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BRITTA SCHEIDELER*

The scientist as moral authority: Albert Einstein between elitism and democracy, 1914-1933

The meanings of democracy are beyond measure.
Max Weber, 1918[1]

1. AN EXCEPTIONAL DEMOCRAT AMONG SCHOLARS?

THE PICTURE OF Albert Einstein in politics is that of an exceptional democrat among scholars. However, Einstein's differentiation between the "base mobs" and "rude masses" and an "intellectually and morally superior part of nations" on the other hand does not quite fit the picture of Einstein as the "constant fight[er] on behalf of democracy," the advocate of the "absolute equality of men."[2] His claim

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The following abbreviations are used: *AEF*, Otto Nathan and Heinz Norden, eds., *Albert Einstein über den Frieden* (Bern, 1975)—since the English version (*Einstein on peace* (New York, 1968)) sometimes does not give the literal translation, the English citation will follow in parenthesis; *CP*, Anne Kox, Martin J. Klein, and Robert Schulmann, eds., *The collected papers of Albert Einstein*. Vol. 6: *The Berlin years: Writings 1914-1917* (Princeton, 1996), and Robert Schulmann, Anne Kox, Michel Janssen and József Illy, eds., *The collected papers of Albert Einstein*. Vol. 8: *The Berlin years: Correspondence 1914-1918* (2 parts, Princeton, 1998); EAJ, Einstein Archives, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem; *MW*, Albert Einstein, *Mein Weltbild* [1934] (Berlin, 1955)—English version (*Ideas and opinions* (New York, 1954)) cited in parenthesis; *SJ*, Albert Einstein, *Aus meinen späten Jahren* (Stuttgart, 1984)—English version (*Out of my late years* (New York, 1950)) cited in parenthesis.

1. Max Weber, *Der Sozialismus* (Wien, 1918), 4.

2. Quotes, in this order, from Einstein to Marie Curie, 25 Dec 1923, in *AEF*, 83 (65); Einstein's contribution to the *Book of friends* [1926], in *AEF*, 97 (79); Einstein to Sigmund Freud, in *AEF*, 203 (186), resp. Gerald Holton, *The advancement of science, and its burdens* (Cambridge et al., 1986), 78, and *AEF*, 10 (viii). See also Siegfried Grundmann, *Einsteins Akte. Einsteins Jahre in Deutschland aus der Sicht der deutschen Politik* (Berlin, 1998), 294; Armin Hermann, *Einstein. Der Weltweise und sein Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1994), 407, and Friedrich Herneck, *Einstein und sein Weltbild* (Berlin, 1988), 11-14, 197.

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that the "intellectual and moral elite" should exert a "direct influence on the history of the world today" does not fit into the picture either.[3] If this contradiction is mentioned at all by his biographers, the reasons are always left out. Thus Fölsing observes that "Einstein's firm belief...in democracy" was unusual in Weimar academic circles but that in his "elitist contempt for the common man," he did not differ from ordinary reactionary professors.[4] This article dissolves this contradiction between elitism and democracy in Einstein's political thinking by showing that his understanding of democracy did not agree with today's liberal and pluralistic concept and that his understanding of science, *Wissenschaft,* ascribed not only high intellectual, but also high moral competencies to scholars and scientists.

Einstein was not unique in his understanding of science in Germany before 1933. According to the strong German neo-humanistic tradition, study of both arts and science—especially the humanities—provided the route to *Bildung*, meaning both intellectual and moral self-cultivation. Consequently, the majority of scholars saw themselves as guardians of the common good, in contrast to the presumed selfish interests of political parties and pressure groups. For this reason they claimed moral and political leadership.[5] The political behavior of the majority of humanities scholars has been explained convincingly by their self-understanding as a moral and intellectual elite: as scholars they proclaimed moral and political norms to serve as standards for the rest of society.[6] The question of whether natural scientists, especially mathematicians, physicists, and chemists, saw themselves in a similar way has not been considered fully.[7] Historians presume their affiliation with the educated classes, the *Bildungsbürgertum*, though the natural sciences went beyond the scope of the canon of humanistic knowledge, which underlay the status of the *Bildungsbürgertum* as well as its self-understanding as an elite of values.[8] The central question of this paper is whether Einstein's political thought,

3. Einstein to Sigmund Freud, in *AEF*, 203 (186), text of 1931 or 1932.
4. Albrecht Fölsing, *Albert Einstein* (Frankfurt/M., 1993), 702.
5. Klaus Schwabe, ed., *Deutsche Hochschullehrer als Elite 1815-1945* (Boppard, 1988), 22; Herbert Döring, *Der Weimarer Kreis. Studien zum politischen Bewußtsein verfassungstreuer Hochschullehrer in der Weimarer Republik* (Meisenheim, 1975), 248-249.
6. Schwabe (ref. 5), 16.
7. For the little that exists see Werner Conze, Jürgen Kocka, Reinhart Koselleck and M. Rainer Lepsius, eds, *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert* (4 vols., Stuttgart, 1985-1992); Rüdiger vom Bruch, *Wissenschaft, Politik und öffentliche Meinung. Gelehrtenpolitik im Wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Husum, 1980); Rüdiger vom Bruch, *Weltpolitik als Kulturmission. Auswärtige Kulturpolitik und Bildungsbürgertum in Deutschland am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Paderborn, 1982); Christian Jansen, *Professoren und Politik: politisches Denken und Handeln der Heidelberger Hochschullehrer 1914-1935* (Göttingen, 1992); Fritz K. Ringer, *The decline of the German mandarins: The German academic community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge, MA, 1969), and Klaus Schwabe, *Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des ersten Weltkrieges* (Göttingen, 1969).
8. Some relevant studies: Jonathan Harwood, "'Mandarine' oder 'Aussenseiter'? Selbst-

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especially his understanding of democracy, was influenced by his self-image as a *scientist*, thus making him a member of a moral and intellectual elite. In this way, Einstein will not be depicted as an incomparable figure in politics, rather, his pattern of political thinking and acting will be compared with those of scientists, scholars, and intellectuals in contact with him.[9]

Natural scientists in politics

In comparison with their colleagues in other disciplines, natural scientists were significantly underrepresented in parliament. Among the 62 professors belonging to the Reichstag in the years from 1871 to 1918, only three (5%) came from the natural sciences, whereas they made up 26% of all professors in 1910.[10] They were similarly underrepresented as writers of political accounts in newspapers, journals, and books.[11] Yet, if we take their participation in political declarations, publications, and manifestos as a criterion for their political activity the situation changes. Natural scientists made up 16% of the 647 professors who signed more than one political declaration in the years 1914 to 1933.[12] Therefore, the below average political activity of professors of the natural sciences and the exact sciences does not stand for political indifference. Presumably they shared a common nationalistic and conservative position.[13]

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verständnis Deutscher Naturwissenschaftler (1900-1933)," in Jürgen Schriewer, Edwin Keiner and Christophe Charle, eds., *Sozialer Raum und akademische Kulturen. A la recherche de l'espace universitaire européen* (Frankfurt, 1993), 183-212; Jonathan Harwood, "Weimar culture and biological theory: A study of Richard Woltereck (1877-1944)," *History of science, 34:105* (Sep 1996), 347-377; Lewis Pyenson, *Neohumanism and the persistence of pure mathematics in Wilhelmian Germany* (Philadelphia, 1983); Paul Forman, *The environment and practice of atomic physics in Weimar Germany: A study in the history of science* (Ph.D. dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1967), and Paul Forman, "Weimar culture, causality and quantum theory, 1918-1927," *HSPS*, *3* (1971), 1-115.
9. See David Cassidy, "Biographies of Einstein," in Armin Hermann et al., eds., *Einstein Symposion Berlin aus Anlaß der 100. Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages, 25.-30.3.1979* (Berlin, 1979), 490-500, on 497, and David Cassidy, *Einstein and our world* (New Jersey, 1995).
10. Britta Scheideler and Hubert Goenner, "Albert Einstein in politics—A comparative approach," *Max-Planck-Institutefor the History of Science, Berlin, Preprint 63* (1997), 1-28, on 2-3, and Lothar Burchardt, "Naturwissenschaftliche Universitätslehrer im Kaiserreich," in Schwabe (ref. 5), 151-214, on 172. Representative detailed studies on the participation of natural scientists in political parties have not yet been done.
11. Jansen (ref. 7), 24-25, 102-103.
12. Döring (ref. 5), 256-272, and Hubert Goenner (to appear).
13. Kurt Bayertz, "'Siege der Freiheit, welche die Menschen durch die Erforschung des Grundes der Dinge errangen': Wandlungen im politischen Selbstverständnis deutscher Naturwissenschaftler," *Berliner Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, *10* (1987), 169-183; Elisabeth Crawford, *Nationalism and internationalism in science, 1880-1939* (Cambridge, 1992); Paul Forman, "Scientific internationalism and Weimar physicists: The ideology and its manipulation in Germany after World War I," *Isis, 64* (1973), 151-180; Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus, "Isolation und Kooperation der nationalen Scientific Communities," in Hermann

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The secondary literature explains that natural scientists had good reasons to be satisfied with the status quo in the German Empire. The more severely modernization and democratization threatened humanities scholars in their role as political spokesmen, the more they wanted to put their role to the test, while "scientists...had never had such an exposed status."[14] Moreover, the prestige of the natural scientists, contrary to the humanists', increased with growing scientific knowledge and its successful industrial application.[15] But even if scientists were prepared to utter political statements publicly, they did not meet with the same response as representatives of disciplines closer to politics to whom the public granted a "much higher competence in interpreting the world."[16] The scientists shared this evaluation. As Max von Laue wrote: "Throughout my life, despite my strong political interests, I was prudent enough to stay away from political activity if it went beyond voting; I knew my limits."[17] "Wherever lawyers, national economists, historians, philosophers or theologians felt approached in their professional competence the natural scientists saw no direct link to their own occupation."[18]

Another possible explanation of the greater political reserve of natural scientists was their definition of science. The dominant neo-humanistic definition included the urge to render science fruitful for self-cultivation and the creation of a philosophy of life. The willingness of humanities professors to derive principles or values for society at large from their research and to express political judgments linked to this image of science.[19] Natural scientists, however, elaborated scientific concepts and methods originally not based on neo-humanism;[20] the exact sciences did not deal with humans and human society. Nonetheless, the majority of natural scientists may not have felt content with the modest role of experts.[21] They tried to maintain a humanistic discourse with the humanity professors, and believed in the educational value (*Bildungswert*) of their sciences.[22] And the generations up to 1890 had received their education in a humanistic high school (*Gymnasium*). While

(ref. 9), 517-536. Cf. Harwood, "Mandarine" (ref. 8), 199.

14. Jansen (ref. 7), 15.

15. Burchardt (ref. 10), 206-210.

16. Jansen (ref. 7), 118.

17. Max von Laue, *Aufsätze und Vorträge* (Braunschweig, 1961), 28.

18. Burchardt (ref. 10), 211. Burchardt's additional argument that the professors of the natural sciences had a higher work load and therefore less time for politics than their humanistic colleagues is hardly convincing. For mathematicians in Göttingen see Heinrich Behnke, *Semesterberichte. Ein Leben an deutschen Universitäten im Wandel der Zeit* (Göttingen, 1978), 28, 32; for biologists, Bayertz (ref. 13) and Harwood, "Mandarine" (ref. 8).

19. Ringer (ref. 7), 399.

20. Jansen (ref. 7), 47 and 102-03. Cf. Rudolf Stichweh, *Zur Entstehung des modernen Systems wissenschaftlicherDiszplinen. Physik in Deutschland1740-1890*(Frankfurt, 1984), 455-456.

21. Cf. Burchardt (ref. 10), 213. Harwood ("Mandarine" (ref. 8), 210) classifies professors who saw themselves as experts and not as culture-bearers as "outsiders."

22. Otto Brüggemann,*Naturwissenschaftund Bildung. Die Anerkennungdes Bildungswertes*

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ascribing a high value to exact thinking in the natural sciences for the formation of personality, the theoretical physicist Woldemar Voigt insisted that the real educational strength resided in history.[23] Professors in the exact sciences, and in the natural sciences in general, understood themselves as culture-bearers, but left the interpretation of the political and social course of affairs to their colleagues in the humanities.[24]

By comparing Einstein with a few selected scientists who became politically active, the specific reasons and motives for his political role can be illustrated. Carl Runge, an applied mathematician, offers an example of political activity derived from a self-understanding as a citizen. Before World War I, Runge did not care much about politics. According to his daughter, he only felt obliged "to implement his will as a citizen" after the summoning of the National Constitutive Assembly and consequently joined the Göttingen Section of the Democratic Party.[25] Einstein's support for democracy in contrast did not derive from an ideal of citizenship since his self-appreciation as a moral authority went beyond his participation as a citizen. Moreover, he considered "belonging to a state as a business matter, comparable to dealing with a life insurance company."[26]

Another scientist whose politics helps illuminate Einstein was Leo Arons, one-time lecturer in physics at the University of Berlin. He had been deprived of his right to teach there in 1900 because of his membership in the Social-Democratic Party. Claiming a political leadership role for professors as a consequence of their higher education and self-cultivation, Arons considered his political gagging by the authorities to be "a degradation of the rank of professors."[27] After the revolution of 1918 he challenged the universities in an open letter to take a leading role as the moral and intellectual elite of the new state.[28] Einstein opposed the initiative: "In this war, the professors have amply shown that, in political matters, nothing can be learned from them. On the contrary, it is imperative that they learn something, namely to shut up!"[29] He turned against their claim for a higher compe-

der Naturwissenschaften in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (Heidelberg, 1967), 51-55, and Heinrich Schipperges, *Weltbild und Wissenschaft. Eröffnungsreden zu den Naturforscherversammlungen 1822 bis 1972* (Hildesheim, 1976), 50-57. For the special role of mathematics see Pyenson (ref. 8).

23. Woldemar Voigt, *Physikalische Forschung und Lehre in Deutschland während der letzten hundert Jahre. Festrede zur Jahresfeier der Universität am 5.6.1912* (Göttingen, 1912), 13. See also Russel McCormmach, "On academic scientists in Wilhelmian Germany," in Gerald Holton and William A. Blanpied, eds., *Science and its public: The changing relationship* (Boston, 1976), 157-171.

24. Burchardt (ref. 10), 213; McCormmach (ref. 23), 168.

25. Iris Runge, *Carl Runge und sein wissenschaftliches Werk* (Göttingen, 1949), 171.

26. *CP,* 6, 212.

27. Arons, quoted from Walther Koch, "Geistige Bewegung," *Sozialistische Monatshefte, 25* (1919), 1099-1100, on 1100.

28. Vossische Zeitung, 12 Nov 1918; Abendblatt; reprinted in Leo Arons, *Universitäten heraus!* (Berlin, 1918), 5-6.

29. Arons (ref. 28), 3. See Bruno Borchardt, "Hochschullehrer und Staat," *Der Abend, 26*

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tence in interpreting political matters that they derived from the combination of science, education, and philosophy of life.

Finally Einstein can be compared with three Nobel prizewinners who derived political competence and a political role from their fields of science. None of them had attended a humanistic *Gymnasium* and all three designed their roles as political interpreters explicitly in competition with the humanists.[30] The chemist Wilhelm Ostwald believed that he had found a "law of nature" for the social and political domains and disseminated his "scientific philosophy of life [*Weltanschauung*]" in journals dealing with social and political matters.[31] The physicists Philipp Lenard and Johannes Stark justified their outspoken political activities on the ground that they thought more precisely than non-scientists. Lenard: "no one can look for truth more earnestly and effectively...than the natural scientist [*Naturforscher*], and it is only through truth that humanity will thrive."[32] Both Lenard and Stark looked for unambiguous relations between cause and effect in the natural sciences as well as in politics and eventually found the missing mono-causal explanation in Hitler's racial fantasies viewed as a theory.[33] Because they regarded natural science as a political discipline, their political agitation did not stop at the gates of the university.[34]

In contrast to these scientists, Einstein believed that principles for society could not be derived from the scientific method or body of knowledge—that would have contradicted not only his understanding of "the essentially constructive and speculative nature...of scientific thinking" but also his definition of science.[35] He wrote to Maurice Solovine in 1951: "What we call science has the exclusive goal of determining what *is*. The determination of *what ought to be* is something different, and not achievable through [scientific] methodology."[36] In his view, the methodology of the natural sciences only applies to the laws of ethics to the extent that further ethical rules could be derived logically from ethical premises. Furthermore, he explicitly points out that "scientific statements of facts and relation cannot produce ethical directives."[37] Nonetheless, Einstein constructed his political

(16 Jan 1930) for Einstein as the author of this letter.

30. Wilhelm Ostwald, *Lebenslinien* (3 vols., Berlin, 1927), *3*, 131; Philipp Lenard, "Erinnerungen eines Naturforschers, der Kaiserreich, Judenherrschaft und Hitler erlebt hat" [1943] (Manuscript, Archive for the History of Quantum Physics), 90.

31. Ostwald (ref. 30), *3*, 226, 320.

32. Lenard (ref. 30), 79.

33. Ibid., 6 and Johannes Stark, *Adolf Hitlers Ziele und Persönlichkeit* (Munich, 1930), 8.

34. See among others Andreas Kleinert, "Nationalistische und antisemitische Ressentiments von Wissenschaftlern gegen Einstein," in Hermann (ref. 9), 501-517, on 505-506.

35. Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed., *Albert Einstein. Autobiographical notes. A centennial edition* (La Salle, 1992), 21. See also *CP,* 6, 279.

36. Albert Einstein, *Lettres à Maurice Solovine* (Paris, 1956), 104. The view that science does not provide principles for society or ethics appeared implicitly in Einstein's article "Good and evil" of 1930, in *MW*, 14 (12).

37. "The laws of science and the laws of ethics" (1950), in *SJ*, 53-55, on 54 (114-115, on 114). Cf. Holton (ref. 2), 78.

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and social role around his persona as a scientist. As he wrote to the physicist Hans Thirring in May 1933: "Scientists fail in their duty to defend moral and intellectual values because they have completely lost their passionate love of them—the mentality of Giordano Bruno. This is the only reason why individuals of base and inferior nature have been able to seize power."[38] With this statement, Einstein supposed that scientists could have a significant influence over political events: Their failure to act made the take-over by the National Socialists possible. They thus did not derive their political role and responsibility from their methodology or knowledge, but from their special mentality. Einstein later encapsulated the idea of the scientist by this mentality in the term "scientific person," which might be translated as "true scientist."[39] It expresses Einstein's conception of a person who lives for his science and has internalized its values.

Science and society

In a speech given at a celebration of Max Planck's 60th birthday in 1918, Einstein characterized "science" as an autonomous field, independent from social and political goals. He spoke of the "temple of science" profaned by people who cultivated science for purely utilitarian purposes.[40] The true scientist rejected society. Paraphrasing Schopenhauer, Einstein found an inspiration for art and science in a "flight from everyday life with its painful crudity and hopeless dreariness, from the fetters of one's own ever-shifting desires. A finely tempered nature longs to escape from personal life into the world of objective perception and thought."[41] A second impulse was the desire to create a simplified general picture of the world to overcome "the world of personal experience." In principle, a theory "of every natural process, including life" could be deduced from "the general laws on which the structure of theoretical physics is based"—however "far beyond the capacity of the human intellect" the deduction might be.[42] Hence the philosophy of life in theoretical physics is an escape from the world of experience rather than an explanation for it. By observing and understanding the objective world in its manifest reason and harmony, Einstein argued, the scientist, as well as the artist, could become aware of the futility of human desires and overcome his will and passions. Like many members of the Wilhelmian *Bildungsbürgertum* trying to compensate for its diminishing influence in the vita activa, Einstein cleaved to Schopenhauer's teaching that only contemplation leads to the liberation of will as a dull animalistic impulse.[43] Like Schopenhauer, he regarded pure arts and science to be the most

38. *AEF*, 235 (220).
39. Einstein to Max von Laue, 26 May 1933, in *AEF*, 234 (218). See also *SJ*, 56-59 (116-118).
40. *MW*, 107 (224).
41. Ibid., 108 (225).
42. Ibid., 109 (226). Cf. Holton (ref. 2), 23, 78.
43. See also Jürgen Renn and Robert Schulmann, eds., *Albert Einstein/Mileva Maric: The love letters* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1992), xxvii.

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appropriate way of attaining freedom of will and deliverance since their cultivation involved a "loving devotion to the supra-personal, detached from will."[44] This liberation from "the shackles of selfish desire" and egoistic passions does not mean a surrender of personality.[45] Rather, it enables development into a self-determined, virtuous individual. In this broad sense, preoccupation with science and arts leads to their ultimate goal, "ennoblement of the human being."[46] Einstein later described this quest for cognition of the objective world in its harmony as "cosmic religiosity," a pantheistic feeling that made the "strongest and noblest motive for scientific research" and which can only be experienced by "individuals of exceptional endowments and exceptionally high-minded communities."[47] His ideal international republic of scholars amounted to such a community held together by the necessity of international cooperation, a common effort to achieve greater insight, and an intellectual and emotional bond through "cosmic religiosity."[48] Although freedom from selfishness is connected with the recognition of something greater than oneself in pure science and art, Einstein made the true scientist his universal ideal: "The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure...in which he has attained liberation from the self."[49] His hope for society rested on this ideal.

Certain basic, constant values and modes of thinking can be recognized in Einstein's socio-political views by analyzing his statements up to 1933 according to *leitmotifs.* The model of the true scientist corresponds to Einstein's late-idealistic ideal of the individual animated by "kindness, beauty, and truth."[50] Freedom from selfishness and greed allows the individual to develop into the moral and "independent-minded person" essential to Einstein's model society:[51]

> All the valuable achievements, material, spiritual, and moral that we receive from society have been brought about...by creative individuals....Only the individual can think and thereby create new values for society, nay, even set up new moral standards to which the life of the community conforms....The health of society thus depends quite as much on the independence of the individuals composing it as on their close social cohesion.

44. Einstein's reply to a request of a magazine, 27 Jan 1921, in Helen Dukas and Banesh Hoffmann, eds., *Albert Einstein: Briefe* (Zürich, 1981), 38; Arthur Schopenhauer, "Parerga und Paralipomena," in Schopenhauer, *Zürcher Ausgabe* (10 vols., Zurich, 1977) *9:2*, 79, and *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, ibid., *1:1*, 251.
45. *MW*, 18 (40). See also *MW*, 16 (38).
46. Ibid., 14 (12), 17 (38).
47. Quotes from *MW*, 17 (39), 16 (38), resp. The idea of a pantheistic religion also brought Einstein close to Spinoza, Regine Kather, "Das Verständnis von Realität und die Überwindung der Anthropozentrik. Spinozistische Elemente im Wissenschaftsbegriff Albert Einsteins," in Hanna Delf, J.H. Schoeps, Manfred Walther, eds., *Spinoza in der europäischen Geistesgeschichte* (Berlin, 1994), 394-421, on 408.
48. *MW*, 19 (3).
49. Ibid., 10 (12).
50. Ibid., 8 (9).
51. Ibid., 11-12 (13-14).

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Since the ingredients of Einstein's model society embody "selfless, responsible dedication...to the service of the community,"[52] their association can lead only to a homogenous, harmonious society. Competing interest groups not devoted to the common good cannot appear. Like many members of the European educated classes, Einstein believed that an ideal community of self-determined and social-minded individuals, able to establish common goals in peaceful public discussion, had come to fruition in the United States of America.[53] Public spirit and social equity as well as the freedom of the individual were part of his image of America as the realization of a liberal democratic bourgeois utopia. Typically, he considered the special American mentality to be the basis of this society. Unlike the European, the American, according to Einstein, was friendly, ungrudging, and commited to make sacrifices for his community.[54]

From Einstein's fixation on the selfless individual followed his belief that "the fate of a community is primarily determined by the level of its moral standards."[55] His frequently uttered conviction that every individual has his own right of self-determination collided, however, with the perception that only a minority of humans can act in a self-determined and moral way. Einstein included the true scientists in this minority based not on experience but on his belief in the ennobling effect of science.[56] Since pure scientific work, according to Einstein, needed specially endowed "rich individuals," his political thinking came to rest on the conviction that human beings are of different value.[57] A self-determined moral minority, therefore, had to oppose the majority of people, who were slaves to their desires. Einstein best expressed this dichotomy in his contribution to the *Book of friends* dedicated to the novelist Romain Rolland in 1926:[58]

> The rude masses are driven by dark passions that dominate both them and the governments that represent them....Those few who do not share in the coarse emotions of the masses and who, unaffected by such passions, cling to the ideal of brotherly love...[form] the community of those...who seek to abolish war as the first step toward the moral regeneration of mankind.

52. Speech of 25 Jan 1932, in *AEF*, 178 (161).
53. Declaration, New York Dec 1930, in *AEF*, 132 (115). See also Alexander Schmidt, *Reisen in die Moderne* (Berlin, 1997), 98, 108-109, 154-155, 289-294.
54. Declaration (ref. 53); see also *MW*, 43 (5).
55. Einstein to Thomas Mann, 29 Apr 1933, in *AEF*, 237 (222).
56. Einstein's contribution to the *Book of friends* [1926], in *AEF*, 100 (82). See also Einstein to David Hilbert, before 27 Apr 1918, in *CP,* 8, Part B, 736; Einstein to Paul Ehrenfest, Dec 1914, in *AEF*, 20 (2).
57. Letter of 4 Nov 1931, in Dukas and Hoffmann (ref. 44), 81.
58. *AEF*, 97-100 (79-82).

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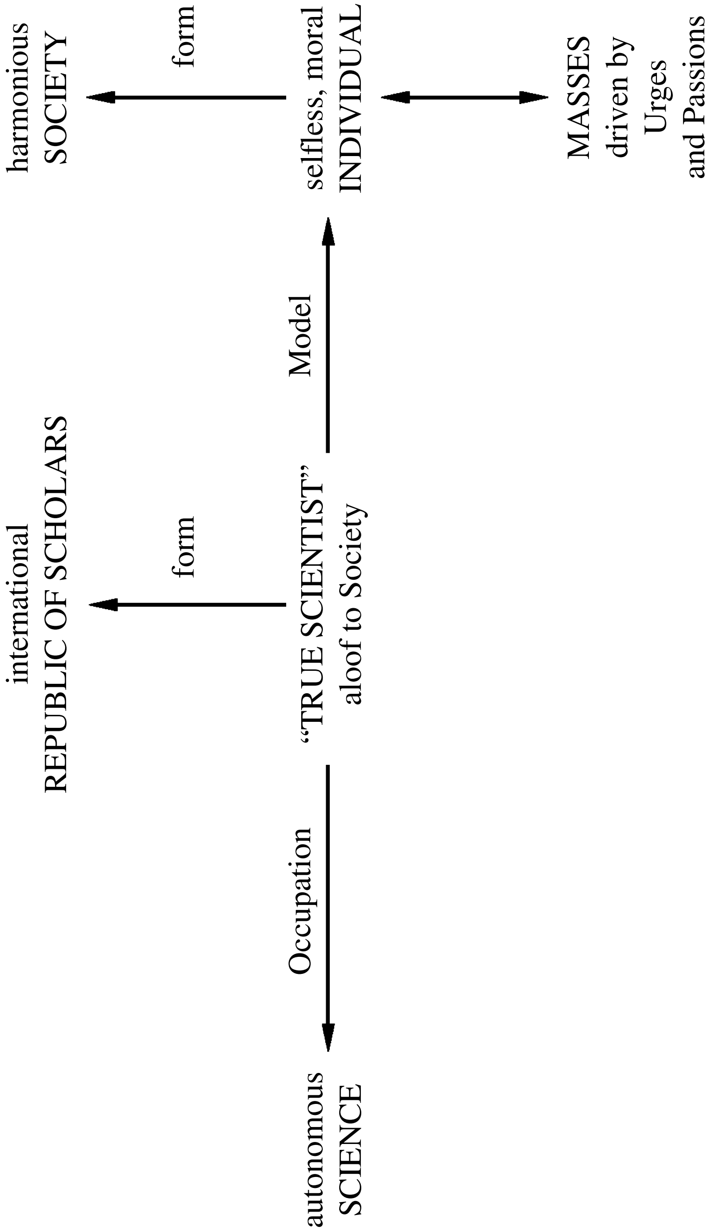

FIG. 1 Einstein’s *Weltbild*.

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Einstein as universal intellectual

Einstein's claim to a moral leadership of true leadership of true scientists and artists consequently resulted from his distinction between the masses, driven by primitive urges, and the minority, able to act according to universal values and to provide moral standards for the social and political spheres. Einstein's numerous appeals for peace, justice, and the dignity of mankind indicate that he took seriously his role as a critic of society and public advocate for the social implementation of his ideal individual. He thus met the criteria that the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu laid down for universal intellectuals: they want "the values existing in their world to gain validity in the whole social universe."[59] Because of their affiliation with the relatively autonomous world of art, science, and literature—a world less dependent on political and economic forces than others—they are particularly qualified to declare the real interests of the people and to propagate universally valid values. Defining themselves by the values associated with their autonomous field, such as moral power, unselfishness, reason and truth, they attempt to "exercise a type of moral authority."[60] To succeed they need, among other things, access to public media. Einstein had this access after the confirmation of his general theory of relativity in 1920 and took advantage of it to give countless interviews to the press.

Although Einstein derived his ideas about the utopian society from his conception of the true scientist, he did not act as a natural scientist, but as the representative and advocate of values valid independently from natural sciences. This marks the difference between him and the natural scientists considered earlier who derived their elitist self-image and political behavior from their knowledge of the natural sciences. But what made the difference between Einstein and the "mandarins" who derived special moral force from their higher education and self-cultivation?[61] Einstein's efforts to realize an ideal of the self-determined individual against the existing values and beliefs by standing up for social justice and democracy and against militarism and authoritarian devoutness. The majority of the academic establishment did not question dominating social and political standards as long as they guaranteed their own social status.

It is therefore likely to consider Einstein's specific upbringing as a major reason for his development into a critical intellectual. This personal development was not typical of the Wilhelmian educated classes. The son of a liberal Jewish family, he belonged to an oppressed minority.[62] Their efforts to assimilate into German

59. Pierre Bourdieu, *Die Intellektuellen und die Macht* (Hamburg, 1991), 46; Britta Scheideler, "Albert Einstein—ein politischer Intellektueller?" in Sven Hanuschek, Therese Hörnigk, and Christine Malende, eds., *Schriftsteller als Intellektuelle: Politik und Literatur im Kalten Krieg* (Tubingen, 2000), 69-89.

60. Bourdieu (ref. 59), 46; also ibid., 42-51.

61. Ringer (ref. 7), 21-27.

62. Lewis Pyenson, *The young Einstein. The advent of relativity* (Bristol, 1985).

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society caused him significant internal conflicts of values, among Jewish religion, enlightened liberal traditions, and pressure to conform. He resolved this conflict by a radical rejection of all forms of prescribed authority (after a brief but intense religious phase). Since Einstein emigrated to liberal Switzerland at the age of sixteen, he had not passed through all the institutions of socialization that Wilhelmian Germany used to ingrain men with the values of the time: college preparatory school, university, and military service. After finishing his studies at the polytechnic in Zurich he adopted Schopenhauer's ideal of the "genius" versus the "masses" to compensate for his inability to find a suitable employment.[63] Einstein's adoption of Schopenhauer not only stood in sharp contrast to his conviction of each individual's dignity but also turned against bourgeois philistine society and their norms. Einstein's success as a "rebel" in physics strengthened his role as an outsider and critic of the status quo.

Einstein's heritage and socialization spurred him to an active role in replacing the political and social standards of the German Empire. This path separated him from most of his colleagues, who shared his values and ideal of personality in the domain of science but fell back on familiar social and political conceptions of a nationalist, conservative order.[64] Einstein's critical distance from the society of his time also separated him from the majority of the educated middle classes. Owing to their humanistic education, they shared his ideal of the autonomous individual and his high regard for Goethe and Kant as intellectual and moral authorities.[65] Like Einstein they distinguished between the "rough masses" and "spiritually and morally elevated" humans.[66] However, in contrast to him, the majority of the Wilhelmian educated classes supported an authoritarian state that guaranteed their social status, but did not embody their cultural ideals. Hence Einstein's very critical attitude towards humanists. He accused them of having given away the universal ideals of Goethe and Schiller for Bismark's religion of power, of spreading the dominant ideology in their own interest.[67] He therefore strongly rejected their claim to an exclusive political leadership. As he said to Leo Arons, they should literally "shut up" in political matters.[68]

63. Renn and Schulmann (ref. 43), xxvi-xxvii. See also Schopenhauer (ref. 44), vol. I/I: Die Welt als Willie und Vorstellung, 242, and a speech Einstein had prepared yet not delivered to the case of E.J. Gumbel in April 1931, in *AEF*, 150 (133). See also Einstein to a musician, 5 Apr 1933, in Dukas and Hoffman (ref. 44), 109.
64. J.L. Heilbron, *The dilemmas of an upright man. Max Planck as spokesman for German science* (Berkeley, 1986).
65. Gerald Holton, "Einstein and the cultural roots of modern science," *Daedalus, 127:1* (1998), 1-44, on 18-23.
66. Press release, 23 May 1932, in *AEF*, 185 (169).
67. Einstein to R. Rolland, 22 Aug 1917, in *AEF*, 40 (20), and to H.A. Lorentz, 2 Aug 1915, in *AEF*, 28-30 (11).
68. Arons (ref. 28), 3.

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Before 1933, Einstein the outsider corresponded or met such intellectuals as Max Brod, Alfred Döblin, Wilhelm Herzog, Kurt Hiller, Alfred Kerr, Käthe Kollwitz, Heinrich Mann, Carl von Ossietzky, Romain Rolland, René Schickele, Ernst Toller, and Arnold and Stefan Zweig. Einstein also had close family ties with Rudolf Kayser (who married Einstein's adopted daughter in 1926), the co-founder of one of the best known German organizations of intellectuals, "Activism" in which many of Einstein's friends participated.[69] These closely linked writers, artists, and publicists were considered prototypical "left-wing intellectuals." Heinrich Mann initiated the intellectuals' movement before World War I and became almost a moral institution in himself. In 1910, he had called the "men of great mind and intellect" to action; their Geist, he said, "obliged them to protect the dignity of man."[70] "Geist" entailed not only intellectual capacity but also the moral authority to represent universal values. In Romain Rolland's manifesto of 1919, "Brain workers, comrades," Albert Einstein, Heinrich Mann and other signatories appealed to the "Servants of the mind [*Geist*]" to honor truth alone: "Truth that knows nought of the prejudices of race or caste." Furthermore, they argued, that it should be the task of the intellectuals to "rally round [the light of the mind] all the strayed sheep of mankind....In order that they may, like ourselves, realize this brotherhood, we raise above their blind struggles the Ark of the Covenant—Mind which is free, one and manifold, eternal."[71]

According to Rolland and Mann, the implementation of these values demanded a democratic and socialist society. Yet, they supposed that the realization of this genuine political goal would not occur through alterations of political, economic, or social relations but through the moral instruction of the individual by the intellectuals. Heinrich Mann believed in the essential role of the intellectual as the "leader of any democracy," since the intellectual provided a role model of "what was true, just...of what the eternal ideal individual is."[72] This short extract shows the accordance between leading Weimar intellectuals and Einstein in values and patterns of thought. They all aimed for a harmonious society of self-determined individuals and opted for a leadership of the intellectual as a moral force. They

69. Kurt Hiller, *Leben gegen die Zeit* (2 vols. Reinbek, 1969), *1*, 98, 107. See also Eckart Koester, *Literatur and Weltkriegsideologie. Positionen und Begründungszusammenhänge des publizistischen Engagements deutscher Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Kronberg, 1977), 345.

70. "Geist und Tat" (1910), in Heinrich Mann, *Essays* (Hamburg, 1960), 7-14, on 13.

71. Georg Friedrich Nicolai, ed., *Romain Rollands Manifest und die deutschen Antworten* (Charlottenburg, 1921), 23-25. For the equation of spirit and morality, see Einstein's contribution to Barbusse's journal *Monde* (1932), in *AEF*, 196 (179), and Dietz Bering, *Die Intellektuellen. Geschichte eines Schimpfwortes* (Frankfurt, 1982), 308-319.

72. Quotes from, resp., Schmutz und Schund (1926), in Mann (ref. 70), 526-541, on 540, and Heinrich Mann, "Dichtkunst und Politik [1928]," in Beate Pinkerneil, Dietrich Pinkerneil and Viktor Zmegac, eds., *Literatur und Gesellschaft. Dokumentationen zur Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur seit der Jahrhundertwende* (Frankfurt, 1973), 140-151, on 144.

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also agreed on the fixation on the individual and his moral education, while social and political structures or interests were regarded as less important.[73]

The role of the committed intellectual, which Einstein adopted, obviously stood in contrast to his self image as a true scientist, driven to the autonomous sphere of science as an escape from the mundane. How did the social and scientific spheres influence one another? How did concentration on the moral individual influence his understanding of democracy, his own policy, and politics?[74] How did his insistence on the leadership of the intellectuals relate to his engagement for democracy? And how did his socio-political views and patterns of thinking undergo a gradual change in reaction to political developments?

2. EINSTEIN'S POLITICS BETWEEN 1914 AND 1933

World War I and Weimar

The outbreak of World War I shook Einstein's core beliefs in the social as well as in the scientific sphere. The war challenged his pacifism and his ideal of the moral individual. The "battle of scholars," waged with slanderous attacks and nationalistic appeals, subverted his belief in the true scientist and an international republic of scholars. In his article *My opinion about the war* (1915), which is an example of his reaction in the social realm, he identified the destructive urges of man and the subservience and patriotism promoted in schools as the causes of the war. He urged people to prevent further wars by rejecting hate and greed and by replacing patriotism with cultural values. "Every well-meaning person should work hard on himself and in his personal circle to improve in these respects. The heavy burdens that presently plague us in such a horrible way will then vanish too."[75] The same year Einstein joined the pacifist "League for a New Fatherland." In its statutes of 1918 the League established as its central goal the development of the individual "on the basis of a truly intellectual and moral culture,"[76] which would take place in a socialist republic through a policy of peaceful coexistence. This mixture of vague socialist philosophy and distinctive individualism attracted intellectuals like Alfred Döblin, Wilhelm Herzog, Heinrich Mann, and René Schickele, with whom Einstein came into contact in the League.[77] Even though Einstein only sporadically participated in activities of the League, which had been forbidden in 1916, his association with it, separated him from the majority of professors. He did not withdraw like most other war opponents but stood up for the universal validity of his emotionally based pacifism and his ideal of personality. The war's threat to his values forced him to speak up as an intellectual for the first time.

73. Waltraud Berle, *Heinrich Mann und die Weimarer Republik* (Bonn, 1983), 39, 195, 226.
74. For the difference between "policy" and "politics" see Karl Rohe, *Politik. Begriffe und Wirklichkeiten* (Stuttgart, 1994), 61-64.
75. *CP*, 6, 213.
76. Announcements of the "Bund Neues Vaterland," 1 Nov 1918, 11.
77. Wolf Zuelzer, *Der Fall Nicolai* (Frankfurt, 1981), 252.

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Einstein's reaction to the "battle of scholars" showed the tension created by his role of an involved intellectual and his self-image as a scientist aloof to society. His colleagues Fritz Haber and Max Planck signed the appeal "To the civilized world!" (October 1914) which justified the war and German militarism as a defense of German culture.[78] The physician Georg Friedrich Nicolai and Einstein countered with an "Appeal to the Europeans," urging scholars and artists to support a "common world culture" transcending nationalistic passions.[79] Only two true scientists signed this pacifist appeal. His disappointment and his emotional ties to the community sharing his "cosmic religiosity" shines through a letter of 1915 to the physicist Paul Ehrenfest: "Is not that small group of scholars and intellectuals the only 'fatherland' which is worthy of serious concern to people like us? Should their convictions be determined only by the accident of frontiers?"[80]

Nonetheless, Einstein stuck to his ideal of the true scientist removed from society. His explanations for the nationalistic behavior of the scientists shored up his ideal at considerable cost. He blamed their failures on the influence of propaganda and emphasized in 1922 that "the attitude of the individual is everywhere far superior to official pronouncements."[81] He tried to protect scientists from social and political influence by proposing an autonomous, apolitical, international republic of scholars. Interaction with the society-at-large would be limited to preparation by scientists and artists of a proper atmosphere for reconciliation between people, which would be achieved through their "creative work, lifting man above personal and selfish national goals." Politics would be prohibited: "They [the corporations of scientists and artists] must never allow themselves to be exploited in the service of political passions in their public declarations or in other public activity."[82] Einstein's "conviction that politics should not be allowed to impinge upon scientific endeavors" agreed with the thinking of other natural scientists.[83] The fact that he neglected social and political questions within science reflected his self-image as a true scientist aloof from society, which of course contradicted his role as an involved intellectual. In contrast to his reaction in the social realm, Einstein did not assert his universal values in his professional field, which would have required a pronounced stand against the cooperation of scientists in the war. Nor did he extend his public involvement for democracy to agitation among scientists.

78. The manifesto is reprinted in Hans Wehberg, *Wider den Aufruf der 93! Das Ergebnis einer Rundfrage an die 93 Intellektuellen über die Kriegsschuld* (Charlottenburg, 1920), 16-17.

79. *AEF*, 22-23 (4-6); Hubert Goenner and Giuseppe Castagnetti, "Albert Einstein as pacifist and democrat during World War I," *Science in context, 9:4* (1996), 325-386, on 332-333.

80. Einstein to Paul Ehrenfest, 23 Aug 1915, in *AEF*, 30 (12).

81. Ibid., 78-79 (60). See also Einstein to H.A. Lorentz, 21 Sep 1919, in ibid., 53 (34-35).

82. Speech to the Club for the Cultivation of Social and Scientific Relations in New York, Sep 1920, in ibid., 60 (41).

83. Einstein to H.A. Lorentz, 16 Aug 1923, in ibid., 82 (53); Scheideler and Goenner (ref. 10), 3-4.

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A few days after the November Revolution of 1918, Einstein gave a speech to the League for a New Fatherland that asserted two pre-requisites for a functioning democracy: "belief in the sound judgment and will of the people" and "willing submission" to this will.[84] Why this belief in a sound will of the people, which Einstein himself could scarcely share? As early as 1915, he had summed up his opinion of the common man: "vox populi, vox Rindvieh,"[85] "the vote of the people is the vote of a sheep." It seems that Einstein postulated a sound will of the people because he could not accept subordination to the will of the majority, which might contradict his universal values. His desire to ingrain a sound will in the people reflects his conception of a harmonious society in which moral individuals work for the common good.

An essential character of liberal democracy is pluralism, the recognition of competing social groups with different values and interests.[86] Einstein's non-pluralistic understanding of democracy became obvious in the economic, political, and social crisis of the years after the Armistice, which led to rebellions, fights over distribution, and a renewed militarism and nationalism. Bitter over the failure of his ideal of a harmonious society, he spoke now not of a "sound will of the people" but of the "base mob, governed by mass suggestion" and easily molded by the press into the "unresisting tool" of interest groups.[87] These interest groups appear in Einstein's writings only in a negative light: "commercial and political interests" that "systematically corrupt the sound common sense of the people."[88]

Since Einstein did not warrant conflicting interests in politics as legitimate, he condemned interest-driven politics as a moral misdemeanor. He regarded rulers, and even democratically elected governments, as deeply corrupted by political power and nostalgia for past traditions.[89] Now, people not acting with a sound will are driven either by primitive urges or external forces.[90] In principle, however, all humans rank equally: "My political ideal is democracy. Let every man be respected as an individual and no man idolized."[91] The gap between elitism and democracy

84. *AEF*, 44 (25). This speech probably was not given to students at the Reichstag, as Nathan and Norden suppose, but at a meeting of the League for a New Fatherland on 13 Nov 1918 (Goenner and Castagnetti (ref. 79), 363).
85. Einstein to Lorentz, 2 Aug 1915, in *AEF*, 30 (11).
86. Werner Fuchs, "Pluralismus," in Werner Fuchs, et al., eds., *Lexikon zur Soziologie* (Opladen, 1988), 576; Winfried Steffani, "Pluralismus," in Wilhelm Bernsdorf, ed., *Wörterbuch der Soziologie* (Stuttgart, 1969), 807-811.
87. Quotes from Einstein to Marie Curie, 25 Dec 1923, in *AEF*, 83 (65), and Einstein to Sigmund Freud, 30 Jul 1932, in *AEF*, 206 (190). See also Einstein to Paolo Straneo, 7 Jan 1915, in *CP*, 8, Part A, 77.
88. *MW*, 9. [AU: (6)?]
89. Letter to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 3 Jul 1930, in *AEF*, 124 (106); Einstein to J. Hadamard, 24 Sep 1929, in *AEF*, 118 (100). See also Rohe (ref. 74), 13-25.
90. Einstein to Jacques Hadamard, 24 Sep 1929, in *AEF*, 118 (100); *MW*, 54-55 (110-111).
91. *MW*, 8 (5).

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in Einstein's political thinking could only be overcome through a belief that the masses could be morally educated by the intellectual elite. But in this respect, too, Einstein's opinions remained contradictory.

Between politics and morality

Einstein's dismissal of interest-driven politics as a moral misdemeanor amounted to opposing morality to politics. His reaction to Kurt Hiller's plan for an upper chamber demonstrates this point. In 1914 Kurt Hiller, Alfred Wolfenstein, and Rudolf Kayser's "Activism" called for a political "rulership of moral and intellectual [*geistigen*] human being."[92] After a discussion with Einstein in mid-1918, Hiller sent him his brochure, *A German upper house*, calling for an aristocratic government of the "spiritual leaders."[93] Hiller accepts democracy but only if the rule of the people is "utterly subordinated to the common good." They must be directed by the "best people," people independent of individual interests or class affiliations.[94] Referring to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Hiller argues that only the "rule of the spirit" or of "spiritual individuals" can translate reason and the common good into politics and create a global alliance for peace. Despite agreeing in depreciating democracy as a compromise of particular interests, Einstein unreservedly rejected Hiller's plan since he believed that the concentration of power within a small group would inevitably lead to their corruption as "politicians of power and *Realpolitik* who agree upon the principle that private morality is not important to the relations between the states and the people."[95] Probably he referred here to an essay by Ernst Troeltsch, *Private and state morality* (1916), which differentiated between the humanitarian ethics of the individual and the terms of behavior of governments and politicians. These act according to "realistic interests of the state that happens to have the power and has to have the power in order to maintain and protect itself."[96]

That Einstein, disapproving of the political leadership of the intellectuals, argued that they would be corrupted by power gives several clues to his political thinking and acting. His understanding of politics as closely, yet diffusely related to such terms as "state," "government," "power," and "force" coincides with Max Weber's definition of politics as "a strive to gain power."[97] During the early 1920s,

92. Kurt Hiller, "Ein Deutsches Herrenhaus [1918]," in Hiller, *Verwirklichung des Geistes im Staat* (Leipzig, 1925), 80-119, on 82. See also Rudolf Kayser, "Aufklärung," in Kurt Hiller, ed., *Das Ziel* (Munich, 1917/18), 66-83, on 78, and Juliane Habereder, *Kurt Hiller und der literarische Aktivismus. Zur Geistesgeschichte des politischen Dichters im frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 1981), 57.
93. Hiller (ref. 92), 107.
94. Quotes from ibid., 84, 105; see also ibid., 82-85, 112-113.
95. Einstein to Kurt Hiller, 9 Sep 1918, in *AEF*, 42 (22).
96. Ernst Troeltsch, "Privatmoral und Staatsmoral," *Die Neue Rundschau, 27* (1916), 145-169, on 154; Goenner and Castagnetti (ref. 79), 377.
97. Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf, Politik als Beruf," in Weber, *Gesamtausgabe,* ed.

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Einstein could not see how to devise a more positively orientated view of politics against that of Weber. Only once, in 1921, did his understanding of politics as the implementation of ethical goals obtrude, in his suggestion that the President of Czechoslovakia be awarded the Nobel Prize for "never sacrificing his noble convictions to the success of *Realpolitik*."[98] In his answer to Hiller, Einstein favored a complete democratization of Germany in order to guarantee a "decentralization of the will for power" to the greatest possible extent.[99] As paradoxical as it may sound, Einstein herewith uttered a concrete political request in order to reduce politics as the strive to gain power. Again his answer to Hiller indicates his ambivalent relation to democratic political institutions. On the one hand he favored a strong parliament on whose majority the government would depend. In a letter to Arnold Sommerfeld of January 1922, he recognized the necessity of parties as a means of forming political will and of mediating between the individual and the government.[100] Yet he admitted in his letter to Hiller that such a constitution, based on Western ideals, would have major shortcomings, which he did not itemize. But from Einstein's disapproval of interest groups and of striving for power we may guess that he rejected parties as representatives of particular interests in a pluralistic democracy and the parliament as a battle field.

Einstein's statements on corruption by power explain why he never joined a political party himself or took on any direct political responsibility.[101] Using Max Weber's terminology, we may call Einstein a representative of the "ethic of ultimate ends [*Gesinnungsethik*]" whose actions aim at ensuring that "the flame of pure intentions, the flame of protesting for example against the injustice of the social order, never goes out." In contrast, the "ethic of responsibility [*Verantwortungsethik*]" consists in realizing ideals, in a responsible way by taking into account the consequences of political actions.[102] Einstein spoke of the responsibility of politicians in 1933: supporting the view that "political leaders must really all be pathological because a normal person would not be able to bear such a tremendous responsibility while at the same time being so little able to foresee the consequences of his decisions and actions."[103] Together with Einstein's remarks on corruption by power, this statement leads to the assumption that his sense of responsi-

Horst Baier, et al. (Tubingen, 1992), *17*, 157-252, on 159 (text of 1919). For the semantic "narrowing of the term politics to the art of power" see Volker Sellin, "Politik," in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (9 vols., Stuttgart, 1978), *4*, 789-874, on 831-833.

98. Einstein to Nobel-Komitee, 19 Jan 1921, in *AEF*, 60 (41).

99. Einstein to Kurt Hiller, 9 Sep 1918, in ibid., 42 (23).

100. Einstein to Romain Rolland, 22 Aug 1917, in ibid., 39 (21); Albert Einstein and Arnold Sommerfeld, *Briefwechsel,* ed. Armin Hermann (Basel, 1968), 98.

101. Goenner and Castagnetti (ref. 79), 365, and Anton Reiser [that is, Rudolf Kayser], *Albert Einstein* (New York, 1930), 140.

102. Weber (ref. 97), 237-238.

103. Einstein to Willem de Sitter, 4 Apr 1933, in Dukas und Hoffmann (ref. 44), 53.

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bility kept him from direct political participation. No doubt also that he saw his ideals endangered by the necessity of compromising as well as by political actions "using the means of violence."[104]

Einstein's political and moral involvement therefore expanded mainly in response to appeals or through memberships in numerous associations.[105] The more famous he became, the more requests he received to take over a presidency or join a committee. Although the various associations had different humanitarian goals, they all shared an often explicitly stated crossbench orientation, as, for example, the "Society of the Friends of the New Russia" or the "Red Aid," which had close ties to the communist party. The call Einstein had signed to support the "Red Aid" in its work for political prisoners and children stated: "The German Red Aid is a non-partisan organization."[106] Other left-wing liberals like Thomas and Heinrich Mann or the banker Hugo Simon could also be found among the signatories. Consequently, Einstein refused or regretted his membership in organizations linked with a political party.[107] With the exception of his own participation in elections, Einstein only once gave up on the "imperative [sic!] distance toward political parties," namely in the run-up to the parliamentary election in July 1932.[108]

Einstein's statements on communism illustrate how he reacted when his ideals conflicted with the methods of implementing them. After spontaneously agreeing with the Bolshevists, "as peculiar as their ideas are," [109] he increasingly differentiated between the communist ideal and its practice. From his observations of the USSR he concluded that a planned economy led to a drop in productivity and that the principle of a cadre party led to a suppression of freedom of speech and to a corruption of the ruling elite.[110] He therefore spoke against communist methods and refused all statements which glorified conditions in the USSR.[111] Writing to

104. Weber (ref. 97), 248.

105. Uriel Tal, "Jewish and universal ethics in the life and thought of Albert Einstein," in Gerald Holton and Yehuda Elkana, eds., *Albert Einstein. Historical and cultural perspectives* (Princeton, 1982), 297-318, on 299: "the main thrust of his [Einstein's] political reaction continued to be moral."

106. *Die Menschenrechte, 1* (Dec 1926), 10. The call was issued by the German League for Human Rights to which Einstein belonged.

107. Einstein to the pro-Soviet German "Committee against imperialistic wars," 29 Sep 1932, in *AEF*, 198 (181-182); see also Einstein to R.N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, 6 Jul 1932, in *AEF*, 220 (203-204).

108. Grundmann (ref. 2), 320. Einstein could not vote before 1926 since he was registered as a Swiss citizen (ibid., 280).

109. Einstein to Max Born, 27 Jan 1920, in Albert Einstein and Max Born, *Briefwechsel 1916-1955* (Munich, 1991), 43.

110. Einstein to Henri Barbusse, June 1932, in *AEF*, 195 (178); interview with Einstein in the *New York Times*, 17 May 1925, in *AEF*, 93 (75); Einstein to Michele Besso, 21 Oct 1932, in Albert Einstein and Michele Besso, *Correspondance 1903-1955* (Paris, 1972), 290.

111. Einstein to Henri Barbusse, June 1932, in *AEF*, 195 (179), and to the "Friends of the Soviet Union," 30 June 1929, in *AEF*, 115 (96).

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his son Hans-Albert in 1929 Einstein said: "I have stayed truly red. If I knew an appropriate way I would immediately apply 'bolshevism'. But humans are an awfully tricky kind of material!"[112] With this reservation he praised Lenin as a warrior for social justice and as an "innovator of humanity's conscience."[113] He still spoke in favor of the communist ideal of a society without classes, which he believed to be in line with his model of a harmonious society of self-determined individuals. Max Born among others pointed out that if Einstein had studied Marx and Engels, he would have found that they contradicted his view of the dictatorship of the proletariat.[114]

But Einstein did not always succeed in separating between the ideal and its practical implementation in order to avoid the question of political and moral responsibility and to preserve his role as a moral institution. In 1930, Einstein signed a letter of protest against the shooting of Russian scientists who, without a trial, had been found guilty of sabotage. Planck had sent this declaration to Einstein for his signature. Einstein expressed his absolute willingness to sign on Planck's recommendation: his source, an honest, "not always objective" Professor Frank, had confirmed that the accusations against the scientists were false and politically motivated.[115] This protest in return provoked the biting criticism of the Russian writer Maxim Gorki who accused the signatories of participating in the rabble-rousing propaganda of the capitalistic exploiters against the USSR. With their protest, Gorki pointed out, the signatories appeared to tolerate and cover up the social and economic injustice as well as the militarism of their home states. In contrast to the Western world, Gorki went on, the USSR had removed "an obstacle to the growth of human culture in general," that is, the capitalistic economic system, something the signatories only "platonically dreamt about."[116]

Gorki's attack deprived Einstein of the possibility of separating between his values and their realization. He now had to decide whether to give preference to the realization of his ideals or to stick to his scruples. In the autumn of 1931, he publicly withdrew his signature on the letter of protest on the ground that his supporters, Max Planck and Professor Frank, had misinformed him.[117] Einstein could only give an evasive answer to the harsh criticism of Russian emigrants who complained that his withdrawal would justify barbaric Stalinist actions. In his answer he denied that he would approve the methods used in Russia. But he also expressed his "great respect for the high aims and for the high idealism" of the social

112. *Einstein's letters at Christie's, 12 Nov 1996 in Berlin*, Auction catalogue, Christie's, *The Einstein family correspondence* (London, 1996), 69, lot 65. See also *MW*, 75 (93).
113. Statement to the League for the Human Rights on the occasion of Lenin's death, 6 Jan 1929, quoted in Abraham Pais, *Ich vertraue auf Intuition* (Heidelberg, 1995), 225.
114. Einstein and Born (ref. 109), 46.
115. EAJ, 19-344, 19-346, for notice of which I thank Giuseppe Castagnetti.
116. Maxim Gorki, "An die Humanisten!" *Das Neue Russland, 8* (Jan 1931), 27-30, on 30.
117. "Professor Einstein on the Soviet Union," in *Das Neue Russland, 8* (Nov 1931), 40; a similar declaration by Einstein had been printed September in the *Neue Montagszeitung.*

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reformers in Russia.[118] He explained his withdrawal from the protest by his desire not to embitter "people who have honestly embraced a good cause with all their might."[119] Only on the basis of his uncomfortable experiences did Einstein cease to separate the idea as such from the method of putting it into effect. In an interview in 1933 he declared himself a whole-hearted democrat and an "enemy to Bolshevism as well as Fascism. I am against all dictatorships."[120]

Nevertheless, before 1933 Einstein preferred the moral education of the individual as the least problematic and most important method of achieving a society of self-determined people living in freedom and social justice. His emphasis on the moral individual corresponded to his suggestions for solving social problems by educating and ennobling mankind through the arts and sciences as well as with the help of the role models of spiritual and moral leaders and an improved primary and secondary education.[121] He therefore participated actively in the Commission for Intellectual Cooperation and appeared as a speaker at meetings for adult education. In his letter to Maxim Gorki in 1932 he gave this educational approach priority to change in social and political structures: "May your work continue to ennoble men, whatever form their political organization may take. Destiny will always be decided by what the individual feels, wills and does. This is why—in the long run—the education of the human will always be more the work of artists than that of politicians."[122]

In 1930, with totalitarian ideologies threatening democracy, Einstein traced the "present manifestations of decadence" to an increase in the degree of organization in society and to specialization and the intensification of work limiting the individual's possibility for improvement.[123] He suggested a division of labor with sufficient leisure time for self-improvement. His assumption that the specialization and organization could be turned around and the liberated individual would use his leisure to improve himself was scarcely realistic. Einstein's rejection of specialization extended to physics. He insisted on an "understanding of science as a whole" that resulted in a coherent world picture and abetted the self-cultivation of the researcher while specialization "degrades the researcher to the level of a common skilled labourer."[124] Einstein's refusal to acknowledge developments that

118. Joseph Buschansky to Einstein, 3 Oct 1931 (EAJ, 45-727); Buschansky to Einstein, 25 Sep 1931 (EAJ, 45-724).
119. Einstein to Buschansky, 30 Sep 1931 (EAJ, 45-726).
120. *AEF*, 250 (234).
121 *MW*, 10 (12-13), 14 (12), and *AEF*, 127 (109).
122. *AEF*, 221 (204). For Einstein's later modification of this concept see Einstein to Hedwig Born and Max Born, 12 Apr 1949, in Einstein and Born (ref. 109), 239.
123. *MW*, 12-13 (14-15).
124. Ibid., 33 (69). For the consequences of these views for Einstein's work as an organizer of science see Giuseppe Castagnetti and Hubert Goenner, "Directing a Kaiser Wilhelm Institute: Einstein, organizer of science?" Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, Preprint 63 (1997), 55-80.

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do not allow for regression becomes obvious with his remarks on modern arts, demonstrating his participation in the widespread culture-criticism in the Weimar Republic. He did not give up on this idea of educating mankind through the arts but complained that "painting and music have definitely degenerated and largely lost their popular appeal."[125]

From the early 1930s Einstein put a stronger emphasis on the educational and leadership claims of intellectuals. He expected quicker solutions to the most pressing issues, such as disarmament, from the enlightenment and mobilization of the broader public than from the long-term ennoblement of humankind.[126] He transferred the task of enlightening the public to the "intellectual leaders of the world" and suggested a "radical pacifist association of renowned authors, artists, and scholars" that should seek, "through the press, to exert political influence in matters of disarmament, security, etc." The physicist Paul Langevin should take the lead "because he is a man not only of good will but also of good political sense."[127] Here Einstein understood politics in a positive way as the practical realization—or at least the public propaganda—of ethical goals. Nevertheless, Einstein still rejected party politics and politics of power and therefore doubted "whether any professional politician should be an official member of the organization."[128] Artists and scholars should shift their program from indirect ennoblement to the direction of moral and political activity. Somehow his experience that not moral individuals, but competing interest groups and parties, lead society did not make him question his social ideas. He stuck to the selfless individual, the moral teacher of the masses. Einstein's letter to Freud in the early thirties illustrates both his self-image as a member of an elite of values and his non-pluralistic understanding of democracy: "Political leaders or governments owe their power partly to the use of violence, and partly to their election by the masses. They cannot be considered representatives of the intellectually and morally superior part of the nation. The intellectual [*geistige*] elite does not exert any direct influence on the history of the world today."[129] An international association of intellectuals "gaining a significant and wholesome moral influence over the solution of political problems" should try to change this situation by declaring the proper positions in the press.[130]

125. *MW*, 12 (14).
126. Interview, Jan 1931, in *AEF*, 142 (125-126). See also Einstein's speech in New York, 4 Mar 1931, and letter to American opponents of war, Jul 1931, in ibid., 139 (123), 157 (141).
127. Quotes from Einstein's message to the meeting of the War Resisters' International, August 1931, in ibid., 158 (141-142); Einstein to Victor Margueritte, 19 Oct 1932 and to Maurice Solovine, 20 Nov 1932, in ibid., 199 (183), 200 (183).
128. Einstein to Chaim Weizmann, 20 Nov 1932, in ibid., 200 (184); see also his letter to R.N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, 6 Jul 1932, in ibid., 220 (203-204).
129. Ibid., 203 (186).
130. Ibid., 203 (187). Einstein continued to maintain this idea, as in his proposal for a "Court of wisdom" as a "Conscience of mankind," *New York Times* (14 Mar 1939), 1, 15.

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From democracy to the "democracy of a leader"

Many leftist intellectuals of the Weimar Republic shared Einstein's views. Though "all left-wing philosophers agreed in the radically democratic idea of a community supporting the self-determination of the individual in freedom," they believed that the idea should be realized by an intellectual elite. Norbert Schürgers states that almost all socialist and liberal philosophers held a "narrow-minded conviction about the ignorance of the masses and a dangerously naive belief in the moral integrity and the might of the intellectual elite."[131] In the famous book *The revolt of the masses* by José Ortega y Gasset, whom Einstein had already met in Toledo in 1923, we read that the "classification of society into masses and elites...is not based on a social but on human categories."[132] In the democratic and pluralistic society following the 1918 Revolution the majority of the educated class as well as the critical intellectuals felt even more threatened than they had during the late Empire in their elitist self-understanding by organized interest groups in unions and parties.[133] This malaise did not cause them to surrender their leadership and educational claims but rather to call more strongly for the greatest possible freedom to develop the creative personality endangered through organization, leveling, and, the dominance of the masses. Even the democratically minded professor of philosophy Ernst Troeltsch favored the "formation...of a new intellectual aristocracy" that "could offer a counterweight to the leveling of democracy."[134] The ideal of a non-pluralistic people's community free of social tensions and political conflicts corresponded to the expectations of a large part of the population in the 1920s who felt politically disorientated, socially marginalized, and economically insecure. The widespread hope for a "Fuehrer" (leader) to bring about this community must be seen in this context.[135]

With the aggravating crises of parliamentarism in the early 1930s left-wing circles intensified their efforts to establish the influence of elites by constitutional changes—a development that influenced Einstein's political thinking. One example is the so-called "Weimarer Kreis" (Weimar Circle) to which pro-republic professors like Adolf von Harnack, Willy Hellpach, David Hilbert, Friedrich Meinecke, Walther Nernst, and Ernst Troeltsch belonged, all of them personally acquainted with Einstein. They propagated the popular concept of a democracy in which elites or charismatic political leaders would compete for the people's votes in regularly

131. Norbert J. Schürgers, *Politische Philosophie in der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart, 1989), 15, 47.
132. José Ortega y Gasset, *Hauptwerke* (Stuttgart, 1983), 17. See also Thomas F. Glick, *Einstein in Spain* (Princeton, 1988), 136-137.
133. For the following see Döring (ref. 5), 184, 202, 248-249, and Bernd Faulenbach, "Die Historiker und die 'Massengesellschaft' der Weimarer Republik," in Schwabe (ref. 5), 225-246, on 226, 245.
134. Ernst Troeltsch, "Die geistige Revolution," *Kunstwart, 34* (1920/21), 227-233, on 233.
135. Eberhard Kolb, *Die Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1984), 111.

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scheduled elections.[136] A person with leadership qualities—or, Max Weber's word, a charismatic *Führernatur*—vested with considerable power as president, would balance the power of unions and pressure groups. This leader would relegate the parliament as well as the parties to a reporting and servicing role.[137] Max Weber, who developed this political model in 1920 shortly before he died, imagined that the leader's authority with the masses would be based not on common political goals but on his personal leadership qualities. Consequently, Weber emphasized that the leader should not follow directives but only his own convictions and values to point the way for social development. With the personalization of power and the debasement of parliament and the parties, the "democracy of a leader" differed in its essential characteristics from the democracy based on the natural right of a sovereign people to organize themselves. This has to be emphasized just as much as the fact that people who supported Weber's idea did not have a totalitarian state in mind. Their main concern, like Weber's, was "how to possibly unify aristocratic and democratic principles, or...how to render individualism possible in an industrial society of the masses."[138] In view of the acute crisis of parliamentarism, "many ideas, formally apparently anti-democratic, were suggestions for realizing a society that insured free self-determination."[139]

Astonishingly similar thoughts can be found in Einstein's essay *Wie ich die Welt sehe* (1930). In it he discusses the problem that the increasing organization of society limits the development of leadership types: "Only a few people are known to the masses as individuals through their creative achievements....Organization has to some extent taken the place [in politics, science and the arts] of leading personalities [*Führernaturen*]." His conviction that only the creative personality can create values for the society, "while the herd as such remains dull in thought and dull in feeling," does not recommend egalitarian individualism. To arrive at a more stable government and to help the value-setting individual achieve a stronger part in politics Einstein believed it necessary—even in a democracy—that "one man should do the thinking and directing and generally have the responsibility." "But the led must not be coerced, they must be able to choose the leader." Thus, Einstein argued in favor of the necessity of elections not so much because of the right of self-determination, but rather because an "autocratic system of coercion" would soon degenerate: "For force always attracts men of low morality."[140]

In concrete terms Einstein suggested a change in the "impersonal character of the electoral system" following the model of the United States: "They have a President who is elected for a sufficiently long period and has sufficient powers really to exercise his responsibility."[141] He did not mention the main differences between

136. Döring (ref. 5), 207-231, 252, 256-260.
137. Schürges (ref. 131), 80, and Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber. Gesellschaft, Politik und Geschichte* (Frankfurt, 1974), 10, 61, 88.
138. Mommsen (ref. 137), 49-50, 62, 83.
139. Schürgers (ref. 131), 23.
140. *MW*, 12 (14), 8-9 (10).
141. Ibid., 9 (10).

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the presidential democracy of the United States and the plebiscitarian democracy of the leader: for example the system of checks and balances or the power of the purse of the Congress as counterpoises to the executive.[142] Likewise, he did not consider whether (and how) the German parliament, already by 1930 unable to act, could take over a control function of the government. Max Weber had also looked to the U.S. when he developed his model of a plebiscitarian democracy.[143] The personalized election of the president in the U.S., his powerful position, and the role of the parties as devoted election campaigners served Weber as models. The position or the competencies of the congress and the House of Representatives played a minor role or none at all.

Einstein's behavior at the parliamentary elections on July 31, 1932 shows how little he knew about the needs of modern people's parties for legitimization through their members. The International Socialist Action Group had asked him to sign a call for a joint list of candidates for the social-democratic and communist parties to set a uniform front of workers against the fascist danger. Since Einstein did not consider a public call to be a successful way to unite people he first refused to sign. Instead, he suggested that he and the artist Käthe Kollwitz invite the two party leaders and the leader of the General German Union to a personal discussion in order to "sort this thing out."[144] This idea resulted in an open letter to the three workers' leaders on June 17, 1932, in which Einstein, Kollwitz, and Heinrich Mann wrote: "In our view, the danger [of fascism] can only be removed by the cooperation of both the big workers' parties in the election....We emphasize most strongly that the responsibility lies with the leaders. Only the plain desire of the workers to stand together should decide."[145] Only when the three workers' leaders rejected this letter did Einstein sign the public call of the socialist action group. This incident illustrates his ignorance or neglect of the competing ideologies and of the party members, whose consent he took for granted, as well as his overestimation of the power of the party leaders and of his own influence as a non-partisan authority.

Einstein had spoken in favor of a complete democratization of Germany through a "decentralization of the will for power" in his response to Hiller in 1918. He represented the opposite position in 1930. As his further statements show, he had not turned away from the democratic principle of self-determination. But now the "centralization of the will for power" was to be a prerequisite to the ideal state. Consequently, in 1930, he complained that:[146]

142. Peter H. Merkl and Dieter Raabe, *Politische Soziologie der USA. Die konservative Demokratie* (Wiesbaden, 1977), 118, 145.
143. Mommsen (ref. 137), 90-93.
144. Udo Vorholt, *Die politische Theorie Leonard Nelsons* (Baden-Baden, 1998), 203.
145. Christa Kirsten and Hans-Jürgen Treder, eds., *Albert Einstein in Berlin 1913-1933* (2 vols., Berlin, 1979), *1*, 223.
146. *MW*, 12 (14-15).

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> in politics not only are leaders lacking, but in also the independence of spirit and the sense of justice of the citizen have to a great extent declined. The democratic, parliamentarian regime, which is based on such independence, has in many places been shaken; dictatorships have sprung up and are tolerated, because men's sense of the dignity and the rights of the individual are no longer strong enough. In two weeks the sheep-like masses of any country can be worked up by the newspapers into such a state of excited fury that men are prepared to put on uniforms and kill and be killed for the sake of the sordid ends of a few interest groups.

In this situation the autonomous government of a leader of high moral integrity should restore lost values as well as defend the right for personal development and self-determination of the individual. Einstein had regarded the former German Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gustav Stresemann, as such a leader. Writing on the occasion of Stresemann's death on October 12, 1929, he described the former statesman as a person with the "characteristic[s] always found in great leaders." "He did not appear as the representative of a caste, a profession, a country...but directly as a thoughtful individual and as the preserver of an idea."[147] Einstein would have welcomed the candidacy of Heinrich Mann for German President in 1932 as Kurt Hiller had suggested.[148]

Even if Einstein had in mind a leader to put into effect positive values it may be doubted that he "had realised and had warned about the dangers for democracy in Germany" in the political crisis of 1930, and that his suggestion for political change might have helped to strengthen the democratic consciousness of citizens.[149] The analogy to the American political system he had in mind did not hold. The American system rests on a "general preparedness to compromise in favor of pluralistic, partial solutions, the preservation of democratic procedures and a deeply rooted respect towards the constitution," precisely what was missing in Germany in 1930.[150] The end of Hermann Müller's chancellorship in March was also the end of the last government still holding a majority in the Reichstag. The following presidential cabinet of Heinrich Brüning only governed via emergency laws of the German President and had instructions curtailing the activities of parliament and destroying the political power of the social democratic party.[151] This shifted power from the parliament and the parties towards the presidency held by the 80-year old Field Marshal von Hindenburg, though he was not in the least the leader Einstein looked for.

147. Michael Grüning, ed., *Ein Haus für Albert Einstein. Erinnerungen, Briefe, Dokumente* (Berlin, 1990), 311.
148. Ibid., 202-203. See also Kurt Hiller, "Der Präsident [1932]," in Hiller, *Köpfe und Tröpfe* (Hamburg, Stuttgart, 1950), 29-35, on 32.
149. Cf. Grundmann (ref. 2), 320.
150. Merkl and Raabe (ref. 142), 149.
151. Detlev J. Peukert, *Die Weimarer Republik: Krisenjahre der klassischen Moderne* (Frankfurt, 1987), 252-254, and Kolb (ref. 135), 123-125.

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In secondary literature, the Weimar circle is usually associated with the liberal-democratic spectrum of left-wing Weimar intellectuals. However, the commonly used dichotomy between left- and right-wing intellectuals does not capture certain important elements of the Weimar circle's program: tendency to limit plurality of values in a democracy (in favor of universal values) and provision for aristocratic corrections.[152] The same ambivalence appears in Einstein's advocacy of the right of self-determination and the political emancipation of the individual and the need for an elitist direction and a charismatic leader under the impression of a crisis-wracked pluralistic society. Einstein's constant shifting between democratic and elitist thinking belongs to the ideological confusion in the discourses of the intellectuals of the Weimar Republic.

Einstein protested strongly against the emergency laws in 1932 that drastically limited the freedom of the press. According to him, a state that hinders its citizens from forming an opinion of their own would inevitably degenerate into an "association of underlings."[153] At the same time, the idea of an aristocratic democracy lived on not only in the public but also in Einstein's private environment. Rudolf Kayser's book on Spinoza, published in 1932, can be interpreted as a recommendation for the political institutionalization of the moral influence of intellectuals. Einstein read this book at the end of that year and wrote the foreword to the English version in 1946. They may well have discussed Kayser's work as it progressed. Kayser emphasizes harmony of the basic beliefs of a nation and the importance of freedom as the key values of Spinoza. This need for freedom ought to entail that every government be based on the will of the people. But, since only reason leads to freedom, Spinoza would favor the "right of the personality for leadership" and would choose a liberal democracy with an "aristocratic leadership" of individuals "of high intellectual rank."[154] It is not surprising that this view is discussed very positively in Kayser's book on Spinoza since Kayser was a cofounder of the activist intellectual movement that had called for a political aristocracy of intellectuals in 1916.

In Einstein's attempts to explain why politics went off course in 1933 his elitist patterns of thought once again come to fruitition. He easily explained the Nazi takeover by the lack of political education and the manipulability of the people, the corruption of the economical and ruling elites, and the fact that the common man was unfortunately yielding to his urges.[155] But he lacked an explanation for

152. Manfred Gangl, "Vorwort," Manfred Gangl and Gérard Raulet, eds., *Intellektuellendiskursein der Weimarer Republik. Zur politischen Kultur einer Gemengelage* (Frankfurt, 1993), 9-11. For the breadth and multiplicity of cultural criticism cutting across all political camps see also Peukert (ref. 151) and Harwood, "Woltereck" (ref. 8).
153. Einstein to Rudolf Olden, 12 Oct 1932, in *AEF*, 221 (204).
154. Rudolf Kayser, *Spinoza. Bildnis eines geistigen Helden* (Wien, 1932), 294-295. See also ibid., 296-299, Kayser (ref. 92), 78; and Manfred Walther, "Carl Schmitt contra Baruch Spinoza oder Vom Ende der politischen Theologie," Delf, et al. (ref. 47), 422-442, on 434-435.
155. Einstein to Paul Ehrenfest, 14 Apr 1933, in *AEF*, 234 (219).

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the passive behavior of scientists and artists. He could only explain that their preoccupation with the objective world did not prompt a selfless defense of ethical values because of their weakness of character. Where then was the true scientist called to "intellectual and moral leadership"?[156] So he helplessly wrote in April 1933: "The only curious thing is the utter failure of the so-called intellectual aristocracy."[157] This failure also meant the failure of Einstein's ideal of the true scientist and of the social and political concepts he derived from it. During the spring of 1933 Einstein exchanged some revealing letters with the physicist Max von Laue. Laue explained his own political restraint as a consequence of his self image as an unworldly natural scientist aloof from society. "The political battle demands other methods and other natures than does scientific research....Can you name a mathematician, a physicist, a chemist with a reputation, who has been moderately successful in politics? These sciences...are so unworldly that they make even Renaissance minds that practice them unworldly [too]."[158] Einstein answered:[159]

> I do not share your view that the scientific man should observe silence in political matters, that is, human affairs in the broader sense. The situation in Germany shows whither such restraint will lead: to the surrender of leadership, without any resistance, to those who are blind and irresponsible. Does not such restraint signify a lack of responsibility? Where would we be, had men like Giordano Bruno, Spinoza, Voltaire, and Humboldt thought and behaved in such a fashion?

Einstein apparently did not realize the contradiction between his call to action and his ideal of the true scientist, driven to pure science as an escape from the mundane. Still staying closely attached to this ideal, he could write to Max Planck, who had yielded to pressure to eject Einstein from the Prussian Academy of Sciences, that their friendship remained the same "regardless of what has taken place 'on a lower level,' so to speak."[160]

156. Einstein to Thomas Mann, 29 Apr 1933, in ibid., 237 (222).
157. Einstein to Willem de Sitter, 5 April 1933, in Dukas and Hoffmann (ref. 44), 53.
158. Max von Laue to Einstein, 14 and 30 May 1933, quoted from Armin Hermann, *Wie die Wissenschaft ihre Unschuld verlor* (Stuttgart, 1982), 131-132.
159. Einstein to Laue, 26 May 1933, in *AEF*, 234 (218).
160. Einstein to Planck, 6 Apr 1933, in *AEF*, 233-234 (218); see also Dieter Hoffmann, "Das Verhältnis der Akademie zu Republik und Diktatur. Max Planck als Sekretar," in Wolfram Fischer et al., eds., *Die Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin 1914-1945* (Berlin, 2000), 53-85, and Planck's letters to H. von Ficker, 31 Mar and 13 Apr 1933, in Kirsten and Treder (ref. 145), *1*, 245, 254.

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