation, above all the issue of the personal intrusions of the monarch upsetting the smooth working of the government, which I have reformulated earlier as the more general issue of splits and alliances; in this case, the position of the monarch splits his supporters and drives a significant proportion of the conservatives into the camp of reform.

Weber goes on to connect the short-term dynamics of military logistical strain to the boiling-up of a crisis point. Since the Tsar overrides legal, regularized bureaucracy, his only instrument of rule is violent intervention by the police to check dissent; his reliance on police power even against the liberal administrators of the *zemstvo* brought about a situation, Weber declared, in which ‘the economic provision of the country and of the capital was sure to be brought to a complete standstill’ (1995c: 247). The combination of this domestic paralysis ‘added to the failure of the Russian railway system resulting from the demands of [provisioning the Russian army in] the Romanian campaign,<sup>8</sup> led directly to the outbreak of revolt’ – that is, it led to the shortage of bread even in Moscow, prompting the women’s demonstrations in January 1917, and a crisis of authority resembling January 1905, but this time leading to the abdication of the Tsar in the face of overwhelming opposition from all strata of society.

The revolution of 1917 did not end here, with the establishment of a parliamentary regime. Weber, writing in late April, was clear-sighted enough to call it, in his title, a ‘pseudo-democracy’, and he speculated about what would be its fate. As we know in retrospect, the decision of the Provisional Government to resume fighting, coupled with crushing military defeat in late summer, led to disintegration of the troops, and the swing of support to the Bolshevik-dominated Councils (Soviets) promising an end to the war. Weber saw the issue, but put stress on the circumstance that the government was in financial straits and could not keep itself going by paying its own civil servants without bank credit; and this credit depended upon foreign loans from Britain and America, the very allies who insisted on Russia resuming the war. This contrasted with the situation in 1905, when liberal foreign powers prodded the Tsar into the Manifesto offering a form of parliamentary representation.<sup>9</sup> Here Weber adumbrates another piece of the state-breakdown theory: the fiscal crisis of government administration that ushers

in the revolutionary situation. But he connects it not so much with the costs of the war itself, as with the vulnerability of the government to direction from whatever policy is favored from its foreign bankers: it is a historical accident as to whether those bankers and their associated governments want to encourage reforms (in 1905) or to oppose them (in 1917).

With the wisdom of hindsight, we can draw a lesson that Weber did not: foreign bankers can try to impose their will, but they don't always get what they want. In 1905–6, they hoped to encourage parliamentary democracy, but this did not go very far, and the result was what Weber himself called 'pseudo-constitutionalism', leaving the autocratic structures in place that led to the crisis of 1917. In 1917, Weber noted, the majority of the Russian populace, the peasants, had an objective interest in cancellation of Russia's foreign debts, since it was their grain that had to be exported to pay the interest, and they were 'highly taxed in order to force them to sell' (1995c: 249). But in Weber's view, this added another reason why neither the foreign bankers nor the landowning interests wanted an end to the war: the political representatives of the peasants could take power only if peace were concluded:

*For only then would the peasants even be at home and available. . . . Thus in order to keep the peasants away from their homes, they [bankers and landowners] are absolutely in favour of prolonging the war for its own sake. . . . Only in this way can . . . the mass of the peasants be held in the trenches under the control of the generals. (1995c: 249)*

Weber thus attributes to bankers and conservatives a rather Machiavellian reasoning for continuing the war. What he did not pay sufficient attention to was what has become a key point in the state-breakdown theory: that military defeat, when combined with fiscal crisis and splits among the elites, destroys the structure of the state and opens the way to whoever can organize a sufficiently unified coalition to constitute a new center of authority. The bankers outsmarted themselves (if indeed they were conscious of what they were doing), and the events of fall 1917 were the consequence.

## **(5) Weber's predictions and revolutionary structural change**

The scorecard of Weber's predictions about Russia is mixed. Obviously it is not easy to predict in the midst of a volatile revolutionary situation, and Weber is often admirable in the way in which he brings his analytical apparatus to bear on what are inevitable points of contention that set the alternatives and the organizational structures that will be decisive no matter what. The main structural problems are: first, as we have already seen, the impossibility of long continuing

personal rule by an autocrat in a world of bureaucratic administration. This is implied in the evolutionary-sounding terms of Weber's titles: the 'Transition to Pseudo-Constitutionalism', and its sub-heading, 'Completing the Bureaucratization of the Autocracy' (characterizing the structural changes of 1905–6); and the 'Transition to Pseudo-Democracy' (for early 1917). As of April of that year, Weber saw everything still hanging in the balance:

*So far, there has been no 'revolution' but merely 'the removal' of an incompetent monarch. . . . At least half of the real power is in the hands of purely monarchist circles, who are only going along with the present 'republican' sham because, to their regret, the monarch has not stayed within the necessary restraints of his power. (1995c: 252)*

Second, a crucial problem of economic class conflict remained. The peasants could not be kept under control – above all if they were allowed full political franchise, which would give them predominant weight in a true parliamentary regime – without expropriation and redistribution of non-peasant land; and the question of how to pay for this expropriation would lead to 'hopeless conflict with the bourgeois landowners' (1995c: 249). 'These difficulties could only be resolved by means of a Socialist Revolutionary *dictatorship* lasting for years' (1995c: 249). (Here, Weber is using the term 'Socialist Revolutionary' in a proper sense as the name of the party of agrarian populists.) This is inconsistent with Weber's prediction, some years earlier, that the growth of capitalism in Russia would end populist radicalism and replace it with Marxist radicalism (1995a: 107–8). Weber himself tacitly underlined the latter position by noting that workers' councils had become the organizing centers of the insurgencies, both in 1905 and in 1917.<sup>10</sup> So although Weber was still thinking of the agrarian radicals as a likely candidate for dictatorship, the Marxists could even more obviously play that role. But as things hung in the balance, he thought yet another possibility most likely: a reactionary dictatorship, probably by the military.<sup>11</sup>

The upshot of these predictions was that Weber expected the course of revolutionary crisis in Russia would tend not towards constitutionalism and bourgeois democracy, but towards dictatorship. This could happen from the right, as an armed suppression of the possibility of carrying out land reforms in the interests of the mass of peasants; it could also happen from the left, both because the radicals would also need dictatorship to overcome the conflict of class interests opposing land reform, and (as we noted earlier) because of the affinity of a social movement of militant idealists with centralized bureaucracy to impose their ideals thoroughly upon society.<sup>12</sup>

Against this trend towards undemocratic bureaucracy, Weber saw only unique historical accidents and ideal values 'emerging from the concrete historical peculiarity of a certain religious thought world' (1995a: 109); the hurried list he

gives of these historical factors does not add up to coherent theory of democracy.

For the medium run of history, Weber's predictive analysis is moderately impressive. By underplaying the influence of geopolitical conditions, he missed seeing the short-term shift just ahead of him: that the resumption of the war would bring not just the downfall of the Provisional Government but also the victory of the Marxian socialists. But he certainly had them on his short-list of candidates for dictatorial power, and he accurately predicted the character of their regime. Weber's vision, both in 1906 and in 1917, was like Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, published some 30 years later (in 1949). Once the bureaucratic dictatorship was in place, it was an iron cage that could never be cracked. As it turned out, both history and sociological theory have gone on in a more complicated direction. The state-breakdown theory, which developed around 1980, offered a successful prediction of the scenario that would undermine even this most extreme form of bureaucratic authoritarianism (Collins, 1986). This theory was in important respects a descendant of certain points of Weber's political sociology. Skocpol (1979) called her own state-centered theory of revolution 'left Weberian', as a reformulation of Marxian topics within a Weberian emphasis on the centrality of the state and its internal and geopolitical dynamics. My own geopolitically based predictive scheme (Collins, 1986) was put forward under a 'neo-Weberian' rubric, since its leading principle is that the legitimacy of rule is a variable affected by the power-prestige of the state in the inter-state arena, and thus by the variables of geopolitical strength and weakness.

Weber himself did not analyze in these ways the revolutions that he witnessed. He was too concerned to polemicize against Marxism, and at the same time still too tied to a frame of analysis he shared with Marxism, which focused on the line-up of preexisting interests battling it out over which structure was to prevail. We are now inclined to see revolution more in terms of situational dynamics that break apart coalitions and put others in their place, creating new interests out of the organizational opportunities that emerge along the way.

But even here Weber had an inkling of what was afoot. In ES, noting the similarities between revolutionary conflict in the medieval Italian cities and early Rome, he commented:

It is a fact, after all, that only a limited variety of different administrative techniques is available for effecting compromises between the status groups within a city. Similarities in the forms of political administration can therefore not be interpreted as identical superstructures over identical economic foundations. These things obey their own laws. (ES: 1309)

Interpreted broadly, 'their own laws' are the principles of alliances and splits that make up the structure of opportunities in the field of political action, and explain the dynamics of revolution.

## Notes

1. This should remind us that the entire chapter 'The City' is not so much urban sociology, in the sense that the field has become constituted, but part of his sociology of political communities and domination.
2. Weber gives several examples. Discussing the leftist revolutionaries, he compares their splits and bitter recriminations to persecutions that took place among Dutch Calvinists against their own Arminian heretics, which, he notes, were worse than their persecutions of Catholics or Baptists. He comments scornfully 'sectarians are like men of the cloth' (1995a: 132–3). Similarly on the far right: in the 1917 revolution, the Tsar preferred not to be rescued even by sharing power with the conservative aristocracy in a parliamentary regime, that is, with monarchists who had decided the only tactical path possible was by taking over the movement for reform (1995c: 247); just as in 1905 'court circles and the civil service would rather do a deal with the devil than with *zemstvo* liberalism' (1995a: 107).
3. I have made an analogous argument in regard to how intellectual life proceeds through emergent or (if you like) 'opportunistic' patterns of disputes and alliances among intellectual positions, an ongoing structure of intellectual opportunities opening up and closing off inside a limited attention space (Collins, 1998).
4. A normal electoral politics version of this dynamic is the 'lesser evil' argument: in the US case, the Greens may not like moderate Democrats, but by staying independent they will take votes from the latter and in effect give votes to conservative Republicans. Virtually all of politics is a version of the 'lesser evil' maneuver.
5. Sometimes, however, a faction may split in order to maintain radical tactics; and this may enable them, in a situation down the road, to put themselves at the head of a still larger coalition. These are complexities to be examined elsewhere.
6. The Union of Unions consisted of  

. . . lawyers, doctors, engineers, journalists, booksellers, primary school teachers, middle school teachers, agriculturalists, statisticians, pharmacists, veterinary surgeons, and also state civil servants. . . . There were also insurance employees, clerks, and actors, as well as representatives of women's and of Jewish rights organizations. . . . There was even an appeal by police officers from Moscow, calling for the 'comrades' to organize. (1995a: 70–1)
7. It also foreshadows similar mass constituencies springing up overnight, as in the Bolshevik-dominated assemblies of 1917.
8. 'The famine occurred simply because the Russian railways were unavailable for civil purposes on account of the demands made on them by the extension of the front due to the Romanian campaign' (1995c: 248).
9. 'Without the warning from foreign financiers – not in so many words but by implication – the Manifesto of 17 October would perhaps never have been issued or at least would soon have been revoked. Fear of the rage of the masses and of the mutiny of the troops, would have been ineffective had not the autocracy been at the mercy of the cool, hard hand of the banks and stock exchanges' (1995a: 102).
10. As of the spring of 1917, Weber already noted that the bourgeois liberals, once the Tsar was deposed and not replaced by another more liberal monarchy, were forced 'to look to the

*proletariat*, whose power was indispensable in the struggle against the Tsar' (1995c: 247). That is to say, they were indispensable not because they were anything close to a sizable fraction of the populace, but because they were so obviously central organizationally in the political struggles in St Petersburg and Moscow, and because they could exercise a paralyzing influence through their control of the unions of railway, postal and telegraph workers (1995c: 248). Weber refers to the Council of Workers and Soldiers as 'a de facto secondary government' alongside the official Provisional Government (1995d: 262). This was Trotsky's prime example of 'dual power'. Kerensky, who in the spring Weber viewed as the leading radical member of the Provisional Government (as leader of the Socialist Revolutionaries, i.e. the agrarian populists), had not yet risen to head of government; at this time he was also connected to the Workers' Soviet, which indeed served him as a counterweight to the monarchists. It was on this play of perceived alliances that Kerensky for a while came to gather all the reins of administrative power in the Provisional Government.

11. 'It is . . . very unlikely that an open or disguised military dictatorship can be permanently kept at bay, *if the war continues*' (1995c: 248). A few pages later, Weber qualifies this slightly as a dictatorship in the interest of capitalists:

Only a tiny proportion (of money from foreign banks) is used in the struggle against the Central Powers. The great mass of it is used to consolidate the domination of the country by capitalist interests and those representing the propertied Russian intelligentsia. One element in the consolidation is the creation of an army which will be as reliable for the bourgeois regime as the Tsar's Black Gangs were for him. It is designed to be used *primarily* against *internal* enemies. . . . What is also necessary to achieve this is the *arrest* of all those people whom the peasants are capable of influencing in their favour. These are the same means that the Tsar's regime employed. These arrests have already begun. (1995c: 254)

12. In the background of both predictions is Weber's long-standing worry that the world was tending towards subjugation under bureaucracy. In 1906 he wrote:

'Democracy' and 'individualism' would stand little chance today if we were to rely for their 'development' on the 'automatic' effect of *material* interests. For these point as clearly as they can in the opposite direction. Whether in the shape of American 'benevolent feudalism', the German 'welfare institutions', or the Russian factory constitution – everywhere the empty shell for new serfdom stands ready; it will be occupied to the degree that the pace of technical-economic 'progress' slows down and the victory of 'income' over 'profit', together with the exhaustion of what remains of 'free' lands and the 'free' markets, renders the masses 'compliant'.

At the same time, the growing complexity of the economy, partial nationalization or 'municipalization', and the size of national territory, creates ever new paper work, further specialization and administrative training – which means the creation of a caste. Those American workers who were *against* 'Civil Service Reform' knew what they were doing. They would rather be governed by upstarts of dubious morality than by a class of professional mandarins – but their protest was in vain. (1995a: 108)

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