

Max Weber in the Netherlands 1903-1907.  
A neglected episode in the early history of The Protestant Ethic\*

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I

As of today Max Weber is a canonical author, who provides us with set texts for university education throughout the developed world. In this sense we may say that he is a 21st century author; a current part of our cultural history; and we would be unwise to underestimate the power of cultural canons and traditions which, though by no means released from history, commonly move according to a much slower time scale than the more immediate history of living agents. As befits his lofty status, the canonical Weber deals with the largest of concepts — the ‘rational’ construction of modernity — using the largest social and political units — the ‘Occident’ and the European ‘Great Powers’ — across a time-frame of millennia. However, this canonical Weber was once a living agent himself; a man who enacted and endured his own history on a more recognisably human scale. The historical Weber was a lifelong depressive who became chronically concerned with his health and who supposed that the cure lay in communion with nature, as a relief from the agitating sphere of *Kultur* (or absolute human ‘values’). Thus he sun-bathed in the nude at home;<sup>1</sup> rode ponies in the Scottish rain and ‘mizzle’; or sat and walked alone for days on the sand-dunes by the *Noordzee*. This historical figure also grew up within a world of far-flung family connections which — then as now — knew no national or ‘Great Power’ boundaries; and so we find him amongst poor hill farmers in the Southern states of America, or spending leisurely afternoons with his affluent mercantile relatives in Amsterdam, listening patiently to the seedy stories of their family life. Such contact with an often unostentatious and perhaps intractable reality is of course essential to any great or canonical author. Thinkers can only take on a greater, posthumous life because in their own day they have not been simply purveyors of grand theory, either in literature or in ‘science’ (*Wissenschaft*). Instead their theoretical formulations have arisen through an engagement with ‘life’ in all its Nietzschean wealth and depth, though without any of Nietzsche’s paralysing elitism.<sup>2</sup> Such an interaction between life in its ‘everyday’

\* Abbreviations: *PE* for *Protestant Ethic*; *AfSS* for *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*; *GARS* for *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, I (Tübingen, 1920); *MWG* for *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe*, H. Baier, ed., et al. (Tübingen, 1984-). Letters by Weber within the latter edition are cited as *Briefe*. — My thanks to Judith Pollmann for reading a draft of this paper, and to Sam Whimster for xeroxes of the transcripts of Weber’s correspondence prepared by Marianne Weber and now in the Dahlem archive.

<sup>1</sup> *Briefe* 13/14.4.06, *MWG* II/5.76.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ‘Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Geschichte für das Leben’ [1874], in *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (1876).

reality<sup>3</sup> and a mind of the utmost conceptual and reflexive power is supplied by a period of about five years beginning in 1903 when Max Weber first went to the Netherlands. Initially this was just another beach holiday, but inevitably his reflexive mind began to focus on the society around it; it moved away from Zen-like nature and came back to *Kultur*. This in turn had an impact on Max Weber the author, and in particular his most famous and now canonical text, *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* — a work which first became the object of conscious preoccupation, a ‘work in progress’, in the months immediately after his return from holiday in Scheveningen in June 1903.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed the reader who begins Part II, the substantive part, of *The Protestant Ethic* (or *PE*) might reasonably suppose that the Netherlands will be a central part of the account which is to follow. The country is listed as one of ‘those lands of *Kultur* with the highest degree of capitalist development’ in the 16th and 17th centuries, whilst the Dutch are also associated with all the major strands in Weber’s remarkable religious composite, ‘ascetic Protestantism’: Calvinism, the baptisers and Pietism. The ‘*Kulturkampf*’ between Dutch Arminians and Calvinists after 1609 is selected as a central historical episode, just as the Synod of Dordrecht is upheld as a doctrinal exemplar of Calvinism. The fact that there was (in Weber’s view) no impassable gulf between Calvinism and the baptisers or *Täufer*<sup>5</sup> was demonstrated by ‘the independent sects of England and Holland’. Finally we are told that Pietism ‘first grew up on Calvinist soil... above all in Holland’ [XXI.2, 5-6].<sup>6</sup> Surely these references point to a major role for the Netherlands in the argument of the *PE*?

The point is reinforced by the location of the Dutch at the heart of ‘Western Europe’ [84] or the Weberian ‘Occident’: the classic locus of rationalization and modern capitalism.<sup>7</sup> Weber was rightly scathing about those of his critics who simply assumed that the presence of a religious and ascetic component, such as Calvinism, could in all cases produce a capitalist outcome: ‘That the *mere* fact of confessional adherence

3 The ‘everyday’, the ‘normal’ and the ‘average’ are central categories for Weber and run throughout the *PE*: eg. *AfSS* XXI.19, 26, 27, 31, 37 n.74, 38, 44, 46, 69, 73, 74.

4 See his letters to Marianne Weber from there, 6-13 June 1903: Zentrales Staatsarchiv Dahlem, Rep. 92, Nachlaß Max Weber. [Hereafter ‘Dahlem Nachlaß’.]

5 The German distinction between *Baptisten* — which in effect means ‘English Baptists’, although they emigrated to America and even back to Germany in 1834 — and *Täufer* — a generic term for all sects with an interest in adult baptism — is hard to reproduce in English. I translate the first as ‘Baptists’, the second as ‘baptisers’.

6 References in square brackets are either to the original text of the *PE* in *AfSS* XX (1904) 1-54, XXI (1905) 1-110 in the form [XX.1], or, as page numbers alone [111], to new material inserted in the revised 1920 text in *GARS*, I, 17-206. I also cite the German texts of the ‘Vorbemerkung’ and ‘The Protestant sects and the spirit of capitalism’, *GARS*, I, 1-16, 207-236 on the same principle. All translations from German are my own. No disrespect for current English language translations of the *PE* is intended thereby; but in my opinion none of these is framed according to sufficiently historical principles — on which point see my comment ‘Translation as a conceptual act’, *Max Weber Studies* 2 (2001) 59-63. More specifically, none allows for an adequate distinction between the 1904-1905 and the 1920 texts. Note finally that whilst the German edition of the *PE* by Klaus Lichtblau and Johannes Weiß (Bodenheim, 1993) deserves all credit for being the first to address this distinction, its textual listing is not complete and it will not serve as a scholarly edition.

7 For a classical summary of this theme see the ‘Vorbemerkung’ [1920], [1-16].

could drum up out of the soil a particular economic development in this way; that Siberian Baptists would inevitably become wholesalers, and Calvinist inhabitants of the Sahara industrialists — such an opinion will hardly be attributed to me.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, he was quite as much a universal and ‘sociological’ thinker as he was an historical one: specific contexts were important, but they could be transcended. Calvinist causation might not be linked to a capitalist outcome like a rod to a piston, but still Weber adhered to the view that the psychological impact of ascetic religiosity — its tendency to produce ‘a virtuoso capitalistic, acquisitive sense’ — was the same ‘*wherever it has appeared*’ [XX.8]. This is what he meant when in a famous (but much misinterpreted) term he talked of an ‘inner’ or ‘elective affinity’ between ascetic Protestantism and capitalism [XX.11, 54; XXI.56]. So: given a location at the heart of the Occident — a wider rationalizing *Kultur* which favoured capitalism in so many other respects besides that of the religious ethic — the expectation that there might be an achieved capitalist outcome in the Dutch case was entirely reasonable. According to Weber’s own definition: ascetic Protestantism ought to take effect anywhere where ‘the *possibility* of capitalist development was *generally* present in the area in question.’<sup>9</sup> So here again, we might expect a quite central treatment of the Netherlands.

But if we ask whether these expectations are met in the text of the *PE* as written in 1904-1905, the answer must be No. There are indeed a sizeable number of ‘Dutch’ references throughout the text; nor does Weber omit some consideration of the problem of Dutch capitalism. Yet any talk of there being a specifically Dutch character or centrality in the argument of the original *PE* would be misplaced. By comparison with the amount and graphic quality of the attention devoted to England and America, or even to Germany — an ascetic failure but (curiously) a belated capitalist success — the Netherlands is virtually an absentee. Here is a marked paradox. And yet it is not the only paradox at work since, despite this general truth, some of the additions Weber made to the revised text of the *PE* published in 1920 *do* tend to highlight local Dutch peculiarity. Without actually subverting the original structure, they certainly represent a cross-current. Clearly there are major unanswered questions here, and to answer them we must examine Max Weber’s encounter with the 17th century Dutch past and also with his 20th century Dutch present. In doing so the history of the *PE* emerges in a fresh light at a point which hitherto has been almost entirely neglected: the years immediately after its first publication.

## II

If we consider the original, 1904-1905 text of the *PE*, there are at least two causes tending to diminish or veil the Dutch presence. The most obvious was Weber’s

<sup>8</sup> ‘Kritische Bemerkungen zu den vorstehenden ‘Kritische Beiträge’, *AfSS*, XXV (1907) 246, cf. H. K. Fischer, ‘Kritische Beiträge zu Prof. M. Webers Abhandlung: ‘Die protestantische Ethik...’, *ibidem*, 241-242.

<sup>9</sup> [26 n.1]. This note was attached in the 1920 text to clarify the meaning of the quotation at [XX.8]; but this was clarification and not alteration.

conventional belief in 18th century Dutch stagnation: that, however advanced Dutch capitalism might have appeared in the 17th century, this was a tendency that had not been sustained and developed thereafter, as it had in England. Thus from the outset a set of unobtrusive but persistent statements make clear his belief in Dutch capitalist deficiency. It was a Dutch sea-captain who ‘wanted to go halfway through hell for profit, even if he singed his sails’ [XX.20], but this was a kind of self-condemnation, since naked greed and high risk were not rational capitalist procedures according to Weber. The Leiden textile manufacturer and political theorist, Pieter de la Court, is invoked as a proponent of low wages in industry, whereas Weber, adopting the avowedly left liberal and ‘democratic’ perspective of his day,<sup>10</sup> holds that high wages best conduce to rational capitalist maximization of productivity; and in his most general pronouncement, he states that ‘the great monied men in the Netherlands were overwhelmingly *not* adherents of a strictly observant Calvinism, but Arminians’ [XX.22, 26 n.1]. Having thus sidelined the Dutch in Part I, he offers only fairly brief reflections in Part II of the text to explain the deficient capitalist ethic of the Dutch *bourgeoisie*: they were *rentiers* and patricians rather than aggressive industrial capitalists; they bought into a feudal nobility; and they helped create a traditionalist rural peasantry via land reclamation. All of these features diverted their energies away from a thrusting, rationalising urban sphere. Political and economic stagnation was paralleled by the decline of radical Calvinism and the promotion of religious toleration after the death of Maurits of Nassau in 1625. [XXI.42 n.78; 94-95, 102-103] In his own day Weber nurtured just the same ‘backward’ image of the Dutch, as can be seen from his contacts with his Fallenstein and Bunge relatives in Amsterdam. They helped run a tobacco import company, working only very short hours and relying almost exclusively on a ‘colossal’ inherited capital with otherwise ‘ancestral’ business methods; the psychological backdrop to this was an atmosphere of physical comfort and ethical laxity.<sup>11</sup> This was almost a replica of the depiction in the *PE* of a capitalist business structure *minus* that spirit of capitalism which was introduced into Germany ca. 1850 — a sketch which also derived from Weber’s relatives, this time in Oerlinghausen [XX.27-28]. However, the modern Dutch stood lower than this in that they produced nothing — and in his assumption that authentic capitalism was industrial and productive, and not merely financial and mercantile, Weber was a true Marxist [6-8]. So on the scale of capitalist evolution, the Dutch were well behind even the soft and *gemütlich* Germans [XXI.39].

But though they may not have embodied modern capitalism, the religious and ascetic credentials of the Dutch would still appear to be strong. Yet Weber dismisses this idea in a line: ‘Holland was really only ruled by strict Calvinism for seven years,’ between the Synod of Dort and the death of Maurits of Nassau (1618-1625). [XXI.102] Of course, a mere epigram could hardly get around the fact that Calvinism was a major religious presence in Dutch society for a much longer period; that (as we shall see) Weber’s principal theological sources, Gisbert Voetius and Johannes Hoornbeek, date

<sup>10</sup> Cf. ‘The Relations of the Rural Community...’ [1904], *MWG* I/8.222.

<sup>11</sup> *Briefe* 18.8.07 cf. 25, 26.8.07.

from well after 1625; or that any site of Calvinist rule (or *Herrschaft*), however brief, might be worth further inquiry. But though such apparently obvious objections were left unanswered in 1905, the intellectual procedure underlying Part II of the *PE* offers an explanation for this apparent casualness: a specifically Dutch presence in the text and a more penetrating inquiry into Dutch problems are set aside, because the mode of inquiry is not national or geographical, but international and psychological. As Weber put it when replying to criticism in 1910: ‘the task which I chose was... in the first place to establish not *where* and with what degree of strength, but *how* and through what inner chain of motivations specific formulations of the Protestant faith were placed in a position to take effect... in the way they did.’<sup>12</sup>

The force of this idea can be seen at almost every point. Thus after the opening pages of Part II, with their apparent pronouncements of Dutch centrality, there follows an exploration of the psychological model of Calvinist predestination with little reference to countries, and with almost no reference to the Dutch at all.<sup>13</sup> Moving on to Pietism, a prior knowledge of Weber’s principal secondary sources — Heinrich Hepppe, Albrecht Ritschl<sup>14</sup> — reveals that he follows their lead by treating Dutch Pietism as a precursor to its German kin. Hence occasional references to Dutch sources [XXI.45 nn.80-82] and a covert allusion to the *fijnen*, that spiritual elite of ‘fine’ or ‘precisian’ Pietists which derived from Dutch usage.<sup>15</sup> Hence too the strategic transition to ‘*German Pietism*’ [XXI.46] which, in accordance with the secondary sources, follows on from the Dutch. But still this is a vestigial borrowing, visible only under the microscope. Weber offers no equivalent heading for ‘*Dutch Pietism*’, and when we compare him to his sources, it is clear that what he has done in fact is practically to suppress any independent reference to the Dutch. The same moral applies to Weber’s several, yet very general, references to Menno Simons and his Mennonite followers [XX.10, 53; XXI.61, 65, 69]. Geographically and linguistically Menno and his original followers were of course Dutch; but they are used by Weber only as early, though significant, exemplars of the sectarian principle which is at work throughout an international ‘baptising’ movement [*Täuferium*]. So the only discernible consequence of their Dutch origin for the *PE* would appear to be Weber’s failure to supply much solid scholarly foundation to support frequent assertions of their importance — the product of his distaste for reading in Dutch, which he considered a ‘cursed hotchpotch’

<sup>12</sup> ‘Antikritisches zum ‘Geist’ des Kapitalismus’, *AfSS* 30, 191. [Hereafter: ‘Antikritisches’.] This can be seen as a reiteration of [XXI.5 n.3a] which dismisses consideration of the specific origin of ascetic movements as a secondary consideration. The text quotation is also translated, minus a crucial emphasis, in *The Protestant Ethic Debate*, D. J. Chalcraft, A. Harrington, ed. (Liverpool, 2001) 70. [Hereafter: *PE Debate*.]

<sup>13</sup> Apart from the citations of Hoornbeck and Voetius noted below, almost the only reference to the Dutch in the entire section on Calvinism is a reference derived from Heinrich Hepppe, a theologian with strong Calvinist interests [XXI.19 n.27]; though note too the anticipatory reference to the *fijnen* [XXI.27 n.52], which is however really part of the history of Pietism.

<sup>14</sup> On whom see below, 364-365.

<sup>15</sup> [XXI.45]. Weber derived the term from Albrecht Ritschl’s *Geschichte des Pietismus* (Bonn, 1880-1886) I, 101, 155, II, 125 etc.; both authors in fact use the German *feinen* and not the Dutch, but there is no question that the derivation is Dutch; cf. also [XXI.27 and n.52].

when compared to the purity of *Hochdeutsch*.<sup>16</sup> His one source on Menno and Mennonites came from the relevant article in the German religious encyclopaedia, the *Protestantische Realenzyklopädie* [XXI.69 n.136],<sup>17</sup> and we can hardly be surprised that, when he considers the baptising sects, the Mennonites are pushed 'rather to one side', so that the focus of attention rests 'especially' on the Anglocentric Quakers [XXI.61 n.122, 62 n.123].

Now Weber's 'psychological' procedure was all his own; but still it guided his choice of source materials and was itself reinforced by those materials. His introductory bibliographical citation of works on Dutch history in 1905 [XXI.5 n.4] is skimpy in the extreme, starting with such notoriously popular and dated works as J. L. Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856). The specifically Dutch sources which follow seem to be cited only for effect: Allard Pierson's *Studies on Calvin* (1883-1891), Robert Fruin's famous work on the Dutch Revolt in the 1590s, *Tien jaren uit den tachtigjarigen oorlog* (1857-1858), and the Roman lawyer J. C. Naber's study of the struggles between church and state, *Calvinist of libertijnsch?* (1884). None will be cited again. Partly this arises from the somewhat casual choice of particular items. For example, Fruin's work stands somewhat apart from the investigative frame of reference of the *PE*, given that its concerns are primarily political and predate the era of the early 17th century *Kulturkampf* which most interested Weber. The same can be said of Pierson, since the *PE* focusses not on Calvin but subsequent 'Calvinism'. [XXI.6 n.5] However, the major point is that, as a result of his comparative ignorance of Dutch literary culture, Weber is here citing a set of liberal authors, with two out of the three (Fruin, Pierson) well known outside the Netherlands.<sup>18</sup> They were in fact authors who were intellectually sympathetic and accessible to liberal circles outside the Netherlands, the circles Weber grew up and moved in. Thus they were secular by background and method (Fruin, Naber); they sought actively to diminish the significance of religious allegiance in politics (Fruin); or else in the case of Pierson, having grown up in the Dutch Reformed Church they had left it, and now stood for a liberal modernism in theology in direct opposition to Calvinism. But this kind of anti-religious liberalism was quite unusable in the *PE*, given its concern to show the fruitfulness of the religious

<sup>16</sup> To Marianne Weber, 7.6.03, 'Dahlem Nachlaß'. Of course Weber could read in Dutch, as much as anyone can who can read German, but he admitted his resistance to speaking it — an obvious test of any deeper intimacy with the language: *Briefe* 7.8.07.

<sup>17</sup> Another tell-tale sign of Weber's lack of Dutch knowledge, and of the random way in which it was acquired, is that his acquaintance with Hendrik Niklaes, the Dutch founder of the Familist sect, comes not from a Dutch source but from a book by the London stationer and Quaker, Robert Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth* (London, 1876): XXI.88 n.41. (He is of course not to be confused with the 17th century Robert Barclay, whose *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (1676) was one of Weber's major primary sources.)

<sup>18</sup> See the valuable sketch by P. B. M. Blaas, 'The Touchiness of a Small Nation with a Great Past', in: A. C. Duke, C. A. Tamse, ed., *Clio's Mirror* (Zutphen, 1985) 141-147. Prof. Blaas states, very fairly, that Fruin had few contacts with foreign scholars; but still he was known to Macaulay and Ranke (141). We might add that Fruin went out of his way to praise Ranke in the most fulsome manner, which was of course music to German ears: F. Rachfahl, 'Robert Fruin', *Historische Zeitschrift*, XCVIII (1906-1907) 507-543, here 515, 532-535. — Pierson had actually lived in Heidelberg between 1865 and 1874 and taught at the university from 1870, though whether Weber knew about this is unknown.

past in shaping the secular present. When Pierson's work is dismissed as 'a purely anti-Calvinist, partisan text', this is not because it is an Arminian work, as an unwary reader might suppose — we shall see that Weber could be interested in both sides of the '*Kulturkampf*' — but because of its secular hostility to Calvinism.

Yet if these authors were of little use to Weber, they do provide a clue to his approach, since they show that the real foundations of any Dutch inquiry at this date were not specifically Dutch but international. Weber's real and working 'Dutch' sources in 1904-1905 were either German or Latin. His major primary sources included Gisbert Voetius's *Ta Asketika* (1664), and when that failed him (due to the inadequacies of the interlibrary loan service) [XXI.3 n.3, 75 n.2], he turned to a pupil of Voetius, Johannes Hoornbeek and his *Theologiae practicae* (1663).<sup>19</sup> Of course these were most emphatically Dutch authors, who aroused relatively little attention elsewhere in Protestant Europe, whereas at home they engaged in a renewed religious *Kulturkampf* against Cocceius and his followers after c.1655. Yet this national context is ignored in the *PE* due to Weber's insistence that significant religious dispute had ended in 1625.<sup>20</sup> Instead he implicitly — or unthinkingly — places them within a cosmopolitan and international Protestant discourse, which was a mirror of his own composite concept, 'ascetic Protestantism'. For though the latter is initially expounded in individual sections (on Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, *Täufer*), the telos of the account is the avowed fusion of all the local or national sources into a single whole in the final section of the *PE*, so as to 'treat of ascetic Protestantism as *one* collective mass.' [XXI.74 cf. 2 n.2] It might be said that the same principle also applies to Weber's other major primary sources, and this is true. However, in the case of his major English and German authors (Baxter, Barclay, Bayly, Spener) a firm sense of national and local context accompanies them throughout the 17th century and even into the 18th century,<sup>21</sup> a context which can in turn be linked to subsequent political and economic outcomes. By contrast Voetius and Hoornbeek can *only* be cited as grouped exponents of an international ascetic Protestantism — 'Luther, Calvin, Knox, Voët,' 'Baxter, Bailey, Sedgwick, Hoornbeek' [XX.11, XXI.20 n.30] — because in a Dutch context asceticism had produced no capitalist end result.

There is a similar international element present in Weber's chief secondary sources: Albrecht Ritschl's *History of Pietism* (1880-1886) and Heinrich Heppe's history of Pietism and mysticism in the Reformed church, '*particularly in the Netherlands*' (1879).<sup>22</sup> Both were works by German authors, which sought to understand Dutch

<sup>19</sup> [XXI.10 n.12, 12 n.17, 20 n.30, 24 n.42, 25 n.48, 27 n.51, 75 n.4, 88 n.42, 90 n.47, 105 n.79].

<sup>20</sup> This may be reinforced by a reliance on liberal and secular authors. Conrad Busken Huet's *Het Land van Rembrandt* (Haarlem, 1882-1884), a work used by Weber [XXI.95 n.54b, 102 n.72], concentrates on Voetius's dispute with Descartes; on Balthasar Bekker and Spinoza; that is, on the struggle between 'Faith' and scepticism, and not on national disputes within the Reformed Church. Thus Cocceius is not even mentioned: Vol. II(1), c.I, ss.XVIII-XXII.

<sup>21</sup> Indeed when Weber strays into the 18th century — a period he regarded as secondary to the formative epoch of the English Civil War and the Thirty Years' War — he evokes English and German context in much *greater* detail in the cases of Zinzendorf and Wesley, to compensate for his relative ignorance and/or lack of interest: [XXI.50-54; 58-60].

<sup>22</sup> *Geschichte des Pietismus und der Mystik in der reformirten Kirche, namentlich der Niederlande* (Leiden, 1879).

Pietism within the wider transnational, or in other words German-centred, history of Pietism as a whole. Another apparently Dutch moment lies in Weber's enthusiasm for Rembrandt [XXI.94 n.54a] — an enthusiasm which derived from a succession of visits to the Mauritshuis during his trip to Holland in June 1903.<sup>23</sup> But even so the written accompaniments to visual appreciation were either German (his friend and Heidelberg colleague Carl Neumann's *Rembrandt* (1902)) or internationally famous Dutch writers in German translation (Conrad Busken Huet's broad cultural history *Het land van Rembrandt* (1882-1884), translated into German as *Rembrandt's Heimath* (1885-1887)).<sup>24</sup> Thus for Weber the significance of Rembrandt's *Saul and David* (c.1655) — the picture which moved him more than any other — lay once more in its revelation of the relation between ascetic Protestantism and modern *Kultur*. Rembrandt was the embodiment of 'the mighty effect' of 'the Puritan idea'; he was a 'Protestant soul grown up in freedom and poverty.'<sup>25</sup> Here indeed Weber was prepared to draw on Neumann's description of Rembrandt's Dutch milieu, but only with a view to proving that 'Puritanism contained within it a world of contrasts', and that the artist was, after all, a 'unique genius', an *exception* to the innate contradiction between Puritan asceticism and the fine arts [XXI.96-97].<sup>26</sup> Of course, Weber was also being conventionally German and international in another sense, since his enthusiasm for Rembrandt, though scrupulous and suitably qualified, was really just another drop in the great tide of Rembrandt enthusiasm sweeping Germany in the last two decades of the 19th century — a tide which raised him from being a mere Dutch master to a central figure in the canon of Western art as defined by German art historians.<sup>27</sup>

23 To Marianne Weber, 8, 9, 10, 13.6.03 on *Saul and David*, Dahlem Nachlaß; extracts pr. in Marianne Weber, *Max Weber. Ein Lebensbild* (Tübingen, 1926) 283-284; trans. Zohn, *Max Weber. A Biography* (New Brunswick, 1988) 270-271.

24 [XXI.94 n.54a, 95 n.54b, 97 n.60, 102 n.72]. Busken Huet was, of course, another theological liberal as well as a pronounced cosmopolitan.

25 Respectively: [XXI.94 n.54a]; to Marianne Weber, 13.6.03, Dahlem Nachlaß. In the latter (especially) Weber is making the (equally international) comparison between Rembrandt and the Catholic Rubens, which became almost obligatory at this date: see for example, Jacob Burckhardt's 1897 celebration of Rubens in his *Recollections of Rubens* which went hand in hand with profound distaste for Rembrandt. One could regard Busken Huet's pairing of *Het land van Rembrandt* with *Het land van Rubens* (1879) as an anticipation of this from a Dutch perspective. However, much the earliest example of this international and religious comparison occurs in Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1861), which Weber was delighted to discover and to which he drew attention in 1910: 'Antikritisches', 185 n.14, here 187 [*PE Debate*, 80]. Baudelaire's 'precocity' is of course readily comprehensible when we consider that he was almost as much an art critic as a poet. — The idea that Rembrandt might have been significantly influenced by Rubens, a commonplace of modern interpretation, is of course absent.

26 [XXI.96-97] cf. Neumann, *Rembrandt* (Berlin and Stuttgart, 1902) III.8, 'Rembrandt und das religiöse Leben in Holland'. Like Weber Neumann supposed that Rembrandt's religiosity was profoundly individual, comprising a mixture of unconventional membership of the Mennonites (527, 574f); Jewish influences; and the mysticism of Jacob Böhme (579-580). Weber approved of, and borrowed from this account [XXI.94 n.54a; 97 and n.60]. Even so the construction of Rembrandt as a 'Puritan' was entirely his own idea, and overrode evidence to the contrary, which was already obvious in Weber's day, notably Rembrandt's portrait of the Remonstrant leader Uytenbogaert (1633) in the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum, a work which is mentioned by Neumann (578) to show that Rembrandt was not a 'church' Calvinist.

27 The best known text of this kind was of course J. Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher* (1890); see further J. Stückelberger, *Rembrandt und die Moderne. Der Dialog mit Rembrandt in deutschen Kunst um 1900* (Munich, 1996).



## III

We may say, then, that in the 1904-1905 *PE* there is some diffused Dutch background, but there are no obvious Dutch figures in the foreground. However, when Weber started to revise the *PE* for separate publication in 1906-1908, and when *at the same time* he drafted the companion essay on 'the Protestant sects and the spirit of capitalism',<sup>28</sup> a set of specifically Dutch references did emerge. There are two obvious reasons for this movement: one intellectual, one external. The external fact is that the only research trip Weber made at this time — albeit a modest one — was when he returned to the Netherlands in July 1907, partly for rest and recuperation, but also in order 'to see what they have on 'Calvinism' and the like' in the Amsterdam and Leiden libraries.<sup>29</sup> Now this was a real advance on his visits in 1903 which, despite such accidental by-products as the viewing of Rembrandt, were intended solely for purposes of rest.<sup>30</sup> Yet 1906-1908 was the only period when Weber did any new work on the *PE* within its original framework — that is, the specifically 17th century origins of ascetic Protestantism, which would then give way to the much wider perspective that came to fruition in 1913-1914, embracing the entire Occident and Christianity as units within a comparison of the 'world religions' throughout recorded history. So by the time he returned to the *PE* in the summer of 1919, to cast it into the form in which it has now come down to us, he regarded both it and the essay on 'the Protestant sects' as 'older' essays [12] — meaning that neither could offer a history of Occidental Christianity as a whole, because they were locked into the original, narrower structure. However, since Weber could not change the structure of the *PE* without destroying it, the net result is that 'older' revisions from 1906-1908 continue to bulk large in the cumulative revisions to the *PE* published in 1920; and references to the Netherlands bulk large within *that* group.

These Dutch references thus draw our attention to a quite fundamental aspect of the

28 [207-236]. This is a major research finding which stems from my work for a forthcoming English-language edition of *The Protestant Ethic* (Oxford University Press), and which could easily consume an essay in itself. Please note here: 1 the obvious textual closeness of the essay on the sects to its immediate and dateable precursor, "Kirchen und 'Sekten' in Nordamerika", *Die Christliche Welt*, XX, Sp.558-562, 577-583 (14, 21 June 1906); 2 the heavy reliance in 'the Protestant sects' on bibliography which was *already* available to Weber when he originally composed the *PE* in 1904-1905; 3 the citation of Dutch materials which must have derived from Weber's trip to the Netherlands in 1907; 4 a conceptual framework confined to the 17th century and ascetic Protestantism, which is shared with the original text of the *PE* but which (it is agreed) was abandoned after 1910; 5 although there are signs of subsequent textual revision in 1919, parallel to those made to the *PE* at this date, these are exceedingly slight.

29 *Briefe* 17.8.07. Weber intended to spend a week in Amsterdam working, though when he lost a day due to a bad night (*ibid.*, 22.8.07), he extended his time there. On Leiden see *ibidem*, 3.8.07, 2-3.9.07.

30 Weber went to Scheveningen (the coastal resort of the Hague) for a fortnight in June 1903 and for a further week in October; in 1907 he spent a whole month (26 July - 28 August) based around Zandvoort, Egmond aan Zee and Amsterdam (in that order). — Prof. Hartmut Lehmann, who is editing the *PE* for the *MWG*, asserts that Weber used his 1903 Dutch holidays for 'literary researches'; but his claim is unsubstantiated (so far). In particular there is no reference of this kind in the transcripts of his 1903 Dutch correspondence in the Dahlem Nachlaß: *Max Webers 'Protestantische Ethik'* (Göttingen, 1996) 148 n.13.

textual history of the *PE*. We have grown used to regarding the *PE* as a text which appears in two states: that of 1904-1905 and that of 1920. But though in publishing terms this is an evident truism, seen as a statement about the genesis of the text, it is radically false. The textual changes which were first printed in 1920 did not all derive from Weber's hasty revision in the summer of 1919;<sup>31</sup> so they do not reflect a simple switch from an 'early' text to a 'later' one, where the latter reflects the viewpoint derived from writing *Economy and Society* and the 'Economic Ethics of the World Religions.' On the contrary, materials for revision accumulated throughout the period 1906-1919. In the vast majority of cases the origin and intellectual rationale of Weber's textual revisions is quite clear, and they can be broken down into distinct categories. Of these, erudite references to 17th century Protestantism deriving from work done in 1906-1908, often developed from or even re-using literature *already* available in 1904-1905, make up much the largest category when measured by the number of new insertions into the text — though they lose this primacy if measured by aggregate word length.<sup>32</sup> But in any case it must be understood that the canonical complete text which is so widely read today is in fact a historical composite, based on a number of strata, in which a hitherto wholly neglected, 'early' phase of work, dating from 1906-1908, is a central component.

Now Weber's primary intellectual concern in 1906-1908 was not so much to revise the *PE* — he saw no great need for this — but to develop and supplement it by an inquiry into the nature of the Protestant sects. This was an inquiry he had always intended to pursue as a sequel to the *PE*, and it is plainly announced as the first of several future 'tasks' at the close of that work: 'The task now is rather to demonstrate the significance of ascetic rationalism for the ethical substance of the *social* economy, something only touched upon in the preceding sketch; hence [its significance] for the mode of organization and the function of social communities from the conventicle right up to the state' [XXI.109]. In this statement 'sects' and 'churches' are the missing middle terms between two outer extremes: the 'conventicle' — the informal group which remains within a church framework and which has not yet expanded to become

<sup>31</sup> The primary time frame for this revision (setting aside further emendations at the proof stage) falls between 21 June 1919, when Weber moved from Heidelberg to Munich, and 11 Sept. 1919, when Weber told Siebeck that the manuscript of the revised *PE* was finished (*MWG I*/19.44). In this same period Weber had worked on the extensive revisions to Confucianism (*loc. cit.*), and he had also had to lecture on 'The most general categories of the science of society' (M. Weber, *Lebensbild*, 671; trans. Zohn, 660), since there had been an additional university semester for ex-servicemen. The amount of time left for the *PE* does not appear to be very great.

<sup>32</sup> This is a fundamental documentary point which can only properly be tested by examining an edition of the *PE* which shows the two strata of the text simultaneously and down to the smallest detail (such as I propose). Until that edition appears the reader will note that 1 I posit a clear hypothesis, which can be checked against the texts; 2 it is backed by Weber's own testimony; 3 the Dutch cases specified below are all examples of, and evidence for, the 'early' revisions which I postulate. — The revisions which must be supposed to date from 1919 are — as we might expect — very different in nature, being general and conceptual disquisitions rather than scholarly insertions, designed to take account of Weber's shifting and developing viewpoints on both religion and capitalism. There is then a third category, scholarly and precise once more, representing an accumulation of individual findings commonly deriving from new publications, and first recorded by Weber in the years 1908-1914.

an avowed voluntary ‘sect’ [221] — and the ‘state’ which is still more purely institutional than any ‘church’. The sect was in turn the ancestor of the modern ‘club’ and voluntary association [214-215], and taken all together such an inquiry was a central component of the elaboration of ascetic Protestantism in its specifically social context, an area which the *PE* had explicitly eschewed [eg.XXI.72]. Yet this was a different area of work with a distinct focus, and in the modern day especially it did *not* necessarily lead him to areas with the most pronounced modern capitalism [219], but rather to places with the most obviously developed sects and modern mass religiosity. So although seventeenth century England may have provided an historical root for this inquiry, impressions of present day rural America and the Netherlands were at least as powerful.

Travel impressions of America in 1904 provided the starting point for his first discussion of the sects in the spring of 1906;<sup>33</sup> but once Weber had received such a powerful stimulus to look at specifically modern sectarianism independent of its links to capitalism, he could hardly avoid reflecting on the Dutch case when he went there in 1907, since neo-Calvinism under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper supplied by far the most important example of a modern mass Protestant social movement in the whole of Europe. The Catholic Christian Social movement of Karl Lueger in Vienna, to say nothing of its Dutch Catholic equivalent, though to our eyes obviously comparable, aroused no interest in Weber. Nor, equally noticeably, did the popular Protestantism of the Francophone Swiss cantons, though its contacts with Dutch neo-Calvinism must have been known to him. (This latter case tends to confirm the signs that Weber’s cultural horizons were marked not merely by the Protestant-Catholic divide, but also by the Romance-Germanic one in language.)<sup>34</sup> But within a Protestant and Germanic context Kuyper’s well-known achievements — the founding of his own political party in 1879, the leadership of a ‘sectarian’ secession from the established church in 1886, and attainment of the post of Dutch Minister President between 1901 and 1905 — took on obvious significance for Weber. In his eyes this was a variant of sectarian voluntarism, even if its inherited (religious) or newly created (political) institutional structures remained very important [220 n.2]; more obviously it was a successful, mass Protestant, ‘Christian-Social’ movement in stark contrast to the crashing failure of the German liberal Protestants led by Friedrich Naumann, to whom Weber had been close in the 1890s.<sup>35</sup> Seen thus, how could he fail to be interested in the Dutch case? Such is one intellectual origin of his 1907 journey to Amsterdam.

The result of this interest (and journey) is a set of explicitly Dutch references inserted in the so-called ‘1920’ text of the *PE*. On the one hand, there are learned historical

33 “Kirchen’ und ‘Sekten’ in Nordamerika’, *Die Christliche Welt*, XX, Sp.558-562, 577-583 (14, 21 June 1906); cf. ‘Protestant sects’ [207-218].

34 [XX.36]. This position was softened — though not withdrawn — in 1920: [63-64].

35 Weber always remained sympathetic to Naumann and willing to offer him political advice (though often of the most harshly critical kind). Nonetheless, 1903 marked a kind of parting of the ways for the two men. After the defeat and liquidation of the *National-soziale Partei*, Naumann sought to enlist Weber for a new political journal, but Weber preferred the academic and reflective route of work on the *Archiv*: Weber to Naumann 17.7.03, pr. M. Weber, *Lebensbild*, 289 [trans. Zohn, 276-277].

references inserted into the notes: to Dutch provincial synods; to Dutch sermons denying Christ's role as a universal redeemer; to Dutch (and Voetian) 'conventicles'; to English Baptists in Amsterdam in 1612-1613. There is an expanded treatment of Dutch Arminianism, and a renewed consideration of Wilhelm Schortinghuis, the early 18th century Dutch Pietist.<sup>36</sup> Last but not least Sir William Temple is cited on the proverbial 'honesty of the Dutch' [202 n.2]. This was peculiarly significant given Weber's repeated emphasis that the maxim of 'honesty is the best policy' was central to the 'spirit' of capitalism [XXI,71, 107 n.83a], since it pointed to the (deeply paradoxical) conclusion that, despite their lack of an adequate modern capitalism, the Dutch people could still represent the capitalist ethic. Now it would be unrealistic to suppose that, concealed in the notes, these modest insertions should have attracted much attention. (On the other hand, the idea that Weber's notes are any less important as an indication of his views than the main text is a grave misconception: except when they are simply references, the notes must be regarded as a secondary panel of text.) Still they do mean that in the '1920' text with which most readers are familiar, the section on Calvinism in particular acquires a Dutch patina of the kind that one would in ignorance have expected to be there all along. More prominent, and sending out a louder cultural signal to the readership of Weber's day, are a set of inserted references to the modern Netherlands. When these are supplemented — as they must be — by the parallel references in the essay on the 'Protestant sects', they comprise a succinct catalogue of the entire canon of Dutch neo-Calvinism from the French Revolution onwards (even if, like all canons, this was a retrospective creation, which is not to be taken as an accurate historical rendering of its alleged subject). Thus at various points Weber takes us through a familiar sequence which begins with Willem Bilderdijk (1756-1831), poet, friend of Robert Southey, partisan of the house of Orange and of Calvinism, critic of the French Revolution, and author of a multi-volume *Geschiedenis des Vaderlands* (*History of the Fatherland* (1832-1853)) along these lines [226n.1]. In the next generation there comes the converted Jew, poet and publicist Isaac da Costa (1798-1860) [102 n.2] and Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876) — the latter of course the central public spokesman for mid-19th century Calvinism, which though evidently a modern creed also drew much of its appeal from 17th century tradition, and especially the synod of Dort.<sup>37</sup> Finally there is Kuyper (b.1837), who is the subject of typically lengthy Weberian 'notes' in the essay on the 'Protestant sects' [220 n.2, 222 n.1, 226 n.1].

An equally clear sign of Weber's new immersion in the modern, anti-liberal partisans of Dutch religion lies in the historical sources he employs. Thus the notes on Kuyper in the 'Protestant sects' are underpinned by a series of pamphlets — works Weber could only have found when in the Amsterdam university library in 1907 — chiefly

<sup>36</sup> [84 n.1; 94 n.2; 95 n.1; 97 n.3; 105 n.4; 108 n.3; 131 n.1]; reference to Schortinghuis in the 1905 text will be found at [XXI.45 n.80].

<sup>37</sup> The canons of the Synod did not constitute a sole or unique 'shibboleth' for Groen, but they were of great importance, as indicating that man's fate was controlled by God and not by human effort or rational calculation: *Le parti anti-révolutionnaire et confessionnel dans l'église réformée des Pays-Bas* (Amsterdam, 1860) 11 cf. 16-20. This work was used by Weber: see below.

by Kuypers, but also by Hendrik Hogerzeil, focussing on the great disruption, the *Doleantie* or 'protest' of 1886, that led in 1892 to the formation of the separatist or (in Weber's eyes) 'sectarian' *Reformed Churches in the Netherlands*.<sup>38</sup> Of course, these sources are contemporary and not historical, just as Kuypers himself had no pretensions to be a historian, however important the appeal to Calvinist tradition might be, and for this reason he will not be mentioned in the revisions to the *PE*. Nonetheless, the distinction between the *PE* and the 'Protestant sects' essay is really only that between two sides of the same coin. Thus both pieces refer to Kuypers's precursor, Groen van Prinsterer [226 n.1], who was both a contemporary publicist like Kuypers and a historian as well. If we examine the Dutch bibliography inserted in the *PE*'s bibliographical survey note on Calvinism in 1920 [88 n.1], Groen's work is now the centrepiece of what Weber considers necessary. Two of the three works mentioned are of real importance: one is a large, general historical compendium, the *Handboek der geschiedenis van het vaderland* (1852), whilst the other is an essentially contemporary statement, designed as an analysis and a kind of manifesto for the 'anti-revolutionary party' within the Dutch church, a party readily identified in retrospect as the stage immediately prior to Kuypers's formation of a mass political party: *Le parti anti-révolutionnaire et confessionnel dans l'église réformée des Pays-Bas* (1860). Its subject, as Weber frankly acknowledges, is 'modern Holland;' and hence the subtitle '*étude d'histoire contemporaine*.'

This inextricable mix of historicity and modernity is apparent in Weber's other new Dutch sources which, even when they are not Calvinist, all share the common feature that they are neither secular nor liberal. They comprise (first) Wilhelmus Nuyens (1823-1894), the Catholic country doctor and a prolific 'empirical' expositor of well-known data within an explicitly confessional framework. His general histories, first for the period 1559-1598, and then — the period of interest to Weber — for 1598-1625 constitute an early restatement of a Catholic position suitable for the 19th century analogous to that of neo-Calvinism.<sup>39</sup> We might say that we see here some historiographical origins of *verzuiling*. The next is H. C. Rogge, author of a study of the Remonstrant leader Uytenbogaert,<sup>40</sup> himself the scion of a family with longstanding Remonstrant (or Arminian) loyalties and a Remonstrant preacher for twenty years

<sup>38</sup> Weber cites Kuypers: *Het dreigend conflict* (Amsterdam, 1886), *Het conflict gekomen* (Amsterdam, 1886) and *Separatie en Doleantie* (Amsterdam, 1890); and Hogerzeil, *De kerkelijke strijd te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1886): [220 n.2; 222 n.1; 226 n.1]. Notice that he does not cite what one might have thought was the 'obvious' work by Kuypers, the well-known Stone lectures on *Calvinism* (Amsterdam, Edinburgh, New York, 1899), though it would be unwise to suppose he did not look at them. If he did, then failure to cite was presumably because the coverage here was simply too general and went well beyond consideration of the sectarian principle (10, 37). The lectures include much that Weber would have agreed with, but they also include Kuypers's distinctly unWeberian thinking on a universal or 'common grace' alongside 'particular grace' (30); whilst the treatment of the believers' church — the essential sectarian principle (75-97) — was something Weber found covered with more passion and more attention to precise Dutch circumstances in the 1886 pamphlets.

<sup>39</sup> *Geschiedenis der kerkelyke en politieke geschillen in de republiek der zeven vereenigde provincien, voornamelyk gedurende het twaalfjarig bestand (1598-1625)* (Amsterdam, 1886-1887); cited [88 n.1, 94 n.2].

<sup>40</sup> *Johannes Wtenbogaert en zijn tijd* (Amsterdam, 1874-1876); cited [94 n.2].

(1856-1877). It is true that he did become librarian (1877) and then a professor at the University of Amsterdam (1890), because Arminianism was undoubtedly held to be more congenial to the hegemonic liberalism of this period; still he was not a secular and *wissenschaftlich* liberal, but rather a pious remembrancer of the early 17th century.<sup>41</sup> Finally, there is one significant German source. But whereas in 1904-1905 Weber's German sources used Dutch materials to German ends, here the concern is truly Dutch and the book in question was itself translated from German into Dutch and not the other way round. This was the record of August Köhler's youthful travels as a theology student in the Netherlands in 1855,<sup>42</sup> offering a sympathetic, religiously informed picture of 'grassroots' Dutch religious life in the mid-century — Köhler himself (b.1835) was no theological liberal but an intelligent conservative.<sup>43</sup> It is a work that Weber refers to repeatedly.<sup>44</sup> Of course, none of this should be taken as implying that Weber had simply become illiberal — Robert Fruin and Allard Pierson are not deleted from the suggested reading. Nonetheless, it is clear that there has been a major shift in Weber's Dutch perspective away from that of an instinctive liberalism towards modern Calvinism or its religious antitheses — and this within just two years of the first publication of the *PE*. As I have suggested, the shift was triggered by the combined impact of modern America and the Netherlands upon him, but it also finds roots in his own intellectual make-up. After all, Weber's critique of liberalism, both in Germany and in general, was already well entrenched, as will be clear from the assaults in the original *PE* on 'Liberal 'enlightenment''; on its 'rose-tinted' optimism; and on the naïve pursuit of 'eudaemonistic' happiness, based on the crass assumption of a simple, normative and progressive rationalism [XX.30, 35; XXI.108] — and such thinking had also been a staple of Weber's early maturity in the 1890s.<sup>45</sup> He had not abandoned liberalism; but he knew very well that it must move on to cope with the modern challenges of socialism and — as we see here — nascent Christian democracy.

The main text of the *PE* is relatively little affected by Weber's new Dutch thinking with one significant exception. In the '1920' text there appear a series of references to the idea of evangelical 'revivals' and 'general awakening' as phenomena which occur throughout the Protestant world — in England, North America and in 'Holland' — and which have lasted from the 17th through to the 19th century. [90, 101 n.2, 130, 149] The inclusion of the province of Holland here — despite the previously announced capitalist and ascetic deficiency of the Dutch — and the continuation of the argument forward to the 19th century — despite previous concentration on the 17th century, and a concern to emphasise the overall 'secularization' of European and even American *Kultur* since then<sup>46</sup> — clearly reflect (and derive from) Weber's interest in modern Dutch Calvinism. By and large Weber is well disciplined, and his

41 On Rogge see the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biographisch Woordenboek*, X, 825-827.

42 *Die niederländische reformirte Kirche* (Erlangen, 1856); trans. as *De Nederlandsche hervormde kerk* (Amsterdam, 1857).

43 See *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, LI, 310-311. Köhler's work on the Dutch church was too youthful and too far removed from obvious German concerns to merit a mention in this article.

44 [88 n.1, 102 n.2, 137 n.4, 179 n.1].

45 See eg. the Freiburg Inaugural [1895], *MWG I*/5.558-559, 563, 572.

46 [*GARS* 217 cf. XX.6; XXI.3 n.3, 106].

new and somewhat divergent concerns have been largely restricted to the notes, just as they are in the essay on the 'Protestant sects' and again in the 'anti-critical' writings of 1910.<sup>47</sup> But even in this restricted form Weber's modern, Dutch and 'sectarian' enthusiasms bring major problems for the *PE*, since this was a text originally designed to exclude and not to accommodate such subjects.

Seen purely empirically, there is an obvious gain in that Weber now recognises the continuous presence of orthodox Calvinism throughout Dutch history from the early 17th century onwards. On the other hand, there is an obvious confusion and conflation of terms when Weber seeks to fuse the Dutch '*Réveil*' movement inaugurated in 1822-1823 with Anglo-American evangelical 'revivalism' of the period c.1780-1860. Yet the likeness in labels conceals profound differences in historical substance. The first was a species of Protestant Romanticism, being Continental, cosmopolitan (it was triggered by Francophone Switzerland), literary and intellectual. It can be viewed as a form of Protestant retreat into the past, analogous to the more common Romantic flight from Protestantism to a Catholic medievalism, and hence its well-known attraction of converts from Judaism in the shape of Isaac da Costa and Abraham Capadose [226 n.1]. Yet in all these respects it was worlds away from English-speaking Protestant evangelicalism, which, by its primary emphasis on personal piety, was in principle anti-intellectual, with no interest in history. In this respect, it is noticeable that Groen, with his strong Romantic and literary tendencies, and staunch adhesion to a state-church connection (even if he could allow that the latter was also 'an independent corporation' of the former) could be accused by his opponents of representing high church Puseyism. This was of course an error, but still it indicates just how far removed he was in fact from an English-speaking evangelicalism which regarded Puseyism as something close to Satan.<sup>48</sup> Again, in Anglo-American 'revivalism' the only relevant conversion was not that between religions but the personal experience of rebirth which brought the individual into direct contact with God. Given such characteristics it took on a populist social profile — in Weberian language that of the *Mittelstand* or *petit bourgeois*<sup>49</sup> — which was far removed from that of the cultural and patrician elite of religious Romanticism. At birth it did have a Continental link to Dutch and German Pietism, and this must be Weber's justification for seeking to group the two together. Yet the link was solely one of origin, and it was not sustained subsequently, during the classic era of English 'revivals' and American 'awakenings'. In any case, Pietism was at least as far removed socially and culturally from elite Romanticism as from Anglophone evangelicalism. In short, Weber's attempt to group the two forms of 'revival' was analogous to his parallel and almost equally mistaken attempt to group Isaac da Costa with Hendrik de Cock; the Portugese Jewish convert with the rustic originator of the first modern secession of Calvinist old believers from the Dutch Reformed Church in 1836, as if they were identical peas in a pod [102 n.2].

47 'Antikritisches', 185 n.14 (beginning at 186) [*PE Debate*, 79]; 'Antikritisches Schlusswort zum "Geist des Kapitalismus"', 566 n.10, 570 n.11a.2 [*PE Debate*, 125-127]. [Hereafter, 'Schlusswort']

48 *Le parti anti-révolutionnaire et confessionnel*, 27 cf. 6.

49 See eg. [XX.18, 26-27, 33; *GARS* 38 n.1 (at 39) 53-54, 213-214].

But however important our retrospective and empirical objections may be, Weber was much more concerned about the conceptual problems he could see for himself; and these problems are surely one important reason, though by no means the only one, for the silent abandonment of the *PE* as a publishing project in 1908.<sup>50</sup> Weber's new interest in a modern and mass Dutch Calvinism had created two major difficulties. First, it cast doubt on the view advanced in the original *PE*, that there had been insufficient Calvinist penetration in the Netherlands to bring about the rise of an ascetic capitalist stratum: if this was so, how could Calvinism be so well established nearly 300 years later? It also appeared to run contrary to a major thesis of his writings on the sects: that due to secularization the historical moment for modern European (and even modern American) sectarianism was now past [212-213]. To the second objection, at least, Weber had a kind of answer, though it is given in the 'Protestant sects' and not the *PE*. For him 19th century Dutch Calvinism was not actually a modern phenomenon at all, but a symptom of the essentially constant and unchanging nature of Dutch society and *Kultur*. When staying in the Netherlands in 1907 he wrote that 'here history appears to sleep. There is much which is just as Jan van der Meer painted it 300 years ago.'<sup>51</sup> Now this was not merely a tourist observation about windmills, canals and the rural landscape: when did Weber ever make purely casual or unthinking tourist observations?<sup>52</sup> The same thinking underlies his view of the 'ancestral' business methods of his Fallenstein relatives in Amsterdam.<sup>53</sup> Hence it was possible for him to state that the opposition of the 'orthodox' Dutch secessionists in 1886 — a lay group led by lay elders such as Kuyper — to the liberal ministers of the *Dutch Reformed Church*, 'was in essence exactly the contrast between [moderate] Presbyterians and [orthodox] Independents in the 16th century.' [226] In another formulation, Kuyper was merely 'following on from Voët' in the 17th century [220 n.2]. So although Weber was prepared to allow that 'neo-Calvinism in Holland is indeed a structure with a very modern cross-grain', still to view it as simply modern was a 'fairly strange assertion.' Regardless of any revisions in his viewpoint since 1905, he continued to hold that the fundamental determinant of this 20th century movement lay in the '*sacrosancta synodus*' of Dordrecht.<sup>54</sup>

Yet if one accepted this argument, one would have to ask why Weber was interested in modern Dutch Calvinism at all, when his chief interest in the sects was historical, and when his main argument for the modern period was that they had been, or would in the Dutch case, ultimately be secularized. Nor did it remove his other difficulty,

<sup>50</sup> Here is another major research finding: 'major' because its significance is so great and has been wholly ignored to date. The last mention of revision and separate publication of the *PE* as a potential project is in *Briefe* 27.7.08; thereafter there is epistolary silence. Nonetheless there are *de facto* announcements of abandonment: see 'Antikritisches', 177, 194 n.23, 196 n.28; 'Schlusswort', 566 n.10, here 567-568 [*PE Debate* 62, 82 n.24, 83 n.30, 125-126].

<sup>51</sup> *Briefe* 10.8.07.

<sup>52</sup> Weber himself practically acknowledged this when justifying his long descriptive letters from the Netherlands in 1903: 'a bookish scholar turned pedant has unlearned intuitive pleasure, and can only grasp hold of impressions discursively': to Marianne Weber 13.6.03, Dahlem Nachlaß.

<sup>53</sup> *Briefe* 18.8.07.

<sup>54</sup> 'Antikritisches', 185 n.14, here 187 [*PE Debate*, 80].



the subversion of the relation between ascetic Protestantism and capitalism. Consider here his views on Amsterdam. His new-found anxiety to defend the continuity of Dutch religious life through to the most modern times led him to assert in 1910 (against his critic Rachfahl) that it might not be pure chance that Kuyper's neo-Calvinism found its origins in "unbelieving' Amsterdam', even though in the *PE* he had highlighted 17th century Amsterdam as a mercantilist and materialist centre of religious toleration at odds with radical Calvinism — a passage which remained unaltered in 1920.<sup>55</sup> Weber hoped to get out of this dilemma by positing a previously unsuspected Calvinist 'minority' in Amsterdam in the centuries after 1625 (though he himself had portrayed this as an era of religious decay), which resurfaced due to Kuyper in 1886. Clearly this was special pleading, and only the hagiographer will suppose that all criticism of the *PE* has been based on misreading, or that all Weber's 'anti-critical' defences are empirically robust. Special pleading about Amsterdam was then made general by appeals to the 'half-broken Puritanism of Holland' and a picture of Dutch *Kultur* as riven by the 'most profound contrasts' between the religiously zealous and the indifferent, contrasts that had existed 'in essentials up till today.'<sup>56</sup> Now the idea of sharp contrasts within a national *Kultur* was indeed a favourite with Weber, and one which he had already invoked in 1904 in the English case (as between Roundheads and Cavaliers).<sup>57</sup> Still there was little point in invoking subtleties of this kind when he himself was not a research historian unpicking a crude holism, but an inter-disciplinary social scientist (and emergent 'sociologist') whose perspective was really international and not intranational. Not only this, but the same thesis of national 'contrasts' was being used to justify radically contrary historical outcomes: capitalist success in England, capitalist failure in the Netherlands. Invoking 'contrasts' was in fact an implicit confession of defeat. The only possible reason for doing so in the Dutch case was to support the idea that there might be *both* a mass modern Dutch Calvinism and at the same time a 'contrasting' lack of modern capitalism. But if this was so, then the idea of any meaningful 'elective affinity' between ascetic Protestantism and capitalism was groundless.

Weber could not be expected to proclaim this truth aloud; but like most authors, he could see his own problems — as distinct from those raised by critics — clearly enough. His final significant discussion of Dutch history and *Kultur* occurs in the 'anti-critical' writings of 1909-1910 — a label given by Weber himself which correctly signifies their essentially negative and defensive character.<sup>58</sup> But although the *PE* had by now been set aside, the subject was still quite fresh in his mind, whilst his critic at this date, Felix Rachfahl, was a scholarly historian of the Dutch revolt against Spain.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Compare 'Antikritisches', 185 n.14, here 187-188 [*PE Debate*, 80-81] with [XXI.42 n.78; *GARS* 131 n.1]. For Rachfahl's remarks on Amsterdam, see 'Kalvinismus und Kapitalismus' [1909], in: *Die protestantische Ethik*, II, *Kritiken und Antikritiken*, J. Winkelmann, ed. (Gütersloh, 1978) 98-100.

<sup>56</sup> 'Antikritisches', loc. cit; 'Schlusswort', 566 n.19, here 567 [*PE Debate*, 125].

<sup>57</sup> [XX.52] Not surprisingly given his Dutch difficulties, Weber was anxious to reinforce this idea subsequently: [81 n.3].

<sup>58</sup> See nn.12, 47 supra.

<sup>59</sup> By 1909 he had published a series of biographical-monarchical studies of 16th century Dutch history: *Margaretha von Parma, Statthalterin der Niederlande (1559-1567)* (1898) and the first two volumes of

However, unlike Weber, he was not a modern day economist or social scientist, and the disparity between Weber's novel insistence on the strength of Dutch neo-Calvinism and the absence of a modern Dutch capitalism — a problem which post-dated the original *PE* — was not a subject he could have been expected to touch upon.<sup>60</sup> Yet the 'replies' to Rachfahl show how Weber himself understood that there was a real and unresolved problem in regard to the Netherlands. How could there be such an absence of capitalism when every single variety of ascetic Protestantism (with the obvious exception of the 'latecomer' Methodism [XXI.61]) was 'nurtured and spiritually supported' by Dutch influences, and when the links between these Dutch roots and the English and American heartlands of capitalism were so strong? 'Puritan dissent in England... the specifically ascetic variant of Calvinism... Baptism... the Mennonites... the Baptisers... Quakerism... and finally: Pietism' all had come from Holland or the South Netherlands.<sup>61</sup> Such is the perplexity that underlies Weber's statements in 1910 that 'the problem of the peculiar character of Dutch capitalism and of the inner behaviour of the population towards it' was 'extremely involved and interesting'; and that 'in fact I am still far from clear regarding these problems.'<sup>62</sup> On this, as on so much else, the anti-critical writings of 1910 were intended to be a 'last word',<sup>63</sup> a burying of the subject — and in the Dutch case they really were. The impasse was left unresolved.

#### IV

What, then, does Weber's Dutch 'moment' tell us about the history of the *PE*? Unlike many inhabitants of 'great power' states, and contrary to any notion of him as a ruthless 'great power' nationalist, Max Weber understood full well that territorial extent or size of population were not the sole reasons for reflecting on the nature of a polity or society; that in the realm of *Kultur* smaller powers such as 'the Swiss, Danes, Dutch, [and] Norwegians' could be just as, if not more, interesting than large ones

*Wilhelm von Oranien und der niederländischen Aufstand* (1906-1908); a third volume would come in 1924. The only real grain of comfort to diehard 'empiricist' defenders of Weber *contra* Rachfahl is that he had not published on the early 17th century period which was most central to Weber's concerns and argument.

<sup>60</sup> Confronted by Weber's 'new argument' regarding the Dutch, Rachfahl thought only of his own position and whether it was compromised thereby. Predictably he supposed it was not: 'Nochmals Kalvinismus und Kapitalismus' [1910], in: *Die protestantische Ethik, II, Kritiken und Antikritiken*, 250.

<sup>61</sup> 'Schlusswort', 570 n.11a, here 571 [*PE Debate*, 127].

<sup>62</sup> 'Antikritisches', 185 n.14, here 186 [*PE Debate*, 79].

<sup>63</sup> 'Last word' or *Schlusswort* was of course central to the title ('Anticritical last word') of Weber's second article on the *PE* of 1910, which did indeed stand as a last word until 1920. The editors of *The Protestant Ethic Debate* unhesitatingly reject this idea: for them the anti-critical writings 'stand between the first and second editions of the *PE* and have the potential to bridge the editions' (5); and by a natural extension they regard the critical debates of Weber's day as part of a seamless continuum through to contemporary sociological discussion of Weber, capitalism etc. Here all is teleology and there is no such thing as historical discontinuity. On this arbitrary basis they delete Weber's title (in favour of 'Weber's Second Reply to Rachfahl' — a sublime blandness) without a word of justification.

afflicted by distorting political and military commitments.<sup>64</sup> The interest he displayed in Dutch history and religiosity in 1907 shows clearly that such an interest in ‘small powers’ was no mere empty statement. Now this is not to say that his difficulties with Dutch Calvinism and capitalism were the sole and decisive cause of the silent abandonment of the project to revise and republish the *PE* the following year. Still, the Dutch case did show that the path of such revision and expansion was not a smooth one; that an inquiry into the social location of ascetic Protestantism was going to lead Weber into a conceptual terrain which was in many ways distinct and divergent from that raised by the individual and psychological affinity between the Protestant ethic and capitalism — the carefully delimited sphere he had selected for the *PE* in 1904-1905. The history of the years 1906-1908 shows that, even when he confined himself to a 17th century and Protestant framework, Weber’s thoughts inevitably tended towards conceptual multiplicity and comprehensiveness of coverage. On a smaller scale they pointed in the *same* direction as the comparative religious and sociological studies he would take up after 1910, or had already taken up in his university lectures on *General* (‘theoretical’) *economics* in 1897-1898.<sup>65</sup> Indeed one of the very oddest features about the *PE* was its claim to tackle such a broad theme — the origins of modern capitalism and hence of modern *Kultur* as a whole — by such a singular, ‘one-sided’ and relatively narrow route [XXI.110]. In this respect it was a most unWeberian work, and it is not frivolous to suggest that this unusual and consciously constrained format was a self-imposed restriction provoked by Weber’s previous nervous collapse and the fear of its recurrence.<sup>66</sup>

Of course, in explaining the silent abandonment of the *PE* as an intellectual project in 1908, other factors must be added in. Intellectually Weber had very little to gain from revision and republication of the *PE* within its original, limited remit: the revisions made c.1906-1907 show no signs of any great conceptual advance but only (as we see) of conceptual diffusion and the multiplication of perspectives. Again, though there was a possible financial reward attached to book publication — a project first urged upon him by his publisher Siebeck in July 1906<sup>67</sup> — after receiving the news of his wife’s legacy from Carl David Weber in the summer of 1907,<sup>68</sup> this need was no longer pressing. Thus it was that from the autumn of 1908 far more ambitious and expansive concerns, above all the revision of Gustav von Schönberg’s *Handbuch der politischen Ökonomie* — the precursor of the *Grundriß der Sozial-ökonomik* and of *Economy and Society* — would thrust the *PE* aside, apparently for good. All the same, if we wish to understand the ways in which the *PE* was first developed after 1905 and then laid to rest, Max Weber’s encounter with the Netherlands is a central

<sup>64</sup> ‘Zwischen zwei Gesetzen’ [1916], *MWG* I/15.94; cf. 94-95 passim; ‘An der Schwelle des dritten Kriegsjahres’ [1916], *ibid.*, 682-684.

<sup>65</sup> See the *Grundriss zu den Vorlesungen* [1898], repr. Tübingen, 1990.

<sup>66</sup> This logic undoubtedly applies to the parallel, ‘external’ sequence of events whereby Weber gave up his teaching post and took an editorial post without any fixed obligations at the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*; and without the *Archiv* the *PE* would never have existed in anything like the form that we know it, and so perhaps not at all.

<sup>67</sup> *Briefe* 24.7.06 referring to Siebeck’s letter of 17.7.06.

<sup>68</sup> See *Briefe* 12.8.07 (to Michels) and then 2-3.9.07.

episode, which casts new light on the history of the text at an unexpected and hitherto entirely neglected point.

## RECENSIES

## ALGEMEEN

I. de Haan, *Politieke reconstructie. Een nieuw begin in de politieke geschiedenis* (Oratie Universiteit Utrecht, 12 maart 2004; Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht, Faculteit der letteren, 2004, 45 blz., ISBN 90 7691248 3).

In de rede waarmee Ido de Haan in maart van dit jaar het hoogleraarschap politieke geschiedenis te Utrecht aanvaardde, toont hij hoe de bestudering van het 'nieuwe begin' en de reconstructie na regimewisselingen de politieke geschiedenis verder kan helpen. Daarmee greep hij de gelegenheid aan om de eerste resultaten te presenteren van een door NWO gefinancierd onderzoeksprogramma dat hij in Amsterdam was begonnen maar nu in Utrecht voortzet. Het is een mooi en veelbelovend thema, want de manier waarop na een crisis nieuwe spelregels ontstaan in de politiek en nieuwe instituties vorm krijgen kan fundamentele inzichten opleveren, zoals De Haan al duidelijk maakt met een vergelijking tussen verzoening en reconstructie na crisisperiodes in het Nederland en Frankrijk van 1600, 1814 en 1945. Zijn achtergrond als politicoloog maakt hij productief door anders dan historici meestal doen niet naar verschillen tussen historische periodes te zoeken maar naar overeenkomsten. Er kan dan anachronisme dreigen en de definitie van overgangperiodes en regimewisseling is nog niet helemaal scherp (de periode die misschien wel het meest als overgangstijd wordt aangeduid, het fin de siècle, staat los van regimewisseling, en impliciet betekent regimewisseling bij De Haan zoiets als restauratie, dus niet 1795 maar 1813-1815 en niet 1940 maar 1945), maar de energie waarmee De Haan zich aan het werk heeft gezet doet verwachten dat er uit de deelonderzoeken een mooie synthese zal ontstaan. De Haan overtuigt ook wanneer hij betoogt dat het onderzoek naar een nieuw begin in de politieke geschiedenis een bijdrage zal leveren aan de vernieuwing van de geschiedschrijving van de politiek. De laatste decennia is nog eens de vruchtbaarheid gebleken van onderzoek naar politieke crisisperiodes zoals de Franse Revolutie, maar ook het eind van de negentiende eeuw waarin geen sprake is van formele regimewisseling. Door zich te concentreren op reconstructie na regimewisseling bakent De Haan een terrein af waarbinnen een consistente benadering mogelijk is.

De Haan neemt geen genoegen met een uitleg van zijn eigen plannen alleen. Hij wil ook duidelijk maken wat hij niet doet en daartoe onderbreekt hij zijn betoog voor een kritische bespreking van de geschiedenis van politieke cultuur. Hij begint met een hommage aan zijn voorganger, Hans Righart, die het begrip onder Nederlandse historici introduceerde. Dat is sympathiek, elegant en op zijn plaats. Maar vervolgens haalt De Haan een retorische truc uit, want hij gebruikt Righart, die na zijn oratie eigenlijk weinig meer aan het thema heeft gedaan en wiens definitie van politieke cultuur door de beoefenaren ervan niet veel is nagevolgd, om de zwakheden van de benadering van politieke cultuur te kritiseren. Hij concentreert zich op drie punten: het gebrek aan aandacht voor evenementen, instituties en macht. Omdat enkele argumenten die De Haan aandraagt wel vaker worden gehoord, is het de moeite waard ze hier kort te bespreken.

Righart meende dat de studie van de politieke cultuur zich bij uitstek met de 'longue durée' bezighoudt. Daar is veel tegenin te brengen en De Haans kritiek dat de politieke cultuur het evenementiële over het hoofd ziet overtuigt niet echt. Laten we een voorbeeld van De Haan zelf nemen: Van Limburg Stirum die op 17 november 1813 op de Kneuterdijk de beroemde