

this sense, all four states transcended medieval politics, where the nobility had been both the hegemony of local politics and the sole warrior class.

The decline of Spain—which fought too much—reminds us again that war can break states as well as make them. Paul Kennedy's notion of imperial overstretch causing internal exhaustion and decline seems à propos here. Yet it is fascinating, and possibly significant, that the three western European countries who experienced the degenerative effects of war most harshly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries emerged in the twentieth century as the main standard-bearers of fascism, with all its glorification of War and the State writ large. The causal links between the Italian Wars and Mussolini, between seventeenth-century Castile and Franco's Spain, or between the Thirty Years' War and Hitler's rise, are admittedly distant and attenuated. But perhaps there is a calculus in the subconscious of nations that seeks to compensate for the humiliation of defeat by the exaltation of war and martial values, however delayed the compensation may be. The scars of Mars run painful and deep, and heal but ever so slowly.

War and the Rise of the Nation-State

Now every French citizen is a soldier, and a willing soldier at that!

—Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville,
Address to the French Legislative Assembly,
December 29, 1791

Vive la Nation!

—French war cry at Valmy, September 1792

By 1660 the cake of state was baked in France, and the recipe was in demand across all Europe. The institutions of feudalism were inexorably declining; the claims of Church and empire to universal political supremacy were irretrievably lost. The state had emerged as the logical unit of politics, superior to all other forms of organization in its capacity to generate armed force, the currency of power. While the majority of European kingdoms and principalities retained their medieval form in the first decades after the Westphalian settlement, traditional politics could not and did not long endure the shock of military encounters with the armies of France or Sweden, the two states where the military revolution had proceeded furthest. Modern warfare unleashed modernizing pressures with a vengeance. Via numerous transmission channels, including unabashed borrowing and

imitation, the military engine of state formation began to operate in yet untouched regions of Europe, both West and East. Eventually, carried abroad by the trading companies, steamships, and bayonets of imperial powers, the bureaucratic state would proliferate throughout the earth. Wherever the gun went, the filing cabinet followed.

The proliferation of sovereign states took place in three main waves of historical development. From 1648 to 1789, state formation took place almost exclusively within Europe, with absolute monarchy the most common form. The states of this era, with the exception of a few anomalous republics, retained a dynastic basis and were not actual *nation-states* as the term is understood today. Though the borders of a given European state might approximate those of a specific linguistic or cultural community, the sense of community at the national level was only weakly felt, and the identification of nation with state was weaker yet. The European state was now more than a private dynasty, more than a cluster of feudal realms, but it was not yet widely perceived as the political incarnation of a sovereign people. European trading companies and colonists established settlements and outposts throughout much of the world during this period, but of these only the British colonies of North America successfully formed an independent state prior to the French Revolution.

The second great wave of state formation occurred in the wake of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, which unleashed powerful forces of nationalism all across Europe. Originating in war and propagated by invading armies, this nationalism transformed dynastic states into true nation-states, widely identified in the popular imagination as the embodiment of the national community of the populace. Nineteenth-century nationalism produced a new arithmetic of state formation: multiplication by division, as multinational empires split into a host of new states (Greece, Belgium, Romania, etc.), and addition by subtraction, as wars of national unification welded disparate principalities into unitary states (Italy, Germany). This period essentially ended after the First World War, which precipitated the final disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, creating a boomlet of new nation-states on the periphery of Europe.

The third—and still continuing—wave of state formation took place outside the borders of Europe and overlapped with the second, as the organization of the bureaucratic state proliferated throughout the globe. The New World led the way with the birth of the United States, followed by the Spanish and Portuguese colonies throughout Latin America winning their wars of independence. In the last quarter

of the nineteenth century, the European imperial powers embarked on a feeding frenzy, annexing over 10 million square miles of territory, including most of Africa, and bringing 84 percent of the world's terrain under European dominion. By blood and by iron, the imperial states exported Western military technology and administration into virtually every part of the world, stimulating political reforms and modernization even in the most venerable of ancient empires, albeit at an enormous cost to human life. The cumulative effects of the two World Wars then shattered the overseas empires of the European powers, leading to their withdrawal from Africa and Asia and the rise of scores of new sovereign states, the majority of the membership of the United Nations today.¹

Extra-European state formation remains an unfinished process, for though new sovereign states have emerged in much of the globe, many of them remain but administrative overlays on traditional societies and could not fairly be characterized as unitary nation-states. Nor can the process of state formation be said to have ended even in Europe, for between 1989 and 1993 alone, in consequence of the breakup of the Soviet empire and the war in Yugoslavia, no less than *fourteen* new states made their debut in Europe.* More are certain to follow. Whether the breakup of former Communist states is simply a continuation of the nineteenth-century pattern in which nationalism is destiny and every linguistic community seeks to form its own state, or whether it represents a fundamentally different and fourth stage of state development, remains as yet difficult to say.

WAR, ARMIES, AND EUROPEAN STATE FORMATION, 1660–1789

Our primary concern in this chapter is the passage of Western politics to a new incarnation of modernity, that of the nation-state. But

* The list, for the curious, is as follows: Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Slovakia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo together make up what is left of Yugoslavia—not a new state. Five Central Asian states also emerged—Tadjikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirgizistan, Turkmenistan—but these are generally considered Asian rather than European.

though the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were the midwives of this passage, understanding it fully requires that we return to the period shortly after Westphalia (1648) and consider what happened between then and 1789. The eighteenth century was an era of rapid state proliferation that paralleled the rise of modern nationalism. In the course of the century, a pentarchy of powers—France, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and England—came to dominate European affairs. Only England, furthest to the west and secure behind the Channel, retained the representative system it had inherited from the medieval era. The three eastern powers, by contrast, lacked natural borders and suffered from territory poorly suited for defense. Exposed and vulnerable in a world of rising military power, they pursued the continental path of state formation; like France, they became absolutist states with centralized bureaucracies, large standing armies, and royal dominance of the nobility.

Before looking at how war reared these absolutist giants, three general features of the period should be mentioned. First, the absolutism of the day was neither absolute, total, nor totalitarian. Though Louis XIV in 1692 issued an edict proclaiming his universal lordship over all territory in France, the communications and transport realities of the day severely limited his power to penetrate French society. Also, numerous societal sources of resistance to monarchical power persisted in Enlightenment Europe; of these the nobility remained predominant, despite the ground it had lost to royal power in the preceding two hundred years. Although a Louis XIV might overawe the French nobility for a time, the *parlements* reasserted themselves under Louis XV, rejecting an income tax proposed to finance the War of Austrian Succession and waging a bitter dispute in Brittany over the right of the central government to build roads for defense. The traditional barriers to absolutism were weakest in Russia, where the *oprichniki* of Ivan IV (“Ivan the Terrible”) in the sixteenth century had executed over 10,000 *boyars* and converted the nobility into a service class with minimal corporate privileges. The same barriers were strongest in Habsburg Austria, where the landed class remained powerful and the sprawling, multinational character of the dynasty made central control intrinsically more difficult.

A second feature of the era was the limited nature of war. The horrors of the Thirty Years’ War had persuaded European leaders of the enormous destructive potential of the new warfare. The wars of the eighteenth century were consequently shorter, less destructive, and more mindful of the need to avoid civilian casualties. Several factors contributed to this. An increasingly sophisticated system of

interstate diplomacy mediated disputes, signaled intentions, and maintained equilibrium. The Swiss jurist Emerich de Vattel codified rules of war in 1758 that were more restrictive, and more widely accepted, than those proposed by Grotius over a century earlier. The logistical and commissariat system developed by the Marquis de Louvois, the French secretary of state for war under Louis XIV, spread to all the larger states of Europe, enabling armies to supply themselves from large food depots and permanent magazines rather than by looting the civilian population. The new conventional wisdom held that armies should remain within five days’ march of their bases; this obviously tended to limit the scope and size of battles. Frederick the Great epitomized the eighteenth-century attitude toward war when he opined that the civilian population should not even be aware that a war was taking place.²

A third general characteristic of eighteenth-century Europe was the prevalence of mercantilist economic policies. Because mercantilism and “enlightened despotism” are so often invoked as capturing the spirit of the age, it is important to recognize that they derived at least in part from the requirements of war. European monarchs had always known that money was needed to wage battle, but in the eighteenth century it began to dawn on them that the capacity to generate revenue was linked to the condition of their countries, that the cows had to be kept healthy and plump if they were to be milked regularly. Whatever the enlightened despots may have thought of the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment, whatever genuine altruism or concern for the public welfare they may have felt, their economic policies were aimed foremost at enhancing the state’s capacity for war-fighting. Jean Baptiste Colbert, whose name is most closely associated with mercantilism, put it simply: “Trade is the basis of finance, and finance is the sinew of war.”

In short, notwithstanding Frederick the Great’s vision of battle not interfering in civilian lives, war continued to exert a profound influence on the internal affairs of states from 1660 to 1789—less from its violence and destructiveness than from its organizing and formative effects at home. The urgent need for funds to cover the large debts run up in the Seven Years’ War (1756–63) motivated many of the most prominent and loudly hailed domestic reforms of the Enlightenment era, and the most spectacular manufacturing achievements of the century were largely military in nature. It was hardly the liberality and vision of Enlightenment philosophy alone that transformed Prussia into the fourth-largest manufacturing country in the world by the death of Frederick the Great in 1786.³

MILITARY CONFLICT AND DOMESTIC REFORM

France emerged from its defeat of Spain in 1659 as the ascendant power in Europe. Louis XIV carried the logic of the absolutist state to its culmination, forging the largest war machine and administrative apparatus of any European power. The number of troops at his disposal reached a peak of 392,000 during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14), with a standing *peacetime* army of 150,000—as many as Richelieu had wielded at the peak of the Thirty Years' War. Even the French navy in 1689 was briefly the largest in Europe, with more ships of the line than England's. The military reforms of Vauban and Louvois elevated the French army beyond the Military Revolution of the seventeenth century, converting it to an efficient, well-trained fighting force with a strict chain of command, promotion based on merit, fixed pay scales by rank, and standardized uniforms. Louvois established a network of supply depots, created a reserve system, integrated the artillery with the regular army, and instituted military hospitals and a pension system for disabled veterans, the first in Europe. By the end of the Sun King's reign, the French army was in many respects closer in spirit and form to the European armies of today than to the army of Richelieu.⁴

With its splendid court and unparalleled army, France became the prototype of European state formation, its institutions widely seen as incarnating the secrets of military success, its innovations shamelessly copied. Shifting alliances and the tendency of the European states to maintain a shifting balance against French power made it impossible for France to assert continental hegemony—indeed, France's battlefield record was always less impressive than the peacetime promise of its army. But European *perceptions* of French military superiority enabled the French language to conquer the courts of Europe, while French arts, letters, and drama asserted a kind of pan-European cultural hegemony as well.

From 1660 to 1789 France was a central player in every major European conflict involving multiple powers, with only one exception—the Great Northern War of 1700–1721. Table 4–1 lists the major multilateral wars of this period and the key antagonists; again and again, the large powers allied with or faced off against France. No other power played such a pivotal role in alliance politics; no other state fought with and against so many other major powers so frequently. This constant military interaction with the most advanced military power on the continent inevitably had a profound effect on the thinking of other state leaders and the evolution of their internal

Table 4–1. Major European Conflicts, 1660–1789.

DATE	WAR	PRINCIPAL CONTENDERS
1688–97	War of the Grand Alliance	France vs. England, United Provinces, Spain, Sweden, Austria
1700–21	Great Northern War	Sweden vs. Russia, Poland, Saxony and Denmark
1701–14	War of the Spanish Succession	France and Spain vs. Austria, Britain, and the United Provinces
1733–38	War of the Polish Succession	France and Spain vs. Austria and Russia
1740–48	War of the Austrian Succession	France and Prussia vs. Austria and Britain
1756–63	Seven Years' War	Austria, Russia, France, Sweden and Spain vs. Prussia and Britain
1778–83	War of American Independence (in Europe)	Britain vs. France, Spain and the United Provinces

policies. Even in the small principalities of Germany—Bavaria, Saxony, the duchy of Württemberg, and the electorates of Mainz, Cologne, and Trier—French subsidies and military support had the effect of strengthening the power of princes and central governments à-vis their respective towns and estates.⁵

Prior to 1648, European state formation had been driven largely by circumstance; only in Sweden was there a conscious attempt to forge a modern state by borrowing from the military and political institutions already extant on the continent. This changed in the eighteenth century, which witnessed several deliberate “top-down” efforts at forming centralized bureaucracies and standing armies on the French or Swedish models. Military defeat or perceptions of threat motivated most such efforts. Prussia embarked on its first modernizing reforms in response to the devastation of the Thirty Years' War. The First Northern War (1655–60) lent momentum to the process. As the Great Elector declared on its eve, “The military preparations of all our neighbors compel us to follow their example.”⁶ Russia's defeat at the Battle of Narva in 1700, when a brigade of 8,000 Swedish soldiers trained in the art of continental warfare routed 35,000 Russian soldiers, impelled Peter the Great on a determined reform course. Austria's defeats at Mollwitz (1741), Hohenfriedberg (1745), and Soor (1745) in the Silesian Wars sent shock waves through the Austrian establishment and spurred its first serious modernizing reforms.

In the case of Austria, Maria Theresa's principal advisors, Counts Friedrich Wilhelm von Haugwitz and Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, recognized that the loss of Silesia had occurred primarily because Austria,

unlike Prussia, was not internally organized to make effective use of its resources. Between 1748 and 1763, Haugwitz and Kaunitz undertook a far-reaching reform program: the army was enlarged and restructured along modern lines; an antiquated structure of government was replaced by a more rational, bureaucratic administration; taxation and military recruitment quotas were imposed on the landed nobility. Additional military reforms followed the Seven Years' War. The Theresian reforms undermined the Austrian estates and reduced the weight of the *Länder*, consolidating Upper and Lower Austria into a modern, centralized political structure (though the rest of the Habsburg realms remained under more traditional forms of rule).⁷

The reformative impact of war is particularly instructive in the Russian case. By the time Peter I, "the Great," assumed the full powers of the throne in 1689, the Romanov dynasty had long since reestablished the primacy of the Tsar over Russian society, briefly lost during the Time of Troubles. In this sense, Russia was already "absolutist," but it was a thoroughly medieval despotism, untouched by the modernizing trends in the West. And though Russia had fought intermittent wars with Poland, Sweden, and Turkey during the seventeenth century, its approach to war remained medieval. This changed rapidly under Peter the Great, during whose thirty-five-year reign Russia was completely at peace for only 25 months.⁸ Two events in particular spurred the new Tsar's obsession with reform. The first was Peter's Grand Embassy to Western Europe in 1697–98, an extended tour during which he inspected the industry, weaponry, craftsmanship, and political institutions of France, Holland, Germany, and England; he returned home determined to modernize Russia, especially in military technology. His second epiphany was Russia's defeat by Sweden at Narva, which Peter recognized as deriving not only from Sweden's superior military forces but also from the administrative-political machinery that produced and supported them. Narva marked the beginning of twenty-one years of war with Sweden, during which time Peter literally rebuilt the Russian state in order that it might wage war on a par with the Western powers.

He began by replacing an antiquated recruiting method with a system of general conscription applied to all classes. Regular annual levies were made, with up to 30,000 men added to the ranks every year; the Russian army increased to 113,000 men by 1708. Instead of troops disbanding during peacetime, regiments were made permanent and the Crown assumed direct responsibility for their maintenance. The Tsar also launched a crash program of naval armament, which by 1703 put the first small Russian fleet in the Baltic; by the end of his reign, the

Russian navy numbered 48 ships of the line, over 800 galleys, and 28,000 men. Peter also modernized his military administration, eventually creating a General Staff, a Commissariat, a Ordnance Office, an Artillery Office, and Naval and Military Colleges.

In 1707, a Russian victory at Lesnaya indicated that the Petrine reforms were beginning to pay dividends. But the decisive Russian victory at Poltava the following year proved to be a powerful catalyst for reform, having an even greater impact on Russian internal affairs than the defeat at Narva. By persuading Peter that his reform course was on target, it spurred sweeping political and administrative innovations. Before Poltava there had been only two Petrine ukases (Acts) dealing with governmental organization; after Poltava, there were hundreds, a veritable flood of reforms, as Peter overhauled his financial and taxation system and reorganized the Russian state administration along more rational lines. Defeat as a catalyst of political reform is a common phenomenon; the post-Poltavan reforms show that victory sometimes has a similar effect as well.

The Russian historian Vasili Klyuchevsky maintains that overtaking the West militarily was the undeviating goal of the entire Petrine reform program, even of those administrative innovations that were not directly military in nature.⁹ This obsession was passed on to his successors as well, catapulting Russia on a three-centuries-long course of Herculean efforts to keep pace with Western military advances. Because the Western powers interacted far more closely with one another in commerce, diplomacy, and war—and because of the more rapid progress of capitalism, and later industrialization, in Western Europe—the West achieved rapid rates of technological innovation that Russia found difficult to match. The effort to catch up was a constant *leitmotiv* of Russian history from the time of Peter the Great onward. In attempting to match the West while rejecting Western values and refusing to liberalize Russian society, Russia only reinforced its autocratic course; state-driven innovation was substituted for social initiative, and despotism became an instrument for containing the social forces unleashed by modernization.¹⁰

THE MILITARY LOGIC OF THE ABSOLUTIST STATES

The rise of the state invariably meant the political subjugation of autonomous classes or groups by the center. Just as the growing power of the French state under Richelieu and Mazarin triggered revolts by both lords and peasants, the rise of the absolutist state in Prussia, Rus-

sia, and Austria met with strong internal resistance. During the First Northern War (1655–60), the Great Elector demanded large grants from the Brandenburg estates; when they resisted, he imposed a land tax by force and ceased to consult the Estates. In 1662, faced with an incipient revolt in East Prussia, he marched 2,000 troops to Königsberg and compelled the *Junkers* (nobles) of the Prussian Estates likewise to yield to his authority. Later in the decade, when the Prussian *Landtage* (Estates) were dithering over tax payments, the execution of a recalcitrant noble quieted all resistance.

In Russia, Ivan IV (“Ivan the Terrible”) had broken the back of noble resistance a century before Peter the Great, but the latter faced revolt from a different quarter—the elite military corps known as the *Streltsy*, who resented his early reforms aimed at improving the discipline of the corps. Regarding the *Streltsy* as a traditional, quasi-autonomous social and military order that had to be subjugated, Tsar Peter brutally crushed the revolt, executing over 1,000 insurgent troops. He then integrated the *Streltsy* gradually into the reformed regular army. Peter’s ruthlessness contrasts with the more indirect approach of Maria Theresa, who sought to persuade the Austrian Estates to provide long-term grants and used compulsion only on rare occasions—as when Carinthia was forced to make contributions in support of her army. Though the Austrian Estates lost some of their independence, they were never crushed or abolished, while non-Austrian realms of the empire, such as Hungary and Bohemia, retained considerable autonomy. The failure to achieve a truly integrated state may be one reason why the larger Austrian empire proved nonviable in the long run. Like Spain’s in the previous century, Austria’s imperial possessions vitiated its central state formation.

It is striking that once the structure of absolutism was in place, neither France, Prussia, Russia, nor Austria experienced serious internal challenges to absolutist rule again until 1789. Louis XIV faced a brief revolt in Brittany in 1675, and he required 20,000 troops to subdue the Camisard Revolt in 1702–1704; thereafter, the French state enjoyed domestic tranquility until 1789. With the single exception of Pugachev’s Revolt (1773–74), a peasant uprising on the steppes of the Volga far from Moscow, Russia also experienced no further serious violence. The internal equilibrium of the Old Regimes rested upon the familiar triad of army, taxes, and bureaucracy. Central power was upheld by military force, which was organized and funded by bureaucracies, which collected taxes that funded both the bureaucracy and the military, both of which in turn enforced tax collection. It was a circular arrangement that amply justifies Charles Tilly’s description of

the modern state as a kind of protection racket. The most vital leg of this triad was the standing armies of the absolutist monarchs, which made successful rebellion almost impossible for over a century.¹¹

Prior to 1600, the French army had rarely exceeded 25,000 troops in peacetime or 50,000 in wartime, a ratio equivalent to a small fraction of 1 percent of the population—and of course even less if the foreign mercenary component in the Army is taken into account. The ratio nearly tripled under Richelieu, but still remained under 1 percent; under Louis XIV, during the War of the Grand Alliance, it reached nearly 2 percent with a high complement of foreign mercenaries.¹² The growth of the Prussian army was even more impressive, as well as more indigenous, rising from a peacetime strength of 18,000 in the 1660s and 1670s to 40,000 in 1713, to 83,000 in 1740. Much of this growth can be credited to Frederick William I (1713–40), who was nicknamed “the royal drill sergeant” and who dressed in uniform during much of his reign. Declaring 50,000 soldiers worth more than 100,000 ministers, he slashed the Prussian bureaucracy so as to free up funds for the army. His successor, Frederick the Great, by 1755 had again doubled the size of the Prussian army; by his death in 1786, it numbered 200,000 men and was generally acknowledged as the best-trained, best-equipped army in Europe. Some 20 percent of Berlin’s population of 100,000 were soldiers, and the Comte de Mirabeau was describing Prussia as not a state with an army but an army that happened to possess a state. By then, it had achieved a military participation ratio of 4 percent, double that of Louis XIV and roughly *five times* what Richelieu had mobilized in the Thirty Years’ War. It was a ratio higher even than France attained after the *levée en masse* of 1793. In purely quantitative measure, the mass army had arrived in Europe even before the French Revolution.¹³

On the strength of the Theresian reforms, the Austrian army increased rapidly, reaching a level of 108,000 troops by 1754 and climbing to 200,000 at the peak of the Seven Years’ War. Four decades earlier, the Russian army had also undergone rapid growth, reaching 200,000 by the end of Peter the Great’s rule in 1725 (not counting 100,000 Cossacks and mercenary troops).¹⁴ But though this was a large force in absolute terms, in relative terms as a percentage of population, it reflected a much lower level of human mobilization than in either Prussia or France, and that level remained lower even after the size of the Russian army reached 500,000 by the end of the century. This alone would explain why the Russian military—though it was a conscript force drawn from every class of society and every district of the country—did not emerge as an independent political actor or a cata-

lyst of social leveling in the eighteenth century. But how are we to explain the case of the Prussian army? Normally we would expect a high military-participation ratio to stimulate egalitarianism and demands for political participation, but the Prussian soldiery remained docile and exerted little overt leveling influence within German society. Why?

The answer may lie in the high degree of social discipline demanded by the Prussian state—a characteristic that persisted throughout its history and that carried over into the Imperial and Nazi periods as well. Quaint depictions of “enlightened absolutism” aside, the fact is that Prussian rulers ran an exceedingly authoritarian, austere regime, which demanded strict fulfillment of duty and virtually total submission of their citizenry to the needs of the most militarized polity in Europe.¹⁵ Prussian justice was less arbitrary and less physically cruel than in Russia, but through the constant invoking of discipline and duty the Fredericks instilled in their populace an extraordinary degree of internal obedience to the state. By infusing Prussian society with a martial political culture, they neutralized the potentially deleterious side effects to autocracy of a large standing conscript army.

The maintenance of large standing armies was an expensive proposition for all the absolutist states. The Theresian financial and taxation reforms doubled Austrian state revenue to 40,000,000 florins, of which a lean 35 percent was supposed to cover army expenses. In fact, the Seven Years’ War cost Austria some 260,000,000 florins, of which 44,000,000 were spent in a single year (1760), more than the entire annual revenue of the state. Under Frederick the Great, fully 80 percent of state revenue went to the army. Under Peter the Great, military spending more than quintupled, regularly absorbing 80 to 85 percent of revenues and sometimes (1705) as much as 96 percent! It is no wonder that the absolutist states have been described as little more than “machines for making war.”¹⁶

As a percentage of state revenues, French military spending in peacetime never quite achieved the heights of Prussian spending, but the levels were impressive enough, contributing to the eventual fiscal and political ruin of the Bourbon monarchy. A statement of royal finances in 1680—when France was at peace—shows military expenditures equalling some 47,487,000 *livres*, nearly 49 percent of total spending. But this does not include some 11 *livres* in debt repayments, the vast bulk of which were accumulated during earlier wars. Together, the two military components consumed over 60 percent of the French budget. And this was in peacetime; the percentage inevitably escalated

sharply during wars, when only massive borrowing staved off insolvency. By 1786, shortly before the Revolution and also a year of peace, the ratio of military spending in the total state budget had risen to 74 percent.¹⁷ The French state might have adopted as its motto a new Cartesian imperative: “I fight, therefore I am.”

Such high levels of military expenditure forced all the absolutist regimes to impose unprecedented levels of taxation, enforced in every case by military power. Machiavelli in *The Discourses* had written that money was not the sinews of war, but rather good troops, since “gold does not find good soldiers, but good soldiers are quite capable of finding gold.”¹⁸ Never was this more true than under the *anciens régimes*, when military terror enforced the writ of the tax collector and armies served as tools of repression as well as of expansion and defense. In 1724 Peter the Great imposed a “soul tax” on every adult male in Russia; it remained the primary source of state revenue until 1886. The army enforced collection of the tax by brute force, its inevitable abuses spurring the flight of the populace beyond the ever-more-distant frontier. In France, military garrisons based in the countryside enforced the tax-collecting writ of the *intendants* and the corrupt tax farmers. On occasion, French troops even confiscated household utensils and farming implements from the peasantry—their only means of livelihood—when cash could not be obtained. Since the bulk of these revenues went into the support of the army, France was literally heeding the Old Testament injunction of the prophet Joel to beat its plowshares into swords.¹⁹

Bureaucracy, the third leg of the absolutist triad, flourished under the pressure of war. At Versailles, the Grand Monarch Louis XIV added numerous councils and commissions to his administration, seeking to turn the bureaucracy into a pliant instrument of state policy; the term *minister* was first applied to state secretaries during his reign. In Prussia, during the Third Dutch War (or Franco-Dutch War) of 1672–79, the *Generalkriegskommissariat*, originally formed during the First Northern War, became independent of the privy council and acquired vast powers of taxation and financial administration. After the war, the *Kriegskommissariat* became a juggernaut of centralization. Its rapidly expanding hierarchy of officials acquired authority over every facet of public life, from manufacturing to municipal administration. Brandenburg-Prussia became subject to a tightly unified civil-military administration that had been set up originally mainly to fund and supply the army. In the course of the next century, this Prussian administration became the nearest thing in Europe to a classic Weberian bureaucracy: an efficient, faceless civil service devoted to the inter-

ests of the state and largely free of the corruption that plagued other absolutist regimes.

Peter the Great's post-Poltava reforms had an immense impact on Russia's administration, resulting in virtually a "cult of bureaucratic institutions" with offices created to supervise and oversee virtually every physical structure or activity in the country from individual barracks to private homes. Under a system of Colleges (departments) modeled after Sweden, Peter put in place a top-down, hierarchically-ordered bureaucratic machine, the central ranks of which more than doubled between 1717 and 1723 alone. The Tsar also introduced a formal Table of Ranks slotting virtually the entire nobility into a bureaucratic pecking order that was divided into military, civil, and judicial services. Admittance to given Ranks was based on merit, and did not exclude commoners; this began to erode the hereditary structure of the nobility. (It is interesting to note that some 270 years later, when the post-Soviet Russian Federation undertook to reform its bureaucracy and create a modern civil service, the leading reform proposal envisioned a system modeled on Peter's Table of Ranks.)²⁰

Austria, as usual, did not go quite as far as its neighbors. Though it, like Prussia, established a *General-Kriegs-Commissariat* responsible for supervising the military and the economy, it was a less centralized, less effective, and less powerful bureaucracy than its counterpart. The strategic implications of this were not obvious at the time, but the weaker Austrian administration would prove consistently unable to mobilize military resources as effectively as the Prussian bureaucracy. Even in the mid-eighteenth century, the trends were emerging that would culminate in Prussian, rather than Austrian, dominance over Germany.

ALTERNATIVE PATTERNS: BRITISH CONSTITUTIONALISM, POLISH DECLINE

War did not invariably beget absolutism after Westphalia. Though after France, Great Britain was the most militarily engaged power of the eighteenth century, it retained and even strengthened its constitutional structure. The partitioning of Poland also reflects a different pattern, reminding us again that war can have disintegrative as well as formative effects.

The main objective of William of Orange when he captured the English throne in 1688–89 was to mobilize England's full military potential in the struggle against Louis XIV; consequently, between

Table 4-2. British Military Expenditures, Wartime Peaks and Peacetime Lows, 1688–1783. (Index = British pound, £)

MAJOR WARS	WARTIME PEAK	PEACETIME LOW
War of the Grand Alliance	£11,000,000	£3,000,000
War of Spanish Succession	15,000,000	5,000,000
War of Austrian Succession	12,000,000	6,000,000
Seven Years' War	21,000,000	10,000,000
American War	28,000,000	24,000,000

Source: John Brewer, *The Sinews of War*, p. 39.

1688 and 1714 the English state was almost constantly at war with France. During this period, virtually every branch of the government expanded in response to the pressures of war and empire, and Great Britain of necessity assumed many of the political features of the large continental states, including high rates of taxation, a standing army, and a well-administered professional bureaucracy.²¹ War continued to drive British state development throughout the following century. The period from the Glorious Revolution to the American Revolution saw five sharp jumps in the size of Great Britain's army, navy, bureaucracy, military expenditures, tax receipts, and national debt—coinciding respectively with the five major wars in which France was a principal adversary. Military expenditures, for example, would soar during a war as the army and navy expanded vigorously; afterward, expenditures would drop, but never to prewar levels. The result of this "ratchet effect" was cumulative net growth from war to war (see Table 4-2). The mushrooming of Britain's debt—from a negligible amount in 1688 to over 242 million pounds in 1784—likewise occurred almost entirely during wartime.²²

Sustaining such immense military expenditures required an efficient taxation system. The English after 1688 developed one of Europe's finest: legally uniform, rationally organized, and relatively uncorrupted. Astonishingly, constitutional Great Britain in the eighteenth century achieved per capita revenue income nearly twice as high as that of autocratic France! In the century after Charles II, Britain's aggregate net tax revenue increased tenfold, reaching 20 million pounds by the time of the French Revolution. Such a robust tax base gave its creditors confidence, enabling it to borrow money more readily and at lower interest rates than its continental counterparts. All

this belies the notion of Great Britain as a lightly administered, lightly taxed "weak" state. How was this possible?

The historian John Brewer postulates that the answer lies in the domestic support generated by constitutional government. Precisely because Britain was *not* absolutist—because the British Commons zealously scrutinized proposals for taxation, because it held royal officials responsible for how funds were accounted for and spent, because there were counterweights to monarchical authority—British institutions acquired a public legitimacy that the arbitrary methods of absolutism could never achieve.²³ Taxation by representation made it feasible to sustain higher levels of taxation and elicit greater national sacrifice in war than was possible through military-bureaucratic coercion. Edmund Burke in 1775 spoke of the "liberal obedience" that derived from constitutional government as the foundation of the British army and navy.²⁴ The British case again illustrates that while war affects every kind of state in far-reaching ways, the manner in which a people organizes itself for defense is a critical variable in determining how their political system evolves at home, as well as how it copes in an anarchic international environment.

Eighteenth-century Poland offers an example parallel to Italy and Germany of the disintegrative effects of war. The extremely weak political institutions that emerged in Poland during the medieval period—an elective monarchy, the *pacta conventa* limiting royal power, the infamous *liberum veto* that allowed even a single delegate to dissolve the Diet and nullify its will—made it very difficult for a strong central Polish government, even a constitutional one, to develop. With no semblance of central authority and with its institutions mired in the worst of feudal particularism, Poland stood little chance in competition with states where the Military-Bureaucratic Revolution was in full swing. Its vulnerability became obvious in the First Northern War (1655–60) and the Russo-Polish wars of 1654–56 and 1658–67, when internal divisions played into the hands of foreign enemies, resulting in diplomatic setbacks and territorial losses.

These seventeenth-century losses portended the three partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, all of which resulted from specific wars. But the real defining catastrophe for Poland, the event that crippled the state and made it incapable of resisting foreign encroachments, was the Great Northern War of 1700–21. During this war Poland, much like the Germanic states in the Thirty Years' War, became a hapless battleground for the armies of neighboring states. The restraints on violence against civilian populations that had been accepted in Western Europe after 1648 still had not penetrated to the

eastern half of the continent.²⁵ The bitterly fought war caused Poland's population to plummet by at least a million persons, mostly from disease, while the financial extractions of the Russian, Swedish, and Saxon armies sometimes amounted to more than the entire annual revenue of the state. Polish villages were plundered mercilessly; famine, epidemic, and depopulation followed.

Poland never recovered from the effects of this war. Without a central locus for reform efforts, defeat only widened its internal fault lines. In the War of Polish Succession (1733–38), the Polish Crown became a pawn of foreign armies and Poland was left a virtual satellite of Russia. Upon a revolt of Catholic nobles in 1768, Russian troops invaded, setting in motion the train of events that culminated in the First Partition. Shocked by the loss of one third of their population and territory, the Polish Diet agreed to abolish the *liberum veto* in 1788; four years later, it made the throne hereditary. All this was too little, too late. Factionalism prevailed again, as reactionary Polish lords rebelled against the new order, giving Catherine II of Russia ("Catherine the Great") another excuse to intervene. The Second and Third Partitions (1793 and 1795) divided what was left, erasing Poland from the map of Europe for over a century.²⁶ It was the most spectacular casualty of conflict among the hundreds of political entities that disappeared in the modern era. Unlike them, however, Poland would get a second chance after World War I, when the states that once partitioned it had themselves been decimated by war.

WAR, REVOLUTION, AND THE GENESIS OF THE NATION-STATE

From whence sprang the full-blooded nationalism that swelled to such heights of intensity in the French Revolution, that inspired soldiers and citizens to swear oaths to *patrie* and *nation*, that fired the French armies at Valmy and eventually propelled them across the face of all Europe? Why did nationalism become the most powerful political force of the nineteenth century, the forge of states, and why does it remain such a potent force in Europe and much of the world today? If we are to understand the passage of the state into the second stage of its modernity, the stage primarily associated with the nation-state, it is necessary first to consider the origins of nationalism.

We think of the nineteenth century, particularly the period between 1815 and 1880, as the Age of Nationalism, when a well-articulated ideology of nationalism emerged for the first time, a political doctrine that held that states should coincide geographically with nations—and that every nation large enough to constitute a sovereign state had the right to form one.²⁷ The voices of this classical nineteenth-century nationalism included Jeremy Bentham, Friedrich von Schlegel, Friedrich List, Ernest Renan, Karl Theodor Welcker, Jules Michelet, and Giuseppe Mazzini; its statesmen-executors were Giuseppe Garibaldi, Camillo Benso di Cavour, Louis Kossuth, and Otto von Bismarck. But nationalism is more than just a doctrine of state formation, and its origins predate the Restoration era. Nationalism is also a powerful collective emotion fixated on the mystical and mythical image of *the nation*. It is a kind of modern tribalism or political religion capable of eliciting strenuous exertions, supreme sacrifices, and deeply felt hostility—above all in war and in connection with war. For while nationalism is widely recognized as a cause of war—stimulating nationalist insurrections within states and bitter feuds between them—war is also a progenitor of nationalism. Its modern form developed in parallel with the rise of modern warfare and the modern state; from the beginning it was closely and inextricably intertwined with both.

As a collective passion rather than a political doctrine, nationalism—or what is perhaps more properly termed *protonationalism*—can be traced in European history at least as far back as the Hundred Years' War. Joan of Arc did not implore the Dauphin Charles to retake Normandy from the English. She told him to drive the English out of *France*—and this was over three hundred years before the French Revolution, in an era in which personal loyalties are regarded by historians as rarely transcending village, province, and Church.²⁸ Machiavelli, ever a harbinger of modernity, displayed a remarkably precocious sense of nationalism in his appeal to the Medicis of Florence to form a *national* army, free of all mercenary influence, to liberate Italy from the invasion of foreign powers.²⁹ The Spanish *Reconquista* likewise awakened national consciousness across the Iberian peninsula. There is nothing like warfare to sharpen communal identity and create a sense of the “otherness” of enemy peoples.

Though there is much evidence of the nationalizing impact of conflict during the two centuries between Agincourt and Westphalia, the Protestant Reformation and the religious passions it unleashed initially *slowed* and *muted* the development of protonationalism into modern state-centered nationalism. It was not only that particularist and religious loyalties were so intense; it was also that the religious wars

divided the newly emerging states *internally* almost as sharply as they divided them from one another. The civil wars of the Reformation era—the Schmalkaldic War, the French Wars of Religion, the English civil wars—aggravated internal schisms and complicated, at least in the short term, the investment of national feeling in the emerging centralized states. The fact that the newly centralized states endured these strains and did not break up is an indication of their growing power and tenacity, but so long as the religious wars continued, nationalism could not coalesce around secular political institutions and the states could not become nation-states. The Puritan revolution against Charles I, in its evocation of the rights of the English people vis-à-vis royal authority, is sometimes regarded as the first manifestation of true nationalism in Europe, but the strong religious sentiments it embodied, and which continued to divide England after the Restoration, precluded English nationalism from acquiring either the intensity or the modern quality that continental nationalism would later assume in the French Revolution.³⁰

Only after the passions of the religious wars subsided could national feeling come to fix on the state as its primary locus. Nationalism did not create the modern state; rather the modern state stimulated the rise of nationalism. As absolutist states grew in power—as religious and feudal claimants on loyalty retreated, as the borders of Europe were increasingly recognized as the frontiers of states rather than as dynastic property lines, as advances in warfare made the bureaucratic state the only tenable bulwark of security—human loyalties naturally began to stray from Church and village. The national feeling that had existed in unfocused form for centuries came in the course of the eighteenth century to be centered increasingly in the state. This can be seen as early as 1683 in Leibniz's satirical *Mars Christianissimus*, in which he complained of Louis XIV's France that “they already scorn our nation,” in Spinoza's claim that devotion to country was the highest form of piety, in Herder's call for Germans to “spit out the green slime of the Seine” (i.e., the French language). The Marquis d'Argenson observed in 1754 that “never before were the names of Nation and State evoked as often as today. These two words were never pronounced under Louis XIV, and one hardly knew what they meant.”³¹

The wars of the eighteenth century were the lunar gravity driving the incoming tide of nationalism. Precisely because they were limited wars, not fought for some supranational empire or supreme cause, but only for the narrow interests of the state, they strengthened perceptions of the state as the primary claimant on loyalty. During a war, human loyalty tends to migrate to the highest level at which the cur-

rent collective military efforts are organized, and after 1648 that level increasingly became the state; armies became seedbeds of nationalism in their own right. Though mercenary forces still constituted a sizable portion of national armies, moving with ease from one paymaster to another, the percentage of native-born soldiers increased steadily as the century progressed. By 1789, 75 percent of the French army were French subjects. When Austria occupied much of Galicia in the First Partition of Poland, the idea of raising regiments for the Austrian army from the occupied territory was suggested—what would have been routine practice even fifty years earlier. Field Marshal Franz Lacy, an adviser to the Regent, Joseph II, argued against the plan on the grounds that “a national spirit is taking a general hold, especially among the common people. We may therefore expect the Poles to be as attached to their fatherland as the Silesians.”³²

There are in fact many war-related sources of nationalism, and all of them were at work in the eighteenth century. One was the unifying effect of frequent wars; faced with a common external enemy, the community of the nation tends to rally, and now for the first time there were coherent central governments to rally around. (As the sociologist George Simmel argued, a perception of mutual threat invariably promotes group cohesion—even at the level of a nation!) Another factor that helped solidify the budding nationalisms of eighteenth-century Europe was the integrating effect of military service on soldiers—for example, by promoting usage of a single dialect and by diluting parochial attachments. Finally, when faced with the prospect of death in battle, the human mind inevitably seeks some higher meaning—and in wars where religion played little or no role, the myth of the nation offered one answer. Frederick the Great sought to inculcate his soldiers with a passionate Prussian patriotism that was closely akin to modern nationalism. His writings speak of the “spirit of the army,” while his war cry at the Battle of Zorndorf—“Come, children, die with me for the fatherland!”—was only a short step from the *Vive la nation* of Valmy.³³

There were also nonmilitary factors in the rise of nationalism, of course, such as the increasing availability of the printed word in vernacular languages and the published writings of the Enlightenment philosophers, above all Rousseau, who gave philosophical undergirding to the concept of popular sovereignty.³⁴ But just as the French invasion of Italy in 1494 had given rise to the “generation of ‘94” in political philosophy, so also did the wars of the eighteenth century—particularly the American War of Independence—stimulate nationalist thinking. The rationalism of the Enlightenment was not the only

source of the nationalism articulated by Rousseau, Johann Gottfried Herder, Edmund Burke, Vicomte de Bonald, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine; their writings were also a response to the drumbeat of current events.

The crisis of the *anciens régimes* came about in part because dynastically based states could not fulfill the nationalist aspirations that their very existence had stimulated. Though the autocratic state was the locus of collective efforts during wartime, it was unable to offer its subjects anything beyond security; it could not fill what Michelet called “the immeasurable abyss” left by the Enlightenment. For the autocratic state to do that, it would have to represent the interests and aspirations of the nation, not merely those of the ruling dynasty. The incompatibility of dynasticism with nationalism was the fundamental contradiction that destroyed the *ancien régime* in France. That contradiction also accounts for the schizophrenia of nineteenth-century nationalism, which fixated on the state as the embodiment of nationalist aspirations, the Sovereign of the General Will, yet sought to overthrow established monarchical states everywhere.

After 1789, nationalism became a revolutionary force that challenged the legitimacy of any government that did not derive its sovereignty from the nation; it rejected traditional nonnational sources of legitimacy, such as the divine right of kings or dynastic property rights, as usurpations of the popular will. Nationalism insisted that the state become the nation-state, that its wars become the wars of the nation and not of any private cause alone. It happened first in France, where the rivulets of eighteenth-century nationalism became suddenly a raging torrent that overflowed French borders and flooded the continent.³⁵

MILITARY FACTORS IN THE ORIGIN OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

If the French Revolution burst upon Europe like some vast cosmic fireball, it was not because of its radicalism alone (Rousseau was well known), nor its internal turmoil (another *Fronde*), nor even its regicide (Charles I of England was not forgotten). It was because Revolutionary France sent massive numbers of troops pouring outward across its borders as if dispatched to remind the world that a true revolution, and not a mere revolt, was in progress. To the *philosophes* of Europe, the Revolution was the realization of a century of intellectual ferment; to the people of France, it was a grand struggle over who would govern. But to the established order of Europe, it was an urgent,

profound military threat that focused minds marvelously on the source of its irrepressible energy: the fusion of nation and state.

Few events in modern history were so complex in their origins and progressions as the French Revolution of 1789–99. A host of social, economic, political, and ideological factors entered into its making, and in emphasizing its military side this chapter obviously paints an incomplete picture. But the specifically military factors that entered into its making help explain why Revolutionary France rapidly became embroiled in wars with its neighbors, why the French state was so easily seized by Napoleon, and why France was at war for the better part of twenty-three years after 1792. As Simon Schama has argued, the military aggressiveness of France after 1792 was neither accidental nor antithetical to the spirit of the Revolution, but was the logical culmination of almost everything it represented.³⁶

What were the military elements that contributed to the coming of the French Revolution? The first was the direct impact of the American War of Independence. Deeply humiliated by its defeat in the Seven Years' War, France after 1763 actively encouraged—via agents, propaganda, and diplomacy—an American independence movement as a way of striking back at Great Britain. Under the American–French alliance of 1778, the French made strenuous efforts on behalf of the American cause, efforts that were wildly popular with the educated French public. The French fleet fought the British in the West Indies and around the world; in 1781 alone, when the French navy cut off Cornwallis at Yorktown, French naval spending was *five times* its normal annual amount. Moreover, though the Marquis de Lafayette and other French officers initially went to America more for glory, adventure, and vengeance against the British than for any high-sounding commitment to liberty, they returned brimming with idealism; the American revolution had radicalized them in advance of their own. Lafayette and the Comte de Rochambeau are best known, but at least thirty-six other prominent Frenchmen played leading roles in both the American and the French revolutions. Among the aristocratic elite back home, the war also quickened the rise of nationalism, both through its ideological influence and by fanning intense anti-British feeling.³⁷

A second war-related factor was the fiscal crisis of the Bourbon monarchy. The immediate cause of this was the enormous outlays of the American War, which compounded the burden of French war debts that had piled up since Louis XIV. The Seven Years' War, in particular, had exacted an immense toll on the French state. Between 1753 and 1764 (years for which good data are available) France's debt nearly

doubled, from 1.36 million *livres* to 2.35 million. Servicing this debt required more than 60 percent of total state expenditures per annum.³⁸ The American War, over 90 percent funded by loans, added another 1.20 million *livres* of debt—the straw that broke the Treasury's back.³⁹ In Chapter 1, we identified an “inspection effect” of war—how it reveals to a people and a polity their most serious defects. The American War did this for the *ancien régime*, painfully revealing the defects of its antiquated and inequitable taxation system—defects that a venerable series of aristocratic critics, including Marshal Vauban in his *Dixme Royale* (1707), had recognized as portending trouble for the monarchy. Whatever the larger causes of the French Revolution, its *immediate* cause was this fiscal crisis brought on by the American War.⁴⁰ In a France where every social class already despised the corrupt taxation system of the Farmers-General, and where the nobility had a long tradition of resisting direct taxation, the Crown's intent to raise new revenues provoked spirited resistance from the *parlements*—almost a replay of the *Fronde* of 1648—and compelled Louis XVI to summon the fateful Estates-General to Versailles. The French Revolution, like the earlier American Revolution, began as a revolt against taxation made necessary by the cost of war.

A third, and ultimately decisive, military factor in the French Revolution was the politicization of the French army and the erosion of the Crown's monopoly of armed power. By the late 1780s, even before the Estates-General convened, some 3,000 troops were deserting annually, and in 1788–89, there were numerous incidents—at Rennes, Béarn, Toulouse, Besançon, and Grenoble—of officers or soldiers resisting orders to suppress local disturbances.⁴¹ By the time of the storming of the Bastille (an operation spearheaded by over a hundred soldiers from the French Guards and the line army) the Crown rightly felt it could no longer trust the 20,000 troops ringing Paris. Nor did the army fall into line when the National Assembly asserted control over many facets of its administration after February 1790. Like the Long Parliament before it, the Assembly discovered how difficult it was to control an army that had tasted power. Desertions and mutinies multiplied, and there were massive defections to the salaried National Guard formed by municipal authorities in Paris. By July 1790, more than one third of line army units were experiencing serious insubordination, usually involving confrontation between soldiers and officers. The Minister of War declared that insubordination was creating a “military democracy” and driving the aristocratic officer corps into exile. When the monarchy was overthrown in the revolt of August 1792, the senior army commanders, even those of royalist sentiment,

almost unanimously concluded that their troops would not support a march on Paris to restore the King. By then the French elite were beginning to understand what dozens of monarchs, dictators, and General Secretaries would eventually learn: that it is impossible to isolate a large standing army from larger currents of social change, and that once the army is lost the state is lost as well.

REVOLUTIONARY EXPANSIONISM AND THE MILITARY ORIGINS OF THE TERROR

The military factors discussed above do not alone explain the intense nationalism and militarism that emanated from the Revolution. Why did the Revolution turn outward, and why did France become a militarized and militarily expansionist state so swiftly after its army had nearly collapsed?

Part of the answer lies in the close connection between France's earlier wars and the development of French nationalism. Following the humiliation of the Seven Years' War, a deeply felt *ressentiment* toward Great Britain brooded among the French elite. Victory in the subsequent American War did not assuage this anti-British feeling but only gave French nationalism an increasingly militant and triumphalist tone. And though Austria had fought in alliance with France in the Seven Years' War and remained nominally an ally, anti-Austrian sentiment was also strong. (This was reflected for example in the popular opprobrium heaped on Marie Antoinette, whose Austrian birth and ties with the Austrian court made her exceedingly unpopular—especially after 1785, when during a minor diplomatic crisis with Austria she persuaded her husband to moderate the French position.) In short, French nationalism on the eve of the Revolution had come to define itself very much in *antiforeign* terms, and this xenophobic brand of nationalism gained rapid momentum as the Revolution proceeded. Camille Desmoulins expressed its essence in *La France libre* (1793): "The foreigners are going to regret that they are not French. We shall surpass these English, so proud of their constitution, who ridiculed our servitude."⁴²

The French decision to declare war against Austria in 1792 is often portrayed as a reaction to the Declaration of Pillnitz, as the launching of an ideological crusade for the Rights of Man against the tottering despotisms of the Old Regimes of Europe. It was nothing of the sort. The Declaration of Pillnitz was a carefully hedged, largely symbolic gesture that stirred little response in Paris. Furthermore, Austria had no real interest in waging war. Joseph II had *reduced* his army by

25,000 men before going to Pillnitz, and his advisers had *welcomed* the Constitution of 1791, which they assumed would render Louis XVI a less formidable opponent. By contrast, the Girondists in the National Assembly agitated vigorously for war throughout the fall and winter of 1791 and the spring of 1792, as a way of diverting attention from France's internal problems and consolidating their own position at home. The ideological impurity of their motives is shown by their zeal to have *Prussia*—despotic, militaristic Prussia—as an ally of France against Austria. The King also wanted war, thinking that it would enhance his own power or, failing that, would result in foreign intervention that would end the Revolution. His was the classic error of traditionalists and conservatives everywhere who think war will enhance their position—it usually undermines it. In short, France went to war not in a flush of idealism but rather urged on by radicals and a miscalculating monarch, both of whom hoped to exploit the dynamic of war for their own purposes. But once declared, the fact of war itself intensified French nationalism and gave rise to national myths that endure even today.⁴³

This should not be taken to minimize the significance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man in setting France apart from the rest of Europe. The statement in Article 3 that all sovereignty resides in the Nation marked the formal fusion of nation with state and was itself an important step in the evolution of French nationalism. But in the fury of the Revolution, the ideal of popular sovereignty became inextricably joined with the reality of a xenophobic nationalism before which the more liberal nationalism of the Declaration retreated. Once the Nation went to war against its enemies, the Nation's army inevitably became the focal point of national aspirations and the embodiment of nationalist fervor. The images of war, blood, and battle that permeate the verses of "La Marseillaise," and its repeated refrain—"Aux armes, citoyens"—perfectly capture the ascendancy of the military element in the nationalism of the Revolution. Nor was it just the volunteers and the National Guard that manifested the new nationalism. The regular units of the Fifth Artillery in March 1792 petitioned the Assembly not to increase army salaries, as they preferred to fight for liberty, not pay. And at Valmy, when the power of French nationalism first reverberated on the battlefield, it was the regular line army and particularly the artillery, whose bourgeois officers had not left the service, that carried the brunt of the fighting.⁴⁴

Well before the *levée en masse*, the nationalization of the French army had begun. Three key events altered its character and made it more representative of the nation.

First, beginning in 1790 and with accelerated tempo after the royal

flight to Varennes, over 2,000 noble officers fled France and were replaced by NCOs or National Guard officers. By early 1793, nobles constituted only 15 to 20 percent of the officer corps; by mid-1794, only 2 to 3 percent of captains were of the nobility, while 67 percent were artisans or bourgeois and a remarkable 22 percent were peasants.

Second, a series of recruitment drives enlisted large numbers of new soldiers. In the summer of 1791, the Assembly called for 100,000 volunteers from the National Guard; in April 1792, after declaring war on Austria, it called for an additional 83,600 volunteers. Fully 68 percent of this latter group were peasants, compared with only 15 percent in the line army of 1789. The volunteers served in separate units, but beginning in 1793, when the National Guard was gradually amalgamated into the line army, many became regular soldiers. In February 1793, the Assembly announced a third levy of 300,000, of which at most 180,000 were raised, largely by conscription and largely from the peasantry. In addition to elevating peasant representation, the recruitment drives gave the army greater geographic balance.

A third step in the nationalization of the army occurred in August and September of 1792, when the Assembly discharged the Swiss and the Royal Liégeois Regiments of the Army—alien citizenship having become *prima facie* grounds for doubting loyalty. By February 1793, only about 4 percent of the French army were foreigners.⁴⁵

The proclamation of the *levée en masse* of August 1793 was a desperate measure forced on the Committee of Public Safety by the Republic's precarious military situation. After Valmy French armies under Dumouriez and Custine had advanced rapidly into the Austrian Netherlands and the Rhineland; in February 1793 the Assembly, flush with victory, had declared war on Great Britain and the United Provinces. The conscription measures announced that month triggered massive domestic resistance, above all in the western provinces. By March of 1793, the French armies abroad were suffering stark reverses, and the First Coalition had been formed. By June, the Vendée was embroiled in full-scale civil war; anti-Republican insurrections were occurring across Brittany, Anjou, and Poitou; the "Federal Cities" of Lyons, Bordeaux, Marseilles, and Toulon had revolted; Prussian armies had defeated the French in the Rhineland; and a British-Hanoverian army had triumphed in the Austrian Netherlands. It was in this context of stark threat—at the ever-powerful conjunction of simultaneous civil and international war that either destroys states or enormously enhances their power—that the Committee of Public Safety assumed full dictatorial powers, leading in short order to the *levée en masse* and the Terror.

The *levée en masse* marked the consecration of the Army as the embodiment of the French Nation. Rousseau in *The Government of Poland* (1772) had advocated a people's army in which every citizen would serve as a soldier. In the same year the Count de Guibert published an *Essai général de tactique* advocating a citizen army and predicting that if any nation ever coupled such an army with a plan of aggrandizement, it would overwhelm Europe (though he doubted it would actually happen). In the 1770s and 1780s, numerous other French *philosophes*—Montesquieu, Joseph Servan, the Abbé Mably—came out in favor of a citizens' army. The newly formed National Guard, with its patriotic élan and bourgeois officer corps, was viewed by many as just such an army, particularly after the obligation to serve in it was made universal, at least in theory. But the *levée en masse* went further. It attempted to create not merely an army of citizens, but a *nation of soldiers*, mobilized and dedicated to the military cause of the state. Article I of the decree of August 23, 1793, says it all:

From this moment until that in which the enemy is driven from the territory of the Republic, all Frenchmen are permanently requisitioned for service in the armies.

Young men will go forth to battle; married men will forge weapons and transport munitions; women will make tents and clothing, and serve in hospitals; children will make linen into bandages; and old men will be carried to the public squares to arouse the courage of the soldiers, while preaching the hatred of kings and unity of the Republic.⁴⁶

Formally, the decree conscripted all able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five into the army. All told, it raised nearly 300,000 fresh soldiers, almost twice as many as the Assembly had raised the previous spring, bringing the size of the French army to approximately 750,000, an impressive 2.9 percent of the national population. In social composition, the levy was almost a mirror image of the French nation, drawing fairly on all classes.⁴⁷

The much vaunted nationalism of this enlarged French army was hardly a spontaneous phenomenon. From the beginning, the state fostered and manipulated the nationalism that sustained it. Jean Baptiste Bouchotte, Minister of War at the time of the *levée*, targeted his troops with a vigorous propaganda campaign, distributing over 7,000,000 copies of twelve revolutionary journals. The government also distributed patriotic songbooks and organized revolutionary *fêtes* for the soldiers. In this and other respects, the mass mobilization of 1793–94

portended the manipulation of nationalism that would become commonplace in the twentieth century. The economic sphere showed impressive achievements that also derived in part from the energy of nationalism. The large metallurgical factories of Le Creusot and the armaments factory at St.-Etienne were flooded with state contracts. Thousands of improvised workshops manufactured muskets, gunpowder, and other materiel. Church bells from all over France were melted down to make cannon. Engineers, chemists and other scientists offered their services, developing, among other things, a new method for manufacturing saltpeter.⁴⁸ The first true nation-state in possession of the first mass citizen army formed a national engine of war like none Europe had ever seen before.

The domestic strain of war—especially the civil war in the West—was the primary cause of the Terror, which began one month after the *levée en masse*. While ideological fanaticism may account for the Terror's cold amorality, neither ideological nor economic factors can explain why it happened. Statistical evidence of war as the driving force and rationale is found in a classic study by Donald Greer on the incidence of the arrests and executions carried out by authority of the Committee. Fully 74 percent of all the executions took place in the seventeen *départements* embroiled in the civil war—the Vendée and other provinces of the West, and the Rhône valley, where the Federal Cities were situated. Outside of Paris itself (which suffered 16 percent of the executions), the remainder of the carnage was concentrated largely in the frontier provinces, where enemy forces threatened and opportunities for treason were rife. Where neither civil war nor foreign army threatened, the Terror was a minimal event.⁴⁹

Greer's statistics further suggest that the civil war in the Vendée and elsewhere—what Robespierre termed the threat of an “internal Coblenz”—was a larger factor in causing the Terror than the threat from abroad. The two were linked, however, for the deployment of much of the French army abroad or on the frontiers forced the revolutionary government to rely on terror and other unorthodox methods to contain the insurrections at home. The tightly drawn military-bureaucratic dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety imposed draconian price controls, instituted war taxes, and dispatched specially formed *armées révolutionnaires* (urban militia consisting mostly of unemployed *sans-culottes*) from Republican-controlled cities into the countryside to enforce economic controls and to requisition grain and equipment for the army. Eventually numbering nearly 40,000, the *armées*—“Terror on the move” in the words of Richard Cobb—facilitated the domination by the modernizing cities over the traditional

agrarian society and the penetration of the revolutionary state into the countryside.⁵⁰ In terms of forging a unitary French nationalism, the Republican victories in the civil war were at least as crucial as any military successes abroad, for the provinces that revolted were the most medieval, the least secular, the least “modernized,” and the least integrated sections of France; their victory would have called into question the basic ideological legitimacy and cohesion of the newly incarnated centralized nation-state.

Would the Revolution have perished without the Terror, as Saint-Just claimed? Theda Skocpol, for one, argues that it probably would have, since only an immense concentration of power could have held France together in 1793–94. And since the Revolution *in toto* acted as a “gigantic broom” that swept away the “medieval rubbish” of seigniorial and particularist privilege and paved the way for industrial capitalism to emerge in France, both the Revolution and the Terror were integral components of political and economic modernization.⁵¹ So long as “modernization” is not confused with moral progress, this is at least an arguable perspective, one that finds resonance in much of contemporary scholarship. But the tendency of Western historians and social scientists is ever to read progress backwards into history. Preoccupied with history's “evolution,” we are easily blinded to its tragedies. The remorselessness of the Terror, the unspeakable atrocities committed by Republican forces in the Vendée, the harshness of the Committee's “de-Christianization” vendetta are stark reminders of the ambiguous nature of political change in the modern era and the ever-present potential of war to corrupt and debase human nature. By concentrating absolute state power, war corrupts absolutely.

THE NAPOLEONIC TRANSFORMATION OF FRANCE

Given the close linkage between war and state formation, it can hardly be regarded as coincidental that both the Puritan revolution in England and the secular Revolution in France culminated in military rule. In conditions of anarchy and strife, the army often emerges as the one social organization with sufficient discipline to seize power and govern. The parallel of a single charismatic military officer assuming dictatorial powers in each country is also no accident, given the tendency of military organizations to concentrate power in a single leader, and most often in that general acknowledged by his peers as greatest in war. When Napoleon Bonaparte came to power in the *coup d'état* of 18 Brumaire 1799, France had been at war for over seven years, and the

Corsican was a national hero. Beneath the froth of regime changes in Paris, the French state had become an immense military machine. It was only logical that a general head up this machine, especially given the widespread yearning for a restoration of public order. The regrettable inclination of historians has been to devote far greater attention to his foreign exploits than to his domestic achievements—and rarely to relate the two—yet the latter not only proved more enduring, but had a greater imprint on French life down to the present than all the unstable experiments and innovations of Assembly, Convention, and Directory before him.

As First Consul and later Emperor, Napoleon consolidated the three main gains of the Revolution: rationalization, centralization, and secularization. All were characteristics of modernity; all derived from the inexorable calculus of the military state. Prior to his coming, the architects of the Revolution had undertaken two principal rationalizing reforms: the abolition of the feudal rights of the old *pays d'états* and the privileged cities, and the division of France into 83 geographically more or less equal *départements*, in turn further subdivided into districts, cantons, and communes. These reforms ostensibly made France a unified nation, equally administered in all its parts, though the tumult of civil war, terror, and upheaval in Paris made this a rather theoretical proposition. Napoleon kept this basic structure intact but instituted a system of centrally appointed prefects, subprefects, and mayors that converted it from an edifice of republican rationalism into a top-down hierarchy of centralized power. This military propensity to centralize and rationalize carried over into almost all aspects of state administration, whether in the First Consul's creation of the Bank of France in 1800, his reorganization of the judiciary under the Court of Cassation, the formation of a centralized Ministry of Police over the *gendarmerie*, or the transfer of responsibility for tax collection from municipal officials to a system of inspectors and assessors supervised by a general director in Paris. Central auditing, rigorously enforced, enabled the Napoleonic revenue system to yield a balanced budget in the year X (1801–1802) for the first time in many years.

With respect to the aggrandizement of state power, two ministries played major roles: the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Police. Their efforts were closely coordinated at the center and often overlapped. The Ministry of the Interior attempted to regulate, to a degree of detail that became ever more minute as time passed, every facet of French life—agriculture, commerce, roads, bridges, mines, education, arts, public works, scientific establishments, and the National Guard. It was also responsible for that highly intrusive, ever-

dominant fact of young male existence under Napoleon, conscription, and between 1800 and 1815 the French state drafted a total of at least 2 million men. As the nineteenth-century historian Gabriel Hanotaux observed, the French Empire was “an empire of recruitment” before all else.⁵²

The Ministry of Police under Joseph Fouché turned France into the most efficient police state yet seen in Europe, the severity of its measures justified in part by the unceasing threat from foreign enemies, especially Great Britain, and the need to enforce the Continental System, which sought to ban all European trade with the latter. The Ministry enforced censorship of the press, conducted surveillance of suspected persons, and employed a system of passports and identity cards intended to make it easier to distinguish between foreigners and citizens. The French system of passports, originally intended to aid in capturing foreign spies and saboteurs, was eventually adopted by the other countries of Europe and became a permanent fixture of international life. It is eminently symbolic of the link between war and nationalism that the concept of passports (and the very term *passport*) originated out of the cauldron of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. This document still today gives millions of travelers proof of their nationality and their citizenship in a specific state.⁵³

Further reflecting his military officer's penchant for order, Napoleon sought to replace France's four hundred separate legal codes—inherited variously from Roman or medieval practice according to the province of their origin—with a single, uniform, and fully codified body of laws. This had also been the stated ambition of the National Assembly in 1791, but it took a military dictator to achieve the desired outcome, which ran roughshod over particularist traditions. The resulting civil code, the *Code Napoléon*, and five other Codes of Law gave France the most equitable and rational judicial system in Europe. The First Consul was deeply involved in the crafting of the Civil Code, personally presiding at 57 of the 102 sessions of the section of the Council of State that approved the final draft. The resulting product provided for the first time anywhere in Europe a uniform body of laws that applied equally to all male citizens of any class. (Ironically, the Code was promulgated in the same month as Napoleon's most notorious act of international injustice—the kidnapping and summary execution of the Duke of Enghien.) The Napoleonic codes epitomized the Cartesian rationality and centralized rule to which France had aspired since Louis XIV, and they increased public consciousness of France as a unified nation-state. The Civil Code also greatly influenced the

development of civil law elsewhere in Europe, both by virtue of its intellectual elegance and because French armies simply imposed it on most of the European countries they occupied. (In the first hundred and fifty years after the Code was promulgated, it was implemented in 35 states and adapted by 35 others.)⁵⁴

Napoleon's domestic reforms were a curious fusion of the spirit of the Enlightenment and the no-nonsense command approach of the military officer. Indeed, *this* was "enlightened absolutism," if there ever was such a thing. The military-ideological fusion can be seen in the Napoleonic approach to education. The man who founded the University of France five months after his victory at Austerlitz and three months after the crushing of Naples well understood that in the modern age an educated society is as much a pillar of military success as a prosperous society. The 45 *lycées* that he established to replace the "central schools" of the Directory (roughly the equivalent of high schools) had a curriculum that encompassed the highest learning of the day: rhetoric, classical languages, mathematics, and science. But the *lycées* simultaneously reflected the martial inspiration of the regime: students wore uniforms to class; strict military discipline was enforced; class began and ended with drum rolls; military instruction was integral to the curriculum. Under Napoleon, the *École Polytechnique* established by the Convention in 1794 became increasingly devoted to the training of military engineers; after 1805 it fell under the administration of the War Department.⁵⁵

The Abbé Siéyès described Napoleon as the most civilian of all military men, evidently in reference to his visionary domestic achievements. Yet Napoleon's whole regime was irrepressibly, pervasively *military* in character. Simon Schama describes the France of 1793 as a warrior state; after 1799, it became a state governed by warriors as well.⁵⁶ A good example is the founding of the Legion of Honor and the "senatoriates" in 1804, which marked the beginning of a new aristocracy of merit in France, theoretically open to all classes. What is most striking, however, is the overwhelming predominance of the military in the new elite. Of the 2,000 members initiated into the Legion in August 1804, 99.5 percent were military; by 1814, still less than 5 percent of its 32,000 members were civilian. If the Napoleonic nobility as a whole is measured, military officers constituted 59 percent of its ranks, a much higher percentage than in the aristocracy of the Old Regime. The upper crust of this new "militocracy," Napoleon's marshals, acquired fantastic personal fortunes from the new arrangement, becoming without question the richest individuals in France. In 1807 alone, 27 marshals and generals divided among themselves 20,000,000 francs of Polish revenue confiscated from the Grand Duchy of

Warsaw.⁵⁷ By any measure, France was the most military of states; its leader, the most military of civilians.

While France was undergoing sweeping changes under its military masters, what of its nemesis, Great Britain? Mobilized to the teeth for war, this unwavering foe of revolution in Europe suppressed political radicalism, trade unionism, and war dissent at home. Yet ironically, the British victory in the denouement at Waterloo served neither to preserve the status quo on the continent—where Napoleon had wrought an irreversible revolution—nor even in Albion itself, where the end of the war uncorked a fountain of reform sentiment. Demands for parliamentary and suffrage reform mounted after 1815, culminating in the Reform Act of 1832. Though many factors contributed to its passage, the Act is another example of how mass military service generates democratizing pressures; as many as one in six adult males had served in the army or navy at the peak periods of the war with France, and their service was evoked in the parliamentary debate over the Act. The political effervescence of Great Britain after 1815 is a reminder that the reformative repercussions of war are not confined solely to the defeated parties (the usual presumption), but may affect the victors as well.

THE NAPOLEONIC TRANSFORMATION OF EUROPE AND THE RISING TIDE OF NATIONALISM

On June 19, 1790, a large delegation of international exiles visited the National Assembly in Paris. Consisting of Arabs, Chaldeans, Dutch, English, Germans, Italians, Prussians, Poles, Swiss, Swedes, Spaniards, Sicilians, Syrians, and others, it came to thank the Assembly for the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The delegation's leader, Anacharsis Cloots, proclaimed exultantly that "the trumpet which sounded the reveille of a great people has reached to the four corners of the globe, and the songs of joy of a choir of 25,000,000 free men have awakened peoples entombed in a long slavery."⁵⁸ Even today, the French Revolution is often portrayed in terms akin to those of Cloots—as the trumpet that aroused the nations and spawned the Age of Nationalism, "the springtime of peoples" in which nationalist insurrections sprang up like wildflowers and wars of independence caused a blossoming of new nation-states in Europe.⁵⁹

Given the rhetoric of the nineteenth century—laced with references

to popular sovereignty, the will of the people, national identity, and universal rights—it is beyond dispute that the ideological legacy of the Revolution and the *philosophes* had an immense impact on the course of European history after Waterloo. Emphasizing the intellectual influence of the French Revolution, however, risks slighting the critical importance of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in unleashing nationalism and modernizing influences across Europe.⁶⁰ Napoleon in particular is too often interpreted as the culminator of the Revolution, rather than its culmination—as the man who restored order, rather than as the exporter of radical political change. Historical preoccupation with the man's battlefield prowess, rather than with his immense political impact on Europe, is but another example of the tendency to regard wars as primarily outcomes, rather than as vast causal events in their own right.

For Napoleon is pivotal. No figure in European history more perfectly embodied the bond between war and state formation than he. No single factor contributed more to the “awakening of nations” than the march of his armies; no single factor had a greater modernizing impact on tradition-bound dynastic states than the imperium he forged through military conquest and occupation. One prominent German historian, Thomas Nipperdey, argues this brilliantly in his definitive *Deutsche Geschichte 1800–1866*:

It is true that the fundamental principles of the modern world emerged with the French Revolution. . . . However, for the Germans, the overthrow of the old order first became a practical reality under Napoleon in the form of military imperialism. Only those who have become ideologically blind with respect to the phenomenon of power and concentrate only on the structures and social movements of domestic politics can ignore this basic reality.⁶¹

So persuaded was Nipperdey of the centrality of Napoleon in the modernization of Germany that he began his massive work of 838 pages with an arresting pronouncement: “In the beginning was Napoleon.” By destroying feudal structures and imposing a whole new political order on Europe, this consummate military figure of European history brought about an administrative revolution of continental proportions. Not only did he mold the vessels into which the wine of nationalism was poured, but by provoking bitter opposition to French hegemony, he brewed the wine itself.

The Napoleonic juggernaut elicited two distinct forms of nationalism: a liberal nationalism that responded favorably to the idealism of

the French Revolution and a virulent, martial nationalism that was a reaction to the dominion of France and the excesses of its armies. The liberal view was strongest among the proto-Jacobin radicals of Europe and among the bourgeoisie and artisans who seethed with hatred for the aristocratic order that Napoleon promised to destroy. In the beginning such groups had welcomed, glamorized, and even worshipped the French Revolution; and except in the German Rhineland, where disillusionment was knocking even before Napoleon's advent, they remained true believers for a time. They saw the Corsican as the sword of the Revolution, the standard-bearer who would export its principles to the whole continent and make possible democratic revolution everywhere. And Napoleon, for his part, actively encouraged such illusions, not as a disciple of Rousseau (though he had studied his works) but because the shrewd tactician in him wanted to divide and weaken the multinational empires that opposed him. Wherever his armies went, like the armies of the Republic before them, they proclaimed the liberation of peoples and the Rights of Man. And what better advertisement was there for the superiority of such principles than the military successes of the French army?

Yet in sowing a radical nationalism that opposed the Old Order, Napoleon unwittingly harvested a reactionary nationalism that fought to defeat the New Order. The harsh realities of French occupation—the confiscation of state funds, military conscription, punitive actions against resistance—generated powerful currents of anti-French sentiment, both among disillusioned enthusiasts of the Revolution and among the aristocratic elites of the Old Guard themselves. Anti-French defiance ignited a bonfire of nationalism that swept most of occupied Europe. In Spain, the anti-French gospel unified peasants and magistrates as never before, forcing Napoleon to concentrate over 370,000 troops in the peninsula in 1810, the most he ever dispatched against any one country. In Germany, Freiherr Heinrich vom Stein called for a crusade against “the obscene, shameless and dissolute French race,” to culminate in the razing of Paris. Goethe wrote of “an inspiring fire” burning everywhere against French imperialism. In Italy, there were anti-French uprisings in Parma-Piacenza in 1805 and throughout central Italy and the Vallentina in 1809.⁶² As in the eighteenth century, conflict with a foreign enemy served as an elemental source of nationalism. National identity sprang as much from what a nation hated as from what it loved.

The experience of Graf Fyodor Vasilevich Rostopchin, Governor of Moscow in 1812, is a perfect example of this. Like most of Russia's aristocratic elite, the Governor spoke French as his principal language and

imbibed French culture on a daily basis. But as Napoleon's army approached, Rostopchin struggled furiously to rid himself of his Frenchness, noting in his diary that he had begun studying the Russian language seriously for the first time in his life. Rostopchin's nationalist epiphany, replicated countless times in dozens of countries, typifies the experience of the European aristocracy during the Napoleonic era. French military hegemony undermined French cultural hegemony and generated the nationalist forces that made the creation of a pan-European empire centered in Paris a complete impossibility. In defeating his enemies, Napoleon created them anew. In seeking to unite Europe under a French imperium, he ensured its permanent division into nation-states.

Soldiers and officers were the segment of European society most affected by contact with Napoleon's armies, and they became a channel for the propagation of nationalist and reform sentiment. Professional officers in particular understood the advantages France had gained by forming a mass citizen army imbued with nationalist fervor, and since such an army was inconceivable under traditional absolutism, they often became proponents of political reform.⁶³ Also of importance was the experience of nearly a million soldiers who were mobilized from outside the borders of France by the Napoleonic conscription net. Ermolao Federigo, a young Italian officer who served in the *Grande Armée* in 1804, wrote home that it did not matter whom he served, so long as he and his fellow Italians learned to be good soldiers: "The great aim must be to learn to make war, which is the only skill that can free us."⁶⁴ This was the sentiment of most of occupied Europe: learn from the French so as to defeat them. Since many of the foreigners in the *Grande Armée* also fought *against* Napoleon in the dénouement, it is fair to assume they were doubly infected: once by fighting with the French army and imbibing its spirit; once more by fighting against it, fired with the anti-French nationalism that Napoleon's conquests had generated. One consequence of rising nationalism among military officers and soldiers was their frequent involvement in the nationalist uprisings that flared in Europe between 1820 and 1848. Another consequence was the abrupt end of the mercenary army. Foreigners could no longer be trusted to serve in *national* armies; the French segregated them into the Foreign Legion after 1821; other European armies gradually thinned them out of their ranks.⁶⁵

In the rise of the nation-state, the formation of the *state* is as important as the birth of the *nation*. Napoleon's enduring bequest to France was his forging of a centralized nation-state infused with a secular spirit, substantially divested of traditional impediments to state power,

and possessed of a uniform system of administration and laws. His enduring bequest to Europe was the exportation of this Gallic template of government to every corner of the French Empire and to many of the countries subject to his rule. At its peak (1809–12), the French Empire proper was divided into 131 departments encompassing over 750,000 square kilometers and 44 million inhabitants; it encompassed present-day France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the eastern coast of the Adriatic, and much of Italy. Within this empire, a single system of administration prevailed and the Napoleonic legal codes applied. In other areas subject to his control—Spain, the remainder of Italy, the Rhine Confederation, the Helvetic Confederation, the Kingdom of Westphalia, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw—he abolished feudalism, imposed part or all of the French system of administration and law, including the Code Napoléon, and introduced the French system of public finance. In most such areas, the French conqueror also promulgated a new constitution to legitimate the new order and to serve as a model of enlightened statecraft. There is not even a remote parallel in any era of European history to such a continent-wide program of deliberate state formation. Decades after Napoleon's demise, and even in parts of Europe where he and his country were despised, the institutional legacy of the French Empire and occupation lived on.⁶⁶ Although the French *philosophes* ultimately may have conquered the mind of Europe, the man whom Hegel called "the secretary of the World-Spirit" was the agent of their conquest.

In this regard, it is fascinating to observe that even prior to the revolutionary wave of 1848, nationalist revolts or conflicts between nationalists and traditionalists had occurred in *every* country that had been occupied by Napoleon's armies or that had even only been allied with him—and many of them were instigated by officers and soldiers who had fought in the Napoleonic wars. Mutinous troops revolted against Ferdinand VII of Spain in 1814. The Spanish revolt triggered uprisings in Portugal, Naples, and Sardinia. The provinces of Belgium (formerly the Austrian Netherlands) revolted against Dutch rule in 1830 and won independence the following year. Russia meanwhile experienced the Decembrist revolt of army officers (1825) and a host of peasant uprisings; Poland rebelled unsuccessfully against Russian rule (1830–31); Montenegro (a French dependency under Napoleon) rebelled against Ottoman rule beginning in 1832; in 1847, the Radicals in Switzerland, who sought to form a more centralized nation-state, won a brief civil war against the Sonderbund league of Catholic cantons; in Germany, an abortive revolution took place in Frankfurt and Baden in 1846; Portugal throughout the 1830s remained in a state of

chronic civil war or rebellion. Large portions of the Austro-Hungarian empire also seethed with nationalist ferment: Slovakia, Ruthenia, Galicia, and parts of Italy and Romania.

The presence of so much nationalist strife in virtually every region of Europe that Napoleon touched certainly argues for a causal connection. But not all of this nationalist ferment had an exclusively Napoleonic lineage. Belgium, for example, had experienced revolution as early as 1789, and its rebellion in 1830 was as much (or more) a reaction to its annexation by the Netherlands in 1815 as a result of the earlier French occupation. Nevertheless, when the history and background of the pre-1848 uprisings is examined closely, it is difficult to deny Napoleon's pivotal role as the godfather of nation-state formation and political modernization in nineteenth-century Europe.⁶⁷ And if the New World is included, then the wave of Latin American states that won independence, beginning with Argentina in 1816 and ending with Bolivia in 1825, must also be seen as an indirect consequence of Napoleon's occupation of Spain from 1808–1814 and the flight of the king of Portugal to Brazil in 1808. By cutting the umbilical cord between the New World colonies and their imperial centers in Iberia, the Peninsular War encouraged a separate creole identity and the development of autonomous administrations.⁶⁸

In addition to creating new nation-states, the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars also destroyed states—if the political relics of medieval Europe can be regarded as states—with alacrity. The venerable republics of Genoa and Venice disappeared in 1797. The Holy Roman Empire expired in 1806. Ecclesiastical principalities such as Cologne, Mainz, Trèves, and Salzburg perished in the cauldron. The number of German Free Cities shrank to four. By the time the Republic and Napoleon had finished disassembling and reassembling the map of Germany, almost 60 percent of Germany's population had changed rulers at least once; by 1820, the 294 or so Germanic territories that existed in 1789 had been reduced to 39, many of them loosely grouped under the Confederation of the Rhine. The Confederation gave the Germanic states a common identity they had never before experienced, and as such helped prepare the way for the eventual unification of Germany fifty-five years after Waterloo.⁶⁹

Indeed Napoleon, every bit as much as Cavour or Bismarck, must be seen as the architect of modern Italy and Germany, the "late states" of Western Europe whose earlier unification had been impeded by the disintegrative effects of the Italian Wars and the Thirty Years' War. In Italy, the *epoca francese* had far-reaching political ramifications. The absorption of Piedmont into the Grand Empire from 1802 to 1814

extended the administrative system of Napoleon into the Po Valley and gave a whole generation of Piedmontese administrators valuable formative training in the *Conseils d'État* and prefectures of the Italian imperial departments. This new managerial elite paved the way for Cavour and the "Piedmontese miracle" of the 1850s—the rise of a confident modern state that could act as a core for the unification of the peninsula. The experience of Cesare Balbo and Massimo d'Azeglio, the first two constitutional prime ministers of Piedmont, reflects the influence of Napoleon's rule. Balbo, who worked in the *Conseil* from 1809–1814, recounted that it taught him both to despise the dictatorial nature of Napoleon's empire and to respect its administrative principles. D'Azeglio, whose childhood was spent under the Empire, became a virulent critic of Napoleon, but acknowledged that numerous benefits flowed from his rule.⁷⁰

Outside of Piedmont, the excesses of the French imperium triggered a vigorous counterreaction, particularly among the disillusioned radicals and proto-Jacobins who had initially welcomed the French Revolution. The most important fruit of this new Italian nationalism was the Young Italy movement of Giuseppe Mazzini. The nationalism that Napoleon engendered, like so much nationalism in the Third World today, had a schizophrenic quality about it, a love-hate syndrome. Mazzini and Italy's radical nationalists passionately rejected the French model as a pattern for Italian state formation and insisted on Italy's "separateness"—the undeviating claim of nationalism everywhere—yet they, like the liberals of Cavourian Piedmont, accepted the necessity of a centralized state and in this sense adopted the essential Napoleonic model. When a unified Italian nation-state finally did emerge in 1861, its administrative institutions were closely patterned after those of the Grand Empire.⁷¹

In Germany, the French Revolution had stirred powerful currents of nationalist thought among intellectuals—Johann Gottlieb Fichte being the most prominent—but after Napoleon's devastation of the Prussian army at Jena and Auerstädt in 1806, German nationalism took on more xenophobic tones. "I hate all Frenchmen without distinction in the name of God and of my people," was the not atypical declaration of the poet and historian Ernst Moritz Arndt in 1813.⁷² But along with the nationalist reaction came the reforming impetus of war, as Prussian officials—Count Neithardt von Gneisenau and the barons Karl vom Stein and Karl August von Hardenberg—concluded from the defeat that extensive reforms were essential. Hardenberg justified a French reform model to Frederick William III as the key to liberating Prussia from France:

The French Revolution, of which the present wars are an extension, gave the French people through all their turmoil and bloodshed a wholly new vigor. All their latent powers were awakened. . . .

The illusion that we can resist the Revolution most effectively by clinging to the old order has only contributed to strengthening the Revolution and spreading it further. . . . The force of these principles is such . . . that the State which refuses to acknowledge them will be condemned to submit or to perish.⁷³

Military defeat thus taught what ideological precepts could not. The resulting "revolution from above" in Prussia abolished serfdom, swept away caste barriers, undertook land reform, and established representative assemblies at the municipal level. The Prussian reformers also restructured the national army by introducing universal military training, creating an effective reserve corps, reforming the system of military justice, and fostering professionalism in the officer corps. Partly because of these reforms, the Prussian army acquitted itself admirably in the final battles against Napoleon.⁷⁴

Outside Prussia, in the states of the Rhine Confederation, even more radical reforms took place under or in response to Napoleonic rule. Their overall effect was to undermine traditional society, strengthen state structures, and pave the way for the rapid progress of industrialization and urbanization.⁷⁵ After Napoleon, the traditional, the particularist, the parochial, and the communal in Germany rapidly gave way to the national, the cosmopolitan, the scientific, and the individualistic.⁷⁶ Once this turn had been taken, its further evolution was virtually inevitable, despite the fact that after 1815 many of the more liberal Germanic reforms were repealed or allowed to lapse (not, however, in the military arena, where the basic reforms were preserved and built on).

The nationalism engendered by the French conquest and integration of Europe, and the administrative revolution set in motion by Napoleon, required nearly half a century to come to full fruition in Italy and Germany, and then only after and as a result of wars of unification deliberately engineered and manipulated by nationalist-minded Italian and German statesmen. The Italian and German wars of unification offer casebook examples of how war unifies states: in both instances, military conflict reinforced nationalist passions and shifted political loyalties from the regional to the national level; in both instances, modernized states (Prussia and Piedmont) situated on the geographical periphery of their nations became the centers around

which national unity coalesced; in both cases, war with Austria and the military involvement of France made possible the very unification that both Vienna and Paris had hoped to avert. Yet the wars of unification are best understood if their French pedigree is kept in mind: a direct lineage of nationalism, military reform, and institutional borrowing that can be traced from Napoleon to Hardenberg and Stein to Bismarck; from Napoleon to Mazzini and Cavour. The owl of Minerva may rise from its nest only at dusk, but the falcon of Mars is ever in flight.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD IMPERIALISM

It was no accident that the High Imperialism of the late nineteenth century arose in full bloom shortly after the Franco-Prussian War and the advent of Germany as a unified state. The proclamation of the German Reich in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in January 1871 essentially completed the papering over of Western Europe with centralized nation-states. The coming of age of Napoleon's godchild profoundly upset the European balance, as the General Staff and conscription system of Prussia became the war machine of a much larger state, one that now had full access to the rapidly industrializing heartland of the Ruhr valley. A defeated France roiled with nationalist resentment; a nervous Britannia laid keels for warships. The powerful centralized states of Europe, now closely wedded with their nations and better organized for war than for anything else, could find no ready arena for their rivalry within the confines of the continent without risking catastrophic conflict. The effervescence of nationalism sought escape from geographically too-tight bottles, while the strategic reckoning of statesmen and military officers saw a zero-sum game opening up to them in the non-European world. Three decades of overseas imperialism ensued, ending only when the states made by war again made war.

Even as the continental imperialism of Napoleon had shattered the remnants of feudalism in Europe and set in motion waves of modernizing change, European imperialism shattered the continuity and equilibrium of traditional and tribal societies outside Europe and set in motion a century of violent change. Europe brought the tools and organization of modern war to a world unprepared for it and unable to cope with it. The imperialist powers imported the bureaucracy, the

taxation system, the administrative techniques, the legal regime, the conscription system, the military establishment, the concept of fixed borders and sovereign authority—in short, the whole organizational logic and paraphernalia of the modern warfare state—into regions of the world that neither wanted them, asked for them, nor fully accepted them. The resulting legacy of instability and strife has been with us ever since.

There was, however, one non-European country, and one only, that reacted to the encroachments of the imperial powers with such a determined course of military and political modernization that it rapidly won acceptance as their equal: the island kingdom of Japan. The unequal treaties imposed by Western gunships from 1852 to 1864 shook its feudal society to the core and propelled it into torturous orbits of change, impelled by the imperative of attaining military parity with the West. The ancient and feudal Tokugawa Shogunate, unable to rise to the challenge of the West, was overthrown summarily. In a pattern highly reminiscent of Prussia after Jena, the new Meiji-era rulers sought frenetically to overcome their military inferiority by learning from the West, to “defeat the barbarian by using the barbarian.”

The Japanese modernizers borrowed from French administrative practices, abolishing centuries-old feudal domains and replacing them with prefectures administered directly from the capital. They adopted portions of the *Code Napoléon*. They initially looked to France as a military model also, but after the Prussian victory at Sedan they turned instead to Germany, dispatching military officers to study its General Staff system and Prime Minister Hirobumi Ito himself to study its constitution. A vigorous program of military reform by 1875 gave Japan an officer training school, an arsenal with 2,500 employees, a gunpowder factory, and an artillery range. An 1883 conscription law enlarged the army to 73,000 men, with the potential to expand to 200,000 in war. In 1885, the Meiji government replaced its Executive Council with a cabinet modeled on European lines.⁷⁷

In only seventeen years, Japan transformed itself from a feudal kingdom to a modern nation-state with a Western-style government and military establishment. Its defeat of Russia in 1905 was the first major defeat of a European power by a non-Western state, a signal to the world that the West had no patent on the blueprint for building a modern warfare state. But even before 1905, the European powers had acknowledged the unprecedented political and military achievement of Japan by inviting it to join the 1899 Hague Conference for Peace and Disarmament, the first time in history that the imperialist powers had accepted a non-European power at the conference table as an

equal. On that occasion, one Japanese diplomat discerned the rationale behind his country's inclusion: “We show ourselves at least your equals in scientific butchery, and at once we are admitted to your council tables as civilized men.”⁷⁸ He, at least, had no illusions about what foundation lay beneath the gilded superstructure of the West.