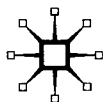


Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society

**New Translations on Politics,
Bureaucracy, and Social Stratification**

Edited and Translated by
Tony Waters and Dagmar Waters

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WEBER'S RATIONALISM AND MODERN SOCIETY
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First published in 2015 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

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ISBN: 978-1-137-37353-3

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Waters, Tony.

Weber's rationalism and modern society : new translations on
politics, bureaucracy, and social stratification / edited by
Tony Waters, Dagmar Waters.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-137-37353-3 (hardback)

1. Sociology—History. 2. Economics. 3. Weber, Max,
1864-1920—Political and social views. I. Waters, Tony.
II. Waters, Dagmar. III. Title.

HM435.W38 2015

301—dc23

2014037608

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: April 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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cians occupy themselves with the unanswerable question of "who is responsible for the guilt of the past?"

If there is such a thing as political guilt,⁵⁵ then it exists in the context of a preoccupation with the question of responsibility for the past. After all, they not only occupy themselves with the wrong question, they also overlook the unavoidable distortion of the problem by mighty material interests.

The victor's interest is to gain the highest possible profit (morally and materially), while the defeated hope to gain favors through admission of guilt. If there is anything vile in this world, then it is how such ethics are used.

It is a direct consequence of equating and using "ethic" as a means of "being right."

b. The Relationship between Ethics and Politics

So what is the true relationship between ethics and politics?

Some say, they do not have anything in common. But is this true in the end?

Or is the opposite the case? Is there one valid ethic that applies to political as well as any other action?

At times people were convinced that only one assumption is possible (i.e., one is correct, so the other has to be wrong).

But does this hold true?

Is it possible that one can put together the same set of moral requirements for erotic and business relationships, family and ministerial relations, and for the relationship with your wife, the greengrocer, the son, the competitor, the friend, or the defendant at the same time?

But is it really true that for the ethical demands on politics it does not matter if politics was a specific means? Power, which is always backed by violence?

Is it not obvious that, when Bolshevnik and Spartacist ideologues who use the same means of politics, they will bring about the same results as any military dictator? What distinguishes the *Herrschaft* of the workers council or soldiers council from any other wielders of power of the old regimes, other than the personality of the powerholders and their diletantism? What distinguishes the polemics used by most of the agents who represent the supposedly new ethic, even against their opponents, from the polemic used by any other demagogue?

"It is their noble intention!" the answer might be.

Very well, then.

But we are speaking of the powerholders' means. The fighting opponents always claim for themselves the noble intent of their goals, and they claim this with total but subjective truthfulness.

But, "Those that live by the sword die by the sword," because war is everywhere.

Does that mean the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount?⁵⁶

The Sermon on the Mount refers to the absolute ethic of the Gospel. This is a more serious matter than those who like to quote these commandments today believe, and are not to be taken lightly.

Such ethics are similar to what is said about causality in science: the Ethics of the Sermon on the Mount [and causality in science] are not like a hackney carriage you can stop at will to get in or off [by simply telling the driver]. But rather the ethics of The Sermon on the Mount is about all or nothing. That's the meaning if something other than trivialities shall result.

For example, the rich youth: "he went away sad, because he was extremely rich."

The commandment of the Gospel is unconditional and clear: Give away what you own—absolutely everything!⁵⁷

But a politician will retort: From a social point of view, the Gospel's command is senseless and unacceptable, as long as this command is not forced onto everybody; [and the only way for it to apply to everybody is to exert force]. This means: taxation, customs checkpoints, confiscations—frankly speaking, coercion and order for everyone.

The nature of an ethical command is that it doesn't contemplate consequences.

Or, for example "turn to him the other cheek also!"⁵⁸

[This command is to be understood] unconditionally and without asking why the other one is allowed to smite, strike, or hit.

This is an ethic of indignity—except for a saint.

That's the key—The Leader [*Führer*] has to be a saint, at least that should be his intent. He has to live like Jesus, the Apostles, St. Francis of Assisi, or people like them. Only then is this kind of ethic meaningful and an expression of dignity.

Otherwise, forget it! [Without this context, this kind of ethic does not make sense].

If this is so, this transcendental acosmic⁵⁹ ethic of love consequently calls for not resisting evil with violence. The opposite holds true for the politician. For him, the command applies "you shall resist evil with force [*Gewalt*]"—otherwise you are responsible for evil when it gets out of hand.

A person who wants to act accordingly to the ethic of the Gospel, should not join the "yellow unions"⁶⁰ and participate in strikes, because strikes are coercive. First and foremost, however, he should not talk "revolution." Because the ethic [of love] does certainly not teach that civil war is the only legitimate war.

The pacifist who acts accordingly to the Gospel and refuses to carry, or even throws away weapons, is described as having an ethical obligation to end the war, and ultimately for ending war for good.⁶¹

But, the politician retorts: The only secure way of discrediting war for the foreseeable future would be a "status quo" peace.

Then, the nations would have asked: What has the war been good for?

[As a result], the war would have been reduced to absurdity, which is now not possible.

But for the winners of the war, at least for some of them, the war certainly paid off in terms of political influence. This interest in political influence was responsible for the fact that any resistance was made impossible for us [the Germans]. Now the peace will be discredited and not the war after the time of war-fatigue has passed. And this is the time of consequence for the ethics of moral conviction [*Gesinnungsethik*], which is an absolute ethic.

Finally, we come to the "duty to truthfulness," which is indispensable for "absolute ethics."

Therefore based on this absolute ethic, one person⁶² concluded to publish all documents, especially those that incriminated our own country, and especially the one-sided publications, which confessed guilt unconditionally and without regard for the consequences. The problem is that the politician will find, if this confession is successful, the truth is not promoted but obscured by misuse and the unleashing of passion. He will find that only an all-around systematic assessment by neutrals could come to fruition. Any other approach taken by the nation may produce consequences which are irreversible and irreparable for decades to come. But an absolute ethic is not concerned with the consequences it may cause.

This is the crucial point.

XVI. Political Ethics and the Anticipation of Consequences

We have to understand that every ethically-oriented action can be divided into two entirely different, irresolvably opposed maxims: an

ethical action can be based on an "ethic of moral convictions" that does not contemplate the consequences of the actions based on the decision [*Gesinnungsethik*], or it can be based on ethics of responsibility, in which consequences for the ordered actions are anticipated and full responsibility is taken [*Verantwortungsethik*].

This does not mean the ethics of moral convictions is identical with irresponsibility, and that the ethics of responsibility is void of ideology. None of this is true, and no one can say that. However, it is an abysmal contrast, if one acts on the ethics of moral convictions; religiously speaking, this means: "The disciple of Christ does the right thing but the outcome is left to the discretion of God." Or one acts on the ethics of responsibility; this means that one is responsible for the foreseeable consequences of one's actions.

For example, you might present to a syndicalist, who acts according to the ethics of moral convictions [*Gesinnungsethik*] in a very pragmatic and convincing fashion, that the consequences of his actions are going to increase the exploitation of his class [and] will hinder its rise. Nevertheless, this reasoning will make no impression at all on the syndicalist.

[The convention with this type of reasoning] is that the consequences of such an act resulting from a purely ideological conviction are evil, so this cannot be blamed on the one who is acting; rather, the world is to be blamed for the evil consequences, the stupidity of the other people, or it must be the will of God who created them that way.

On the other hand, the politician who believes in and acts on the ethics of responsibility [*Verantwortungsethik*], expects these normal defects of men. He knows that he has, like Fichte [the German idealist philosopher] said correctly, no right to assume kindness and perfection in man. And he thinks that he has no right to blame the foreseeable consequences of his own actions on others.

He will take responsibility for his actions and its consequences. But the politician who ascribes to the ethics of moral conviction feels only "responsible" for preventing the flame of true belief from being extinguished, for example, the protests against the injustice of the social order. Thus, to constantly fuel the flame of belief is the purpose of his actions. If one wants to evaluate these actions in the light of their success, they are totally irrational, but these actions can only have, and should only have, "exemplary value."

However, even with this [assertion], the problem has not been solved.

Every ethic in the world has to grapple with the fact of collateral damage. In reality, the fact is that a good and right outcome is in many

cases chained to dangerous and ethically questionable means. One has also to accept the possibility or even probability of unintended consequences. Furthermore, no ethic in the world can make the call when and to what extent the morally good purpose justifies the morally dangerous means, thereby sanctifying mediocre successes because "the ends justify the means."

For politics, the crucial means is coercive power, which inherently implies a tension between means and purpose from an ethical point of view. How great this tension is can be seen in the example of the revolutionary socialists (Zimmerwalder⁶³ school of thought) who, as everyone knows, are committed to the following principle already during the war:

If we have the choice to choose between either a few more years of war, and then a revolution, or peace right now and no revolution, we would choose a few more years of war! [This is a good example of the ethically questionable assumption that "The ends justify the means."]

The next question we have to ask is, "What would the results of such a [Zimmerwalder] revolution be?" Every scientifically schooled socialist would answer the question in this fashion: The revolution would not produce an economy that could be called socialistic, but [just] another bourgeois economy would emerge, which might only be able to eliminate the leftover feudal elements and dynastic remains.

Imagine listeners, for this modest result, they would accept "a few more years of war"!

We surely should conclude that this kind of evil means needs to be rejected, even if we carry substantial socialist convictions.

The case is the same with the Bolsheviks and Spartacists and, as a matter of fact, with any form of revolutionary socialism. And it is downright silly and ridiculous when the "power politicians" of the old regime are criticized and morally rejected for applying the same means, even though it should have been their goals, which should have been rejected and justifiably so. Sanctifying the means by its purpose seems the pivotal point at which ethics of moral conviction [*Gesinnungsethik*] have to fail.

And indeed the ethics of moral conviction [*Gesinnungsethik*] have logically only one option: to reject any action that uses ethically dangerous means. This is the only logical consequence.

But in the real world, we experience over and over again the "politician of ideological convictions whose beliefs are based on moral convictions [*Gesinnungspolitiker*]," but suddenly and inevitably turns into a

millenarian prophet. For example, we see those who have just preached "love instead of violence," in the next moment, they call out for violence. They are calling for the "last violence," which will then lead to the final destruction of all violence—just like our militaries told their soldiers at the beginning of every military offensive: they promised it would be the last. The offensive would bring the victory and final peace. The person who believes in this ethic of moral conviction [*Gesinnungsethiker*] cannot endure the ethical irrationality of the world. He is strictly a "rationalist" who believes in an ethic that has no transcendent dimensions.⁶⁴

Those who know Doestoevsky will remember the scene with the Grand Inquisitor. There the problem is described in detail.⁶⁵ The example shows that it is not possible to ethically discredit ethics of moral conviction [*Geinnungsethik*] and ethics of responsibility [*Verantwortungsethik*] or bring them together under one hat, because the question remains: which purpose should sanctify which means? [Another way to frame this question is to ask] whether one should give this principle a chance at all, or if one should make any concessions based on it.

The respected colleague, F. W. Förster [1869–1966],⁶⁶ who I personally have high esteem for because of the unquestionable sincerity of his convictions but who I certainly rejected as a politician, asserts in his book a simple thesis about how to get around this [ethical] difficulty.

Förster writes: "Of goodness can only come good, but evil follows from evil." Based on this assertion, the whole set of problems does not exist. But it is amazing that such a thesis could still see the light of the world 2,500 years after the [Holy Hindu] *Upanishads*⁶⁷ asserted the same. Not only the whole course of world history, but also every wholehearted examination of everyday experiences reveals that the opposite is true. Indeed, the development of all the religions in the world is based on the assumption (i.e., that the opposite is true).

The ancient unanswered question about theocracy deals with this: How does it come, that a "Higher Power," which is presented as both all-powerful and benevolent, can create such an irrational world of undeserved suffering, of unpunished injustice, and incorrigible stupidity? This Higher Power can only be one or the other, or alternatively completely different calculations of compensation and retribution principles rule life. Such principles may be interpreted metaphysically or they evade our interpretation forever.

This ancient and unanswered question, that is, experience of the world's irrationality, has been the driving force for the development of all religions. The Indian Karma doctrine, Persian dualism, Original Sin, predestination, as well as the *Deus absconditus* (Hidden God), all these

developed out of this experience with irrationality. Even the ancient Christian knew full well that demons reign in the world, and that whoever engages in politics, engages with power and violence [*Gewalt*] as a means, and therefore necessarily makes a pact with diabolical powers. And moreover, he knows that this holds true for his actions, that only good can come from good and evil from evil. But often, the contrary is true. He who does not realize this is indeed like a child in politics.

The religious ethic did, in effect, resign us to the fact that we [as people] find ourselves in varied and different walks of life; and therefore, we also submit to and are put under different laws [depending on what we were born into]. The religious ethics also develop different mechanisms to deal with this fact.

For example, the Hellenic polytheism sacrificed to Aphrodite, to Hera, to Dionysus, as well as Apollo, even though they knew that the gods were always in conflict with each other.

The Hindus ordered life by the work they do. Every work group becomes the subject matter to special ethical laws, a "Dharma," and thereby separated forever into caste system with a well-developed fixed status hierarchy. Nobody who was born into this system had a way out, except through rebirth into the next life. This separated the people and put them into specific groups defined by their spiritual status, which reflected the varying proximity to the highest "spiritual good."

Thus, it was possible to develop and perfect a Dharma code for every single caste from the ascetic and Brahmans, to the rogues and prostitutes, by using inherent legality for every type of professional work [*Beruf*].

Even war and politics is subsumed into this caste system. In the *Bhagavadgita*, you can see how war was integrated into the entirety of the caste code, especially in the discussion between Krishna and Arjuna.

There it says, "Do what is necessary." That means do the "work" following the Dharma of the war caste, do your duty, and follow the regulations. In this kind of belief, the work of war does not damage religious salvation; rather, it serves salvation.

In [this cosmology] and in case of a heroic death, the Indian warrior was assured to get to Indra's heaven, like the Germanic warrior was assured entry to Valhalla [home of the fallen warrior.]

Nevertheless, but notably so, the Indian warrior would have spurned Nirvana as much as the Germanic warrior would have spurned the Christian paradise with its choirs of angels. This kind of specialization in ethics made it possible for the Indian system to create its own political laws by following the nature of its own inherent and autonomous laws of politics. It was only this specificity that made this radical treatment

of this royal art possible.⁶⁸ The truly radical Macchiavelianism, in the popular sense of the word, had already been represented in the Indian literature, in the Kautilya Arthashastra.⁶⁹ And in comparison with the Indian version, Macchiavelli's prince is harmless, even benign.

Within the Catholic ethics, to which Professor Förster relates to closely, exist a specialized form of ethics, the "*consilia evangelica*," which is an ethic that specifically applies to those gifted with a charismatic holy life. In the "*consilia evangelica*," the monk who is not allowed to shed blood or make money, stands next to the pious knight and citizen of whom one is allowed to do the one thing, and another one is allowed to do something else, similar to the Indian system. But the difference between the two ethical systems is that gradation of the hierarchal system of ethics found in India, and its integration into a systematic body of doctrines of salvation, was less consequent in the Christian tradition than in the Indian. This was not only possible, but it had to be this way, because of the premises of the Christian belief.

For example, the depravity of the world by the Original Sin, made it possible to incorporate violence into ethics as a disciplinary means against sin, and against heretics who endangered their own souls and those of others. Within the pure moral convictions [*Gesinnungsethischen*] and transcendental postulations of the Sermon on the Mount, and based in religious natural law, was an absolute demand that sustained their revolutionary power. As a result, almost during all times of social upheaval, law as a fundamental and inexorable force resurfaced. These beliefs in particular created radical-pacifistic sects. One of them set up an experiment in Pennsylvania. They organized a state without explicit structures for external violence. Tragically, the pacifist Quakers were not allowed to bear arms to defend their "ideal" pacifistic state when the American War of Independence broke out [in 1775].

In contrast, middle-of-the-road Protestantism legitimized the state as such; in other words, it legitimated the means of violence. It further recognized the state as a godly institution with absolute authority and, specifically, the authoritarian governance. In this way, Luther⁷⁰ relieved the people from their personal "ethic of responsibility" for war, and shifted this ethical responsibility to "the authorities." This meant that for the people to obey the authorities in all matters, except that of faith, they would never become guilty [in the eyes of God] by obeying the government.

In contrast, Calvinism recognized the use of violence [*Gewalt*] as a means to defend its belief, thus the Holy War was, from the beginning, an element of life as it was also in Islam from the start.

This shows that it was not modern disbelief which was not [simply] born from an altruistic hero worship of the Renaissance which raised the problem of political ethics. All religions have struggled [with such ethical questions], with highly varied results. And after all what we have discussed, it could not have been otherwise, because the specific use of legitimated violence in the hand of human organizations is, by its very nature, what causes the specific features of all ethical problems found in politics. Whoever makes a pact with the means of violence for whichever purpose, and every politician does so, is completely and utterly at the mercy of violence's consequences. This applies particularly, and to a large extent, to the "Holy" Warrior, be he a warrior of a religious or the revolutionary kind.

Let us look at the present for an example!

Anybody who wants to establish "absolute justice" on earth by the means of violence needs followers, a human "apparatus." He has to hold out to these followers the prospect of inner [psychological] and outer [material] rewards. They can be of heavenly or earthly nature, otherwise the apparatus does not work.

Let's look at the inner rewards first.

In case of modern class warfare [such as that of the Bolsheviks and Spartacists], it brings satisfaction of hate and vengefulness. This happens especially where it feeds on resentments and serves the need for pseudo-ethical dogmatism, and the need to slander and denounce rivals and opponents.

The outer rewards may include the following: Adventures, victory, booty, power and sinecures.

The Leader's [*Führer*] success totally depends on the functioning of his machine.

Therefore, The Leader [*Führer*] is dependent on the motives of his apparatus and not just on his own personal motives. Hence, The Leader [*Führer*] depends on the permanent funding for his followers incentives, whether it be the funding for the Red Guard or informers and agitators whom The Leader [*Führer*] depends on for his power.

Under these conditions, the effect of his work does not only lie in his hands, but is determined by the prevailing common motives for his followers' actions. The motivations for their actions can be reined in, in an ethical sense, as long as they are honestly believed by at least a portion of the followers of The Leader [*Führer*] as a person. On this earth, there never will be a majority who will share such an honest belief.

But then this belief in The Leader [*Führer*], even if it is subjectively honest, is in most cases only an ethical legitimation for an addiction

to vengeance, power, booty, and sinecure. We are not going to be deceived by this, because the materialistic interpretation of history⁷¹ is not just any "band wagon," and does not refrain from analyzing the supporters of the revolution. One also has to reckon that after the revolution, which was an emotionally charged time, follows "mundane" everyday life. The Savior Hero, and especially the belief itself vanished, or what is even more effective the Hero and the Gospel become part of a conventional slogan used by technocratic and dim-witted people. This kind of development proceeds quickly during religious wars because they are usually headed and inspired by the "true" Leaders [*Führer*]: The Prophets of the Revolution!

The prerequisite for success of any Leader [*Führer*] apparatus is a process of emptying and objectifying the cause, a process in which the followers are re-created as soulless proletarians. This is necessary in the interest of discipline. Therefore, the followers of a "Faith Warrior" who has taken on governance often degenerate quickly into a common social stratum of people with mundane sinecure privileges.

XVII. The Practitioner of Politics as Vocation

Thus, every person who wants to become a politician, and especially a professional politician, has to be aware of the ethical paradoxes and his responsibilities for what and who he can become in the context of these pressures. I want to point out again, that every politician engages with diabolical powers, which lurk in every kind of violence.

The grand virtuosos of earthly human love and benevolence (they may have come from Nazareth or Assisi or from Indian royal castles) did not work with political means of power. Their kingdoms "were not from this world" but, nevertheless, they affected this world. Therefore, figures like Platon Karataev⁷² and the "the saints" are still the most adequate representatives (or even clones) [of such earthly human love and great mercy and goodness.]

a. Politics and Salvation

If you look for salvation of your soul and that of others, you should not do this by means of politics. Politics has to solve completely different tasks, tasks that are only solvable with the coercive power [*Gewalt*].

But the genius, or if you want to call it the demon of politics, lives together with the god of love, and also with the Christian God in his

ecclesiastical form; there is an inner tension, which can, at any, time explode into an irresolvable conflict.

Even in times when governance lay in the hands of the church, people were aware of this.

In the days of church rule, the church's interaction had a much greater power over the people than the "cold approval" of the Kantian ethical judgment (to borrow the words of Fichte). An interdiction by the church always jeopardized the people's salvation of their souls. But nevertheless, the citizens of Florence fought against the Papal States.

If I am not mistaken, in Macchiavelli's Florentine states, there is a nice recollection of such a situation described. One of the heroes in the story praises the people of the town for whom the greatness of the hometown was more important than the salvation of their own soul.

[Along these lines today] you would substitute "hometown," or "fatherland" (which may not be for everyone an unambiguous value in our days) with "the future of Socialism," or "the future of the international establishment of peace." Then you would frame the problem today as it presents itself today.⁷³

Even today, this threatens the "Salvation of the Soul" since political action only works with violent means and appeals to ethics of responsibility [*Verantwortungsethik*].

Nevertheless, if the "Salvation of the Soul" is chased only and totally through the ethic of moral conviction [*Gesinnungsethik*], when this happens, the ethic of moral convictions [*Gesinnungsethik*] may be discredited for generations to come; this is because the responsibility for the consequences was missing.

Thus and further throughout this process, the diabolical powers which are at play remain unrecognized by the person who is acting. But these diabolical powers are remorseless and create consequences for the person's actions and their soul. And he himself is abandoned to these diabolical powers even if he does not recognize them. "The devil is indeed old."

Neither the years, nor the age is meant by this expression. The meaning is more down this line: "so grow old to understand that devil—become wise!"⁷⁴

Now, I never put up much with people who wanted to get the better of me in discussions by simply showing the date on their birth certificate. But the mere fact that some spring chicken aged 20, and that I am more than 50-years-old, could not make me believe that this alone is a heady achievement, in front of which I should express mortal awe.

It is not our chronological age that makes us. Not at all—it is a trained ruthless look at the realities of life, and the ability to cope with them, and endure them with a tempered inner strength, that comes only with age that counts.

b. Politics Are Not Made by the Head Alone

Verily, verily, I say unto you: politics are made by using your head, but surely not only.

In this respect, people who believe in the ethics of moral convictions [*Gesinnungsethik*] definitely understand this issue.

In the end, nobody has the right to lay down the law whether one should act solely as somebody who upholds an ethic of moral conviction, nor solely as someone who upholds an ethic of responsibility, or even perhaps identify when you should use one or the other.

But there is one remark I would like to make: At this time and day of pure excitement and passion—even though not all excitement is caused by true convictions—politicians on an outrageous scale run wild with slogans like:

It is the world, it is dumb, stupid and mean! It is not me! I am not responsible for the consequences. The consequences are the responsibility of others for whom I work. But I will eradicate their stupidity, arrogance, and nastiness!

To put it bluntly, I ask myself firstly, are such people truly serious about any ethical and moral convictions? I am convinced that in nine out of ten cases, they are windbags puffed up with hot air about themselves. They are not in touch with reality, and they do not feel the burden they need to shoulder—they just intoxicate themselves with romantic sensations.

As a human being, I am not at all interested in this kind of romanticism, and it does not impress me at all.

On the other hand, it is tremendously touching, even shocking, when a mature person, whether he is young or old, is heavily burdened by the responsibility for the consequences his actions may cause. But nevertheless, he acts with an ethic of responsibility and at some point will conclude: "Here I stand, I can do no other."⁷⁵

Such is what touches us at the innermost core as something truly human.

This should be possible to occur for any of us at one point in our lives, unless we are already "dead on the inside." In this respect, the

ethic of moral convictions [*Gesinnungsethik*] and ethic of responsibility [*Verantwortungsethik*] are not complete opposites. They rather complement each other because together they constitute a true human being, and the one who is able to have politics as a vocation.

Well, honored audience, let's talk about this again in ten years [in 1929].

Regrettably, and for many reasons, I fear that by then, and for many reasons, the reactionary times will have set in. And it is very likely that nothing or little of what you and I have wished and worked for [today] will have come true. Maybe there will be, at least on the surface, a little something what we have hoped for, have come true. Nevertheless, it is an inner burden to know that this is very likely to come true, but knowing this does not shatter me. At that time, I would like to see what has happened and come of those of you who look at themselves as true politicians who already believe in an ethic of moral convictions [*Gesinnungsethik*] and therefore participate in the frenzy which leads to this revolution. I would like to know what this will have done to the "inside" of you.

c. A Gloomy Prediction for the Future

Well, it would be so wonderful if things we could turn out like in Shakespeare's 102nd Sonnet:

Once upon a time spring was green and our love was new,
 Every day I was singing like a nightingale in the height of Summer,
 During the latter days the sound is fading.⁷⁶

But it will not turn out that way! The summer's riches are not ahead of us; but the polar nights with an icy darkness and harshness, no matter what group will successfully seize power at present.⁷⁷

Thus, because where there is nothing left, not only the Kaiser [Wilhelm II] loses his rights, but also the proletarians will have also lost rights. Who among you for whom Spring seems to bloom profusely right now will still be alive when this night is finally passing?

And what will have become of all of you spiritually?

Will you become an embittered or a sour Philistine who has given up on the higher things of life and so simply and apathetically accepted the fate of the world, and your own job in it? Or did you take a third option, which is not an unusual or rare option, taken by people who have "the gift" for "self-persecution," which is very fashionable these days, that is, to withdraw from the reality of this world and into a mystical world?

For every one of these examples, I will draw the following conclusion: Those people were never able to live on their own in the reality of the world and the demands of everyday life. They may have thought they had the calling to politics, but objectively and factually, they have never had the calling to politics in the true inner sense of the meaning.

It would have been better for them to simply practice brotherhood in an unpretentiously human-to-human fashion and, as part of that, just earn a daily living.

Politics is like slowly but forcefully drilling holes in hardwood boards, and that with passion and, at the same time, with a sense of proportion.

I have to freely admit, and historical experiences throughout the history of the world show, that people cannot be reaching successfully for what is possible, unless one also reaches for the impossible.

But the only one who can do this must be a Leader [*Führer*] and not only that, he also must be in every literal sense of the word, a hero.

And even those who are neither [Leader] *Führer* nor hero must brace themselves already now with a steadfast heart that can cope with the collapse of all hope. Otherwise, they will not succeed to important things, which are already possible today.

Only the person who is sure that he will not despair when the world, from his standpoint of view, is too simpleminded and wicked to accept what he has to offer, and only the person is able to say "In Spite of it All!" has a calling for the profession of Politics!