4 The state as an ideal: 1789 to 1945

The state as it emerged between about 1560 and 1648 was conceived not as an end but as a means only. During a period of intense religious and civil conflict, its overriding purpose was to guarantee life and property by imposing law and order; anything else – such as gaining the consent of the citizens and securing their rights – was considered secondary and had to wait until peace could be restored. This explains why, even in England with its relatively well-developed parliamentary tradition and even as late as Hobbes, the choice of the sovereign was irrevocable and liberty, as he put it, merely consisted of the cracks left between the laws which that sovereign enacted.[1] True, neither Locke nor Montesquieu nor most of their eighteenth-century successors accepted Hobbes' conclusions in this respect; however, in regarding the state as a mere instrument for making a civilized people, they were entirely at one with him. As late as the 1790s Jeremy Bentham in Britain still considered the state in purely utilitarian terms as a machine whose only mission was to secure ''the greatest happiness for the greatest number.'' The prevailing attitude was succinctly explained by another Englishman, Alexander Pope: ''for forms of government let fools contest/whatever is best administered is best.''

In view of these attitudes one should scarcely be surprised to find that the demands that the early modern state made on its subjects were, compared with what was to come later on, fairly limited. From the upper classes it took administrators and officers; from the middle ones, taxes; and from the lower ones both taxes and cannon fodder. Enlistment in the armed forces was, however, voluntary in most cases; moreover, in terms of percentages, neither the number of soldiers enlisted nor the amount of taxes levied by the ''absolute'' state even approached the burdens imposed by its democratic, liberal, twentieth-century successors. During the two and a half centuries after 1700 the former figure approximately doubled: from 5 to a maximum of about 10 percent of the population

[1] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 139.

were drafted in wartime,[2] while the share of national income drained away by Frederick II's Prussia, the most heavily taxed eighteenth-century state by far, was almost exactly equal to that levied by the United States as one of the most lightly taxed modern states, in 1989, i.e., *before* the increases instituted by the Bush and Clinton administrations.[3] It is of course true that the absolute state denied the great majority of its subjects any form of political participation while demanding obedience from all alike. However, so long as that was granted – or, at any rate, so long as the state encountered no overt resistance to its demands – it was usually content to leave those subjects to their own devices; it did not make a systematic attempt to tutor them or to influence their views.

Considered from another angle, the relationship between the early modern state and its citizens was based not on sentiment but on reason and interest. The idea of just war having been abandoned by Hugo Grotius twenty years before the Treaty of Westphalia was signed, Enlightenment rulers did not go to war against one another for reasons of personal hatred. The role of patriotism in providing motivation for both soldiers and civilians was limited;[4] as Austria's Francis I supposedly said of the Tyroleans, "today they are patriots for me, tomorrow against me."[5] The need to prevent the emergence of revolutionary demands did not allow rulers to burden their subjects too heavily, and also caused most of them systematically to recruit foreigners into their armed forces. Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Switzerland, Italy, and certain German states all exported soldiers; Frederick the Great even claimed to wage war in such a way that the local population should not notice it was going on.[6] When Napoleon defeated the Prussians at Jena in 1806 the governor had posters placed in which he announced that, the king having lost a battle, the subjects' first duty was to stay calm.

Even as the state was reaching maturity around the middle of the eighteenth century, however, forces were at work which were about to transform it from an instrument into an end and, later, a living god. At first the ideas in question, surfacing in the works of French, Swiss, and

[2] For figures on the size of the military from the eighteenth century to the present, see J. A. Lynn, "The Pattern of Army Growth, 1445–1945," in Lynn, ed., *Tools of War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp. 100–27.

[3] For Prussian taxation see chapter 3, n. 55, in this volume; for modern American taxes, see R. B. Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), p. 260.

[4] See C. Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London: Routledge, 1987), pp. 7–10.

[5] Quoted in E. Hobsbawm, *States and Nationalism Since 1780* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 75.

[6] Frederick II, quoted in J. Luvaas, ed., *Frederick the Great on the Art of War* (New York: Free Press, 1966), pp. 100–11.

German intellectuals, were harmless enough. But before long they spread to the masses, causing them to take on an aggressive, chauvinistic tone that boded ill for the welfare of humanity. Partly driven by these forces, partly in an attempt to keep them within limits, the state took them under its own aegis. This led to the bureaucracy extending its tentacles into fields which had previously been largely free of government interference – such as education, health, and ultimately such fields as sports and social welfare as well. As the twentieth century entered its first few decades, a number of states even reached the point where they themselves took over all those activities and services, prohibiting any that were not state-owned; the outcome was the emergence of the ''totalitarian'' regimes of both the left- and right-wing variety. Finally, once the state had become so powerful that it was able to determine what did and did not count as money, the financial restraints which had always limited the actions of previous rulers also dropped by the wayside. The ultimate outcome of all these developments was an increasingly violent series of explosions, beginning with the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and culminating in the era of total war between 1914 and 1945.

The Great Transformation

The man who did more than anyone else to start the Great Transformation was, perhaps, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78).[7] Of *petit-bourgeois* origins – his father, though full of his own importance, was a watchmaker – he spent much of his life away from his native Geneva as a penniless exile; the more extensive his wanderings the more he harked back to it, painting it in splendid hues and glorifying its supposed virtues. Like most of his fellow *philosophes* from the time of Locke and Leibnitz on, Rousseau rejected the Christian idea of original sin and started from the notion that man was naturally good. However, to them the *patrie* was merely ''a community of interests arising out of property rights,''[8] whereas to him it was the source from which all the individual's mental and moral faculties derived. Man being formed by the community in which he was born and in which he spent his youth, outside it no true humanity – no language, no property, no morality, no freedom, no happiness – was possible.[9] In the *Social Contract* of 1762, Rousseau went further still, suggesting that this community had a corporate persona – a

[7] Rousseau's contribution to the rise of the modern state is discussed in J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London: Mercury Books, 1961), ch. 3.
[8] F. M. Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique* (Paris: Cluny, 1920 [1776]), p. 259.
[9] J.-J. Rousseau, ''Patrie,'' in J. d'Alembert and D. Diderot, eds., *Encyclopédie* (Paris: Briasson, 1755–65), vol. XII, pp. 178–81.

moi commun – represented by the general will. To go against one's creator, as against one's parents, was turned into the worst of all vices. Conversely, patriotism – the active submission to, and participation in, the general will – became the highest of all virtues and the source of all the remaining ones.

While the transformation of the *patrie* from the place where one had been born into the highest of all earthly ideals was thus accomplished almost at a single stroke, still Rousseau was no nationalist. As he made clear in the *Confessions*, to him the essence of the *patrie* consisted not of some lofty ideals but of the most humdrum aspects of its existence: such as the language its people spoke, the clothes they wore, the customs they observed, the festivals they celebrated, even the streets and houses they built in a style that was uniquely their own and in which they spent their lives. Precisely because of the extremely intimate link that he saw as existing between it and the individual, the community had to be small, possibly indeed no larger than Plato's ideal city-state to which his father had often compared Geneva and to which his thought owed so much. Decentralization, not its opposite, was Rousseau's goal. The world which he envisaged was anything but modern. It consisted of a loose confederation of autonomous city-states, each one living in relative isolation from its neighbors and populated, as far as possible, by warlike yet peaceful farmers who drew their own nourishment from the soil. Thus, and only thus, would each one also be able to represent the supreme ideal to its inhabitants who both drew their life from it and were supposed to lay down their lives on its behalf if necessary.

These were the days when, reacting to the universalistic ideas of the Enlightenment (man, essentially a rational creature, was the same everywhere), the first stirrings of nationalism made themselves felt in several countries.[10] The writers in question sought to rescue what was unique in each people's culture from the clutches of the *philosophes*: particularly as most of the latter spoke and wrote in French. Thus, in Switzerland, Franz Urs Baltheassar's *Patriotic Dreams of a Swiss* (1758) sang the praise of the simple, virtuous, and free lives supposedly led by the Swiss peasants in their mountain huts. Using as his vehicle the first modern Zurich newspaper, which was published by his friend Heinrich Füssli, Baltheassar sought to rescue anything that was native and authentic, even going so far as to suggest that Swiss girls choose their husbands for their patriotic virtues rather than for wealth. Less utopian was the founding of the Helvetic Society which represented the first organized manifestation of modern Swiss nationalism and whose most important

[10] See J. H. Shennan, "The Rise of Patriotism in Eighteenth-Century Europe," *History of European Ideas*, 13, 6, 1991, pp. 689–710.

member was the famous educator Pestalozzi. It sought to rescue native customs such as dress, folksongs, and the like by recording them and giving them the largest publicity possible.

In Germany during those very years a role similar to that of Baltheassar was being played by Justus Möser and his weekly paper, the *Patriotic Fantasies*. A jurist by trade – he had served as chief judge on the criminal court of his native Osnabrück – and a follower of Montesquieu, Möser before he turned into a social critic had witnessed petty tyranny at first hand. His *bête noire* was the arbitrary laws which such tyranny had imposed on the German states; his chief demand, that they be changed so as to suit the national spirit or *Nationalgeist*. However, Möser differed from his French master in that this spirit was not a neutral factor and did not stand merely for the characteristics of each nation as impressed on it by the facts of race, geography, climate, history, etc. What to Montesquieu had been merely an observable fact that had to be taken into account for the sake of good government was turned into something uniquely precious; like Rousseau, Möser saw in it both the source of the individual's life and, more pertinent for our purpose, that which held different nations together while separating them from each other.

The most important eighteenth-century representative of what one author has called "humanitarian" nationalism[11] was, however, another German publicist, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803). As an early Romantic, Herder was only incidentally interested in law, that system of dry-as-dust regulations by which each ruler surrounded himself. Instead his concern was with the *Wesen* or inner being of each nation which, to him, was no less a thing than a manifestation of the divine. He denounced the Enlightenment emphasis on the rational and the uniform in favor of the unique and the different: "no individual, no country, no people, no history of a people, no state is like any other. Therefore, the true, the beautiful and the good are not the same for all of them. Everything is suffocated if one's own way is not sought, and if another nation is blindly taken as a model." Each nation had its own culture, character even. Nurtured by soil and climate, they were passed on from one generation to the next and would stay intact for some generations even if, by some extreme mischance, a nation were transported from one geographical location to another. Culture manifested itself in dress, habits, and, above all, language; and indeed so strong were the connections between one's mother tongue and one's personal identity that no one was ever capable of learning a foreign one perfectly. On

[11] C. J. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968 [1931]), ch. 2.

the contrary, "civilization itself consists primarily in the potentialities of a nation, and in the making use of them."[12]

Again it cannot be emphasized too strongly that, whatever the kind of community in which they lived or which they had in mind, these and other eighteenth-century intellectuals were no nationalists in the modern, political sense. Some, having replaced Christianity with deism, merely studied different cultures as a way of bringing out the beauty of the creation in all its manifold forms – like a garden of separate flower beds each worthy of being admired on its own. Others, slightly more practically minded, were motivated by the need to understand the spirit of each nation as the basis for doing away with antiquated laws and creating a just social order. Some, such as Rousseau, held democratic and even revolutionary views, whereas others were inclined to accept almost any political regime so long as it allowed culture to develop freely. Herder himself went on record as saying that nothing was so ridiculous as the pretensions of any one nation to superiority, let alone claims of political domination which, far from advancing culture, would create "a wild mixture of breeds and nations under one scepter." His attitude was typical for German intellectuals of his day. As late as 1796, Schiller, Germany's greatest dramatist and poet, was able to write that Germans should forget about becoming a nation, and educate themselves to be human beings instead.[13]

It was only in the years after 1789, when some of the intellectuals came to power and when their ruminations were married to the pretensions of the state, that the picture changed. Leaving the study, nationalism took on an aggressive, bellicose character; nowhere was this more true than in Germany, previously celebrated as the country of "poets and thinkers" in which close acquaintance with French bayonets, French rule, and French marauders led to a violent reaction from 1806 on. In particular, Napoleon's victory over Prussia transformed one philosopher – Johan Gottlieb Fichte, hitherto known mainly as a harmless follower of Kant – into a rabble-rousing orator of remarkable force. In his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807–8), Fichte elevated anti-French sentiment almost to the rank of a religious principle; from that point on even to teach one's daughter French, the common language of the Enlightenment, was to deliver her into prostitution. His work marks the point where German national feeling, long cosmopolitan and inclined toward pacifism, ceased

[12] J. G. Herder, *Werke*, E. Kühnemann, ed. (Stuttgart: Union deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1889), vol. I, p. 402.

[13] J. W. Goethe and F. Schiller, "Xenien," in *Schillers Werke*, J. Peterson and F. Beissner, eds. (Weimar: Nationalausgabe, 1943), p. 321.

to be so and assumed the militant and chauvinistic character that it was to retain during much of the period until 1945.[14]

During the very years that Fichte was thundering away from his University of Berlin chair, the marriage of nation and state was consummated at the theoretical level by another and greater professor, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. A native of Stuttgart in southwestern Germany, Hegel had been brought up to follow his father as a Protestant pastor; however, during his period of study at the University of Tübingen he met with wine, women, and song, and lost his faith in a personal God. He spent time as a private tutor at Bern – where, like Möser half a century previously, he came to know and detest the petty tyranny that characterized city-states at their worst – and Frankfurt before settling down at Jena in 1801. Initially he welcomed the universalistic ideas of the French Revolution; to him they represented the final separation of state from society and thus an end to the corruption which the *ancien régime* necessarily entailed. However, his position changed after the cataclysmic events of 1806–7, during which Saxony was occupied and his own house burnt down.

Though he was in many ways a child of the Enlightenment and thus inclined to believe in rationality as the supreme good, Hegel's loss of faith left him with the question as to whose reason directed the affairs of society and of man. For an answer he turned from the personal God of Christianity to the impersonal Spirit of History or *Weltgeist*, thus setting up a secular religion whose high priest, needless to say, was Hegel himself. Where Hegel differed from others, however, was that he attributed reason – and thus the shaping of history – neither to humanity as a whole nor to the individuals of which it consisted but to the separate political communities or states in which they lived. Composing civil society, individuals merely reproduced themselves without change from one generation to the next. Their principal occupation in life consisted of haggling with each other for petty economic advantage; as they were self-serving and capricious, their doings were scarcely worth noting by the philosopher concerned with higher things. By contrast, states were mighty, hence important and "world-historical," organizations. Each one was not just a system of government but an idea incarnate which manifested itself in that system. Like Hobbes, Hegel saw the state's most important characteristic and the one in which it differed from other organizations as its sovereignty. Unlike Hobbes, he did not see this sovereignty merely as an instrument for imposing law and order but endowed it with high ethical content. Acknowledging no superior, alone

[14] On Fichte and the origins of German nationalism in this period, see above all H. Kohn, *The Mind of Germany* (New York: Scribner's, 1966), pp. 68–98.

of all institutions on earth the state possessed the freedom to develop in accordance with its own nature, a freedom which it bestowed on its citizens (so long as they cooperated with it) and which provided it with its justification. From a machine designed to serve this purpose or that, the state was elevated into nothing less than "the echo of God's footsteps on earth."[15] History itself was transformed, turning from a formless mass of facts into the record of states rising, growing, clashing with each other, reaching maturity, and decaying in an everlasting search for a more perfect political order that was at the same time a more perfect truth. Moreover, and standing in sharp contrast to Locke as well as the Fathers of the American Revolution, Hegel considered that true freedom for the individual was possible *only* within the state. Take the state away and man was reduced to nothing at all, a puny biological creature whose life was divorced from the world-spirit and, in this sense, devoid of ethical significance.

Like Fichte, Hegel spent his last years at the University of Berlin where his lectures were much admired but little understood (his greatest work, *The Philosophy of Right*, took twenty years to sell 500 copies). His death in 1831 marks the end of the Great Transformation that had been started by Rousseau; but whereas Rousseau, harking back to a primitive past, had still spoken of the organized community as his ideal, Hegel was unhesitant in pointing to the state as the community's highest, indeed sole, representative. Embodying freedom and acknowledging no judge above themselves, the one way for states to play out their historical destiny was to pit themselves against other states by means of war, which thus became the principal tool whereby the world-historical spirit unfolded itself; without it everything tended to sink into selfishness and mediocrity.[16] The result was that each state had to be made as strong as possible. For all that he saw the task of the state as protecting the national culture and creating a suitable environment for its development, Hegel would not have been Hegel had there not been present in his thought a strain that adored power politics as such.

Nationalists coming after Hegel frequently disputed the idea that the Prussia of 1820 or so was the best of all possible states, preferring to bestow that distinction on their own countries instead. Some, such as the Frenchmen François Guizot and the Italian Giuseppe Mazzini, were dyed-in-the-wool liberals; if not necessarily in favor of popular democracy, at any rate they did their best to combine national greatness with personal freedom for the individual. Others, particularly in Germany and Eastern Europe but with strong representation in France also, dis-

[15] *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, T. M. Knox, tr. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952), p. 279.
[16] See S. B. Smith, "Hegel's Views on War, the State and International Relations," *American Political Science Review*, 7, 1983, pp. 624–32.

agreed. Fully prepared to do away with personal freedom if it failed to serve national goals, they adopted either an authoritarian and reactionary standpoint or else a populist and even revolutionary one.[17] Whatever their views concerning the kind of regime that was most suitable for their respective national cultures, almost without exception they agreed with Hegel concerning the need for their own states to develop their independence and power. If possible this was to be done in harmony with others, as Mazzini in particular hoped; but if necessary it could be at the expense of their neighbors and by using as much armed force as it took to achieve national liberation (also of fellow nationals currently living in other states), natural frontiers, a place under the sun, or what other phrase could be made to justify territorial expansion. All this helped fuel the kind of interstate rivalry that was to be such a prominent feature of the period from 1848 to 1945 and which, exploding into flame, ultimately led to two world wars as well as a whole series of smaller ones.

Born in the dreamlike visions of a few intellectuals and subsequently dressing itself in a respectable academic mantle, nationalism could not have acquired the force that it did had it not been able to transform itself into a mass movement as well. The first state to deliberately mobilize the masses for its own purposes was Revolutionary France; the magnitude of the task can be judged from the fact that, in 1789, the country was still divided into eighty provinces, each of which had its separate laws, customs, and political traditions. What patriotic feelings existed among the people at large were almost entirely local; as the French Academy put it, "a Frenchman's country [was] merely that part of it in which he happened to be born."[18] To make things worse, it was judged that only between 1 and 13 percent of approximately 27 million Frenchmen who lived within the country's 1792 frontiers could speak French "correctly." Even in the region of the *langue d'oïl*, it was spoken only in the towns, and not always in the suburbs, whereas in the south it was not spoken at all. This was clearly an obstacle to state unity and, in particular, to its more centralized and militant version as envisaged by the Jacobeans. As Henri Gregoire, a clergyman who was at the same time a radical member of the national Convention, put it in his "Report on the need to eliminate *patois* and universalize the usage of the French language" (1794): only when all citizens speak the same tongue can they enjoy equal access to state citizenship.[19]

In the event, the rulers of France between 1789 and 1815 took few

[17] For the forms that nationalism took in different countries, see J. Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (New York: St. Martin's, 1982), particularly pp. 43–118.
[18] Quoted in J. M. Thompson, *The French Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1944), p. 121.
[19] Quoted in M. de Certaue, et al., *La Revolution française et les patois: l'enquête de Gregoire* (Paris: Galimard, 1975), p. 295.

positive steps to correct the alleged linguistic deficiencies of their countrymen (in this they showed better sense than some of their successors who, trying to go further, merely covered themselves with ridicule). What they did do, though, went far enough. Sweeping away the old administrative divisions, they set up a centralized bureaucracy with a uniform structure and branches throughout the country. They also established general military service for all males aged nineteen to twenty-six; a comprehensive legal code with authority over all Frenchmen regardless of status, creed, or province of residence; and a new state-directed secondary and tertiary education system that in many ways was without precedent in history. No less important, the turbulence caused by the Revolution and the series of wars in which the Republic engaged within three years of its foundation meant that Frenchmen originating in the four corners of the country were brought together for a single purpose and mingled with each other as never before. For the first, but certainly not the last, time war became the crucible of the nation as well as of the state in which it organized itself.

To put muscle behind its claims, the Republic initiated a series of huge popular festivals in which it sought to celebrate itself and which it hoped to substitute for the old religious ones. The first one took place in November 1789 when some 12,000 people from various towns and villages in Languedoc and Dauphine gathered more or less spontaneously at Etoile on the Rhone and swore an oath "to offer our arms and our wealth to the common fatherland . . . flying to the aid of our brothers of Paris or of any other town of France which may be in danger." From January to May of the next year similar gatherings were held at Pontivy and Lyons, culminating in a massive gathering on 14 July 1790, Bastille Day, which was thereby established as the anniversary of the Revolution. At the Champ de Mars, the newly designated parade-ground outside Paris, 300,000 "patriots" from all over France were assembled for the *Fête de la Fédération*. It was presided over by Talleyrand, an aristocratic member of the National Assembly who had been bishop of Autun under the old regime but had turned his coat (not for the last time) and become one of the most vocal revolutionaries. To the incongruous sound of masses being chanted and cannon being fired, the assembly swore to forego regional differences. From now on there were to be no more sons of the Dauphine, Artois, Vendée, and so on: only Frenchmen who joined together in taking an oath to the constitution. During the next nine years the ceremony was to be repeated annually, often assuming bizarre forms as when Robespierre enthroned the Goddess of Reason, planted the tree of liberty, and the like. It also served as the model for countless smaller ones held in provincial cities.

Not content with occasional ceremonies, the founders of the Republic marked the event by the adoption of a new national flag – the tricolor – as well as a new national calendar starting in the year one. Designed by the poet Fabre d'Eglantine, it deliberately divided the year into weeks of ten days rather than seven; no better way of giving citizens the clearest possible indication of the state's power to change their working habit and run their lives for them could have been invented. Taking yet another leaf out of the book of the discredited church, France in 1795 became the first country to be blessed with an official anthem for use on public occasions. The *Marsellaise*, a uniquely stirring marching song, had been written in 1792 by captain of the artillery Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle who, as it happened, was stationed in Strasbourg at the time. It received its name from a contingent of troops whose native city was Marseilles and who sang it as they marched toward Paris. It was banned by Napoleon who feared lest the central message, i.e., the need to fight against "the bloody banner of tyranny," might be interpreted as referring to his own regime; restored by the Orleanists in 1830, it was banned for the second time by Napoleon III and officially reinstated in 1871. Increasingly surrounded by its opposite numbers in other countries, it has remained in favor ever since, to be sung on public occasions amidst gestures previously reserved for religious hymns.

During the Revolution and the First Empire, poetry, literature, and the plastic arts were all systematically mobilized to glorify *la patrie* and the emperor who took it over and stood at its head. A special architectural style, known as the *architecture parlante*, was even developed; from the Arc de Triomphe onward its results can still be seen across the length and breadth of France. Painters such as David celebrated Napoleon's deeds – even to the point of showing him unshaven to emphasize that he spent nights as well as days in the service of France. Like many other things that the emperor did, the art he promoted tended to be heavy-handed. From beginning to end, there was no place for subtlety in delivering the message, and even less room for doubt concerning the supremacy of the state.

Whereas France became the first country where the nationalist cause was married to that of the state, elsewhere development often followed a different pattern. Where nation and state did not coincide, as was the case in much of Europe between 1815 and 1860, rulers had cause to fear popular nationalism rather than to encourage it. Consequently it arose without them and, in many cases, against them, incidentally putting an end to whatever still remained of the old idea that rulers and state were one and the same. The outstanding case in point was Germany, stirred to red-hot patriotism during the Wars of Liberation but thereafter once again divided into thirty-eight states – excluding, Austria which, though a

member of the Federation or *Bund*, was in large part non-German.

The early representatives of post-Napoleonic German nationalism were figures such as Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and Ernst Moritz Arndt. Like Hegel, both of them came from a pietist background; like him, they were led by the events of 1806–15 to shake off their earlier political apathy and turn from rather dreamy, religiously minded patriots into burning advocates of the German fatherland. Besides giving nationalist speeches, they started planning and organizing festivals whose purpose was to advocate national unity and celebrate the deeds of the German people ever since the time when their ancestors had triumphed over the Roman legions. The movement was surprisingly quick to take hold; by 1817, when the famous Wartburg Festival was held, crowds attended and an entire liturgy had been created out of thin air. It was modeled on that of the Protestant church, complete with the singing of hymns such as *Deutschland über Alles*, marching about, and preaching; but differed from it in significant points such as the tendency to hold services in the open air rather than indoors, the display of national flags, and the replacement of bells by trumpets. The one held at Hambach in 1832 was attended by 30,000 students, and this was even before the advent of modern transportation and modern means of communication allowed such meetings to be held on a truly national scale.[20]

Initially these popular gatherings, in which much beer was drunk and some windows (and heads) might be broken, were regarded with suspicion by the authorities. They considered them hotbeds of Jacobinism, sent plainclothesmen to spy on participants, arrested leaders, and incarcerated them. However, from the middle of the century on, the direction of the wind changed. The gatherings were taken over by the increasingly nationalized state, which transformed them and made them serve *its* ends. Naturally not all attempts at doing so were crowned with success. Planning a festival, and then making it appear spontaneous, is never easy, particularly if the purpose is to show deference to the authorities rather than to express opposition or simply release steam. For example *Sedantag*, instituted by law to commemorate the battle of 1870 and scheduled to take place on the first day of each September, proved too heavy-handed and did not really attract popular enthusiasm. People, even Germans, preferred occasions which granted a greater measure of popular participation. To fill the void, the state found it necessary to resort to parades and other military displays.

By this time the industrial revolution, having started a century earlier in Britain, had long reached the Continent and was in full swing. Dedicated

[20] For the history and significance of these festivals, see G. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses* (New York: Fertig, 1975), pp. 73–160.

to perpetual economic growth, industrial society meant change and a constant game of musical chairs as people gained or lost new employment and as fortunes were made or lost. But it also led to a vast increase in the individual's ability to move from one place to another; with the spread of the railroads from the 1830s on, the ties that had hitherto bound the common man to the community of his birth were broken for the first time. Thus industrial society weakened or destroyed the older institutions in which people used to live together on a face-to-face basis: such as the extended family, clans, tribes, villages, and guilds, even the relatively small urban communities which, surrounded by their walls, had existed for centuries but which now took on monstrous dimensions owing to the influx of newcomers from the countryside.[21] Their demise left people feeling rootless and naked, exposed as never before to the vast "market forces" that seemed to rule their lives and over which they could not exert the slightest control. Against this background, already around the middle of the century "alienation" was being recognized as a cardinal social problem to which all sorts of remedies were offered by revolutionaries and conservatives alike.[22]

Rising to the challenge, the state, embracing nationalism, deliberately sought to turn the situation to its own advantage and began to sing its own praises by every means at its disposal. Gone were the days when such things as national food, national costume, and national habits could be left to the care of mere patriotic societies; by means of its education system, to be discussed in greater detail in the next section, the state sought to harness not only them but also "culture" in the form of history, painting, sculpture, literature, drama, and music. All these ceased to be either a matter for lone individuals or part of the common human enterprise. Instead they became compartmentalized into English, French, German, or Russian as the case might be; often coming under the auspices of some ministry of culture (which might or might not be the same as the ministry of education), they were subsidized and studied primarily as a means of glorifying the national heritage.

As one of the greatest expressions of human freedom and spontaneity, sport too became nationalized. Previously it had been organized on a purely local scale as fights, races, and athletic demonstrations were used to enliven popular fairs and as neighboring schools sometimes sent their students to compete against each other; now, however, it was taken over

[21] An excellent early analysis for the alienating effects of modern industrial society is K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York: International Publishers, 1932 [1844]), pp. 23ff.

[22] For the links between nationalism and the Industrial Revolution, see E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), particularly ch. 3.

by the state which turned it to *its* ends, including above all preparations for war.[23] Furthermore, the spread of the railways made it possible to organize competitions first on a national and then on an international basis with teams representing their various states. The signal was given in 1896 when the first rejuvenated Olympic Games were held in Athens. From then on, the greater the prestige of any single sporting event, the more likely it was to start with a raising of national flags and to end with the playing of national anthems, to say nothing of the displays of national rowdiness that often took place in between.

From Argentina to Spain,[24] the second half of the nineteenth century also saw the invention of a whole series of new festivals: such as Independence Day, National Day, Armed Forces Day, Jubilee Day, Flag Day, Heroes' Day, Memorial Day, Victory Day, Great Trek Day (for the Boers of South Africa), or whatever they may have been called. Some of these were grafted upon existing religious and royal feasts. Others, generally less successful in the long run, were literally conjured out of nothing. The central festival was invariably held at the capital with the head of state in attendance, listening to and delivering speeches. But every city, town, and village felt obliged to set up a modest copy of the original; the more important the state dignitaries who condescended to come their way, the greater the reflected glory and the more successful the event. Depending on the occasion there would be a holiday celebrated by parades, preferably by the armed forces[25] but, since the latter could not be present everywhere, if necessary by some less august body such as the local sharpshooters' association or gymnastic club. Then there would be tattoos, choruses, speaking choruses, flags, banners, some kind of sacred flame to be ceremoniously lit and carried about and extinguished, and of course the inevitable fireworks. To conclude the proceedings the masses were provided with open-air parties and opportunities for drinking, dan-

[23] A. Krieger, "Sieg Heil to the Most Glorious Era of German Sport: Continuity and Change in the Modern German Sports Movement," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 4, 1, 1987, pp. 5–20; J. Tollener, "Formation pour la vie et formation pour l'armée: la Fédération nationale des sociétés catholiques de gymnastique et d'armes de Belgique, 1892–1914," *Stadion*, 17, 1, 1991, pp. 101–20; L. W. Burgener, "Sport et politique dans un état neutre: l'instruction préliminaire en Suisse, 1918–1947," *Information Historique*, 48, 1, 1986, pp. 23–9; M. Spivak, "Un concept mythologique de la Troisième République: le renforcement du capital humain de la France," *Information Historique*, 4, 2, 1987, pp. 155–76.

[24] L. A. Bertoni, "Construir la nacionalidad: héroes, estatuas y fiestas patrias 1887–1891," *Boletin del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana*, 5, 1992, pp. 77–111; M. A. Civera, "Origen y desarrollo de la fiesta de la Hispanidad," *Historia y Vida*, 25, 295, 1992, pp. 92–101.

[25] See J. P. Bois, "L'armée et la fête nationale, 1789–1919," *Histoire, Economie et Société*, 10, 4, 1991, pp. 505–27, on the way the armed forces came to dominate Bastille Day in particular.

cing, and carousing, while those able and willing to pay could enjoy dramatic and orchestral performances with stirring patriotic content.

During the last few decades before 1914, the existence of any state without such celebrations had become almost unthinkable. Dreaming about a future Jewish homeland, Theodore Herzl as the founder of Zionism became fascinated with the problem; his diary is peppered with descriptions of imaginary spectacles, the more grandiose the better.[26] Though all states participated to one extent or another, the real masters of this kind of thing turned out to be the postwar Communist, Fascist, and, above all, Nazi regimes. In their hands the festivals turned into gigantic occasions such as October Revolution Day, May Day, March on Rome Day, Memorial Day to Fallen Heroes, the Nuremberg Party Day, German Workers' Day, Summer Solstice Day, and the like. Even more than their counterparts in other countries, these occasions quickly lost whatever spontaneity they may have possessed at the outset. Becoming ritualized, they were destined to be repeated with dreadful monotony year after year.[27] The number of participants, not those who presented themselves voluntarily but who were shepherded to the spot by the authorities, rose until it reached tens and even hundreds of thousands, all marching and singing and saluting in unison, to say nothing of the additional millions who received the message by means of those new technical media, the state-controlled radio and film. Sometimes, as in the case of Moscow's Red Square and Rome's Piazza Venezia, the festivities made use of existing structures or adapted them to the new purpose. Elsewhere entirely new ones were built, such as the Zeppelinfeld near Nuremberg and numerous "giantic" (*sic*; a favorite expression in 1930s vintage English-language German guidebooks) open-air theaters which the Nazis constructed all over the country.

As these occasions were designed to demonstrate, by this time state-worship had reached the point where the original distinction between it and civil society was itself being abandoned. For all that he held up the state as the idea, Hegel had never regarded it as the *sole* ideal; on the contrary, he had always insisted on the need for strong private institutions to maintain themselves, balancing both each other and the state so as to make liberty possible.[28] This part of his message was destined to be ignored, not to say falsified, by his totalitarian successors on both the right

[26] Theodore Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodore Herzl*, R. Patai, ed. (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), vol. I, pp. 27, 33, 39, 43, 67.

[27] For Hitler's own ruminations on this subject, see A. Speer, *Errinerungen* (Berlin: Propylaen Verlag, 1969), pp. 67ff.

[28] For Hegel's views on civil society, see S. Avineri, *Hegel* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 141–7, 161–75; and H. Ottman, "Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Changing Paradigms for Its Interpretation," *Clio*, 13, 4, 1984, pp. 315–30.

and left wings of the twentieth-century political spectrum. Each in their own way, Communists and Fascists sought to abolish civil society; of its institutions, only those that had been put under state control and acted in step (or, to use the Nazi expression, were *gleichgeschaltet*) with its ends were permitted to survive.[29] In theory, and sometimes not merely in theory, every stamp-collecting association carried out its activities in pursuit of some political goal and every *Hausvater* became a miniaturized Führer barking out orders at his unfortunate family. Citizens were supposed to address each other in the state-approved way and sign their letters in state-approved words; those who still tried to express any kind of opinion except for the officially approved ones were likely to land in a state-run concentration camp. As Mussolini was to put it in his article on "Fascismo" in the 1935 edition of the *Encyclopaedia italiana* (itself, of course, an étatist design) – "everything inside the state, everything for the state, nothing against the state." In Nazi Germany, according to Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, the only time the individual was free of state control was in his dreams.

It must be conceded that liberal countries such as France and, in particular, Britain never went nearly as far as their totalitarian opposite numbers. Following the tradition first established by Locke and Montesquieu, they defined liberty in a different way; nor, in spite of numerous excesses that took part during some of France's revolutionary periods in particular, did they ever completely forget the need to protect individuals and institutions *against* the arbitrary will of the state. But when everything is said and done the difference was merely one of degree. Not only did twentieth-century France have an influential fascist movement in the form of the Action française, but the "strong" version of Hegelianism had its followers even in Britain where "the name of the little territory which encloses Weimar and Jena" was said to "stir the imagination of thousands of our youths of both sexes even as the name of Jerusalem moved the hearts of men in centuries behind us."[30] Whereas Voltaire had still spoken of patriotism as the scoundrel's last refuge, after 1789 it was only the socialists who doubted that it represented the highest virtue or that loyalty to the state in its capacity as the organized expression of society was the first duty of the patriot. The meaning of the word itself changed, from somebody who "makes the welfare of mankind his care" (the definition provided by the *Encyclopédie*) to a person prepared to fight

[29] The best account of totalitarian regimes in terms of the relationship between state and civil society remains H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1951), esp. ch. 12, "Totalitarianism in Power."

[30] R. B. Haldane, "Hegel," *Contemporary Review*, 67, February 1895, p. 232; see also B. Bosquanet, *Philosophical Theory of the State* (London: Macmillan, 1899).

(some would say, create havoc) on his state's behalf. As treason to the state took the place of *lèse majesté* as the supreme crime, other forms of treason declined or disappeared. Thus, in Germany, *Landesverrat* far eclipsed mere *Hochverrat*; whereas in England *petite trahison*, otherwise known as murdering one's husband and considered a more heinous offense than simply killing one's wife, ended by being struck off the statute book during the 1830s.[31]

Of much greater significance to the lives of most people was the fact that, acting in the name of all these lofty ideals, the state now appropriated for itself the *right* to claim the highest sacrifice from its members. The danger which Voltaire had feared, namely that an excess of "patriotism" would lead to war, had been abundantly realized during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic period. During the last decades before 1914, intense efforts were made by anarchists, socialists, and pacifists in many countries to build international bridges of every sort and thus prevent the most important states from fighting each other. However, when the call for sacrifice came, the barriers that they sought to erect proved to be far flimsier than anticipated by the states themselves and were easily swept aside.[32] With very few exceptions, potential soldiers flocked to the mobilization centers, and parliaments, even those in which socialist representation was strong, voted for war credits. The ultimate result of the marriage between nationalism and the state was to be slaughter conducted with an intensity, and on a scale, which the members of previous political organizations could not even have imagined. Before we can turn to that story, though, it is necessary to trace some of the more concrete means by which the state came to dominate civil society.

Disciplining the people

The state's transformation from an instrument into an ideal could never have taken place if it had not also reinforced its grip on society far beyond anything attempted by its early modern predecessor. For books on folklore to be written, patriotic speeches to be given, and national festivals to be held, even in the presence of kings, presidents, and prime ministers, is all very well. In the long run, though, what counts is neither periodical celebrations, nor the ruminations of a handful of intellectuals, but the

[31] See M. E. Dogget, *Marriage, Wife Beating and the Law in Victorian England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1992), p. 49.

[32] See M. Ferro, *The Great War 1914–1918* (London: Routledge, 1969), ch. 1; and A. Offner, "The Working Classes, British Naval Plans and the Coming of the Great War," *Past and Present*, 107, May 1985, pp. 225–6.

daily grind as experienced by the great majority of the ruled. To make sure that the daily grind would in fact be under its own control and, as far as possible, subservient to it was the goal of every post-1789 state both in Europe and, increasingly, overseas, the most important means for the purpose being the police and prison apparatus, the education system, and the welfare services.

As has been shown in an earlier section, two of the most characteristic features of the modern state are its specialized police forces on the one hand and the prison system on the other. The former was made necessary by the French Revolution and the *lévee en masse* which it was the first to introduce. The latter itself was a typical state-owned bureaucratic instrument, presupposing as it did whole armies of forms, regulations, wardens, physicians, social workers, psychologists, and of course the fortified structures in which their unfortunate wards were incarcerated. While the connection between them and the state is thus strong and intimate, both of them also reflect the fact that, once the Napoleonic Wars were over, the nature of the internal security problem facing the state underwent a decisive change.

From the time of the earliest empires on – and as the establishment of tyrannies in such ancient and medieval city-states as Corinth, Syracuse, Rome, Milan, and Florence *inter alia* also showed – traditionally the persons most in need of supervision had been the great. In the words of one sixteenth-century expert, ''the rich are reluctant to submit to rule because they are fortunate''; though the lone assassin might succeed in murdering a king or magistrate, political change could usually be achieved only by those already ''distinguished by their noble birth and influential positions.''[33] With the establishment of the modern state that proposition became decreasingly valid. As feudal ties weakened and the church lost its right to govern, the switch to ''legitimate'' government meant that rulers had nothing to fear even from the greatest of their subjects. On the other hand, private property took over as the cement on which all relationships outside the nuclear family (and, often enough, inside it as well) were based. From the time of Bodin and Hobbes the protection of private property was turned into one of the principal functions of the sovereign.[34] Conversely, the success of the early modern state was itself explained partly by its willingness and ability to protect the property of its supporters.

With Locke and Montesquieu, the need to defend property against all comers – be it non-property-owners or the ruler himself – was elevated to

[33] Botero, *The Reason of State*, p. 83.

[34] See C. B. McPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), particularly pp. 264–5, 197–221, 247–8.

the rank of a cardinal principle of political theory. The former made the right to property into an inalienable law of nature, even to the point that he defined life itself as a ''possession'' of which no person should be deprived without cause. The latter devoted some of the most critical parts of his work to a detailed explanation of the ways in which that right was to be enforced in practice. In the event, the first state explicitly to adopt the principle as one of its foundations was England after the ''Glorious Revolution'' of 1688. The United States and France followed, the former as soon as it adopted its constitution and the latter in the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789). In Prussia, the inviolability of private property emerged gradually during the eighteenth century and was enthroned by the reforms of 1807–13. No wonder that, as the nineteenth century unfolded, the great – which, all other social ties having been dissolved, translated into the rich in nine cases out of ten – were almost always found on the side of the state. Save for a few eccentric Russian princes with anarchistic leanings, such as Bakunin and Kropotkin, they could be counted on to resist any attempt to upset the existing order, to the point that Marx in 1848 was able to define the state itself as nothing but a committee set up by ''the entire bourgeoisie'' to manage affairs on its own behalf.[35]

The acquiescence, often even the enthusiastic support, of the possessing classes having been secured in this way the early nineteenth-century state set out to extend *its* law and *its* order into those parts of the population which, up until then, were usually considered to be beneath its notice. Previously in most countries, crime among the lower social classes had been understood as the ''depravity'' of individuals. However regrettable from a moral point of view, it did not endanger society, the more so because most of it took the form of petty neighborhood quarrels directed by the poor against each other. As the emergence of the modern state caused the members of the upper classes to be disarmed, and as industrialization caused vast numbers of have-nots to concentrate in the rapidly growing cities, this situation changed. The events of 1789–94 had demonstrated what the mob, provided it was properly aroused and led, could do even to the most powerful and best organized state in history until then. During the decades after 1815 the emerging ''social question'' came to be seen as threatening the foundations of the establishment; and, with it, the working discipline that modern capitalism and industry required.

Whatever their exact motivation, during the two decades after 1810 one country after another set out to imitate Napoleon, establish new

[35] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, A. J. P. Taylor, ed. (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1967 [1848]), p. 82.

police forces, and centralize existing ones. To mention some of the most important developments only, between 1815 and 1825 the old Prussian municipal ''citizens' guards'' (*Burgergarden*), which had hitherto been responsible for dealing with petty crime, were abolished. Their place was taken by the police and (in rural districts) gendarmes, both of whom were paid and maintained exclusively by the state. At mid-century a typical provincial Prussian town was blessed with approximately one policeman per 3,000 inhabitants; by the even of World War I this had risen to over one in a thousand.[36] In 1811 in Russia, Tsar Alexander I, wishing to stamp out disloyalty in anticipation of a probable French invasion, established a Police Ministry by taking a rib of the existing Ministry of the Interior.[37] Renamed ''The Third Department'' by Nicholas I, it was given a virtual *carte blanche* to gather ''information concerning all events, without exception'': by the 1840s it had run so far out of control that it put the emperor's own son under supervision without his knowledge.[38] Assuming various guises, it was destined to remain active as long as the tsarist regime itself lasted. Eventually it served as the model for its even more notorious Communist successors, the Cheka, OGPU, NKVD, and KGB.

Among the main European countries, the one with the strongest liberal traditions was Britain. Though individual members of Parliament repeatedly protested the effect on liberty, here too the growth and centralization of state-run, regular police forces proceeded apace; in 1829 the city of London received its ''bobbies'' (after Home Secretary Robert Peel). In 1835 Parliament ordered all incorporated municipalities to follow London's lead, and twenty-one years after that the County and Borough Police Act made police forces mandatory all over the country. Meanwhile roads, railroads, and telegraphs had all begun to put an end to the isolation of local police forces both in Britain and abroad. During the 1870s police pay, discipline, and criteria for enlistment were taken out of the hands of local authorities and put into those of the Home Office; another landmark occurred in 1890 when it became legal to swap policemen or even entire units between one local force and another. By 1906 no less than a third of the business of the Home Office was accounted for by its Criminal Department – which by this time looked after everything

[36] Figures from A. Luedtke, *Police and State in Prussia, 1815–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 41–2, 86; and E. Glovka Spencer, *Police and the Social Order in German Cities* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1992), pp. 166–7.

[37] On the origins of the Russian police, see P. S. Squire, *The Third Department: The Establishment and Practices of the Political Police in the Russia of Nicholas I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 29ff.

[38] W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I, Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), p. 89.

from controlling foreign-born waiters to petty crime. Even so, compared with what was going on elsewhere, Britain lagged behind. For example, it was only in 1929 that arrest procedures were standardized throughout the country.

By the time these developments were taking place, the state, originally a purely European invention, had started the march of conquest that was to make it master of the world. The process of expansion will be studied later in this volume; here we must merely note that the British system of professional police forces was exported to the most important colonies which naturally looked to the mother country for a solution to their problems. In the United States, as the most important extra-European state by far, New York became the first city to create a municipal police force in 1845. Originally it numbered 800 men – massive for its day, but soon rendered out of date by a population which, over the next two decades, expanded from 400,000 to 650,000.[39] The year 1865 saw the establishment of the Secret Service, the first nationwide police force, whose mission was to protect the president. In 1905 Pennsylvania became the first US state to set up a state police, a measure that was later imitated by New York (1917), Michigan, Colorado, and West Virginia (1919), and Massachusetts (1920). By 1920 the Bureau of Investigation – later renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation or FBI – had been in existence for twelve years. It was created by the executive over the objections of Congress, some of whose members feared that their own affairs would be among those investigated. Originally its mission was to look into anti-trust cases, several kinds of fraud, and certain crimes committed on government property or else by government officials. Like all bureaucratic organizations, it proceeded to expand its organization until it covered a whole array of "federal" crimes.

Having put their forces in place, these and other US states proceeded to impose order both on the countryside and on those lower-class urban neighborhoods which had previously been almost entirely beyond their reach. Patrolling the streets, monitoring markets, beer-houses, and brothels (but careful to avoid those known to be frequented by the state's own high officials), the police soon made their presence felt, though this was more true in Europe than in the United States with its wide open spaces and frontier society. Again Britain with its relatively liberal traditions provides a good measuring-rod. The number of prosecutions grew sevenfold between 1805 and 1842; compared to the population the

[39] See J. F. Richardson, *The New York Police: Colonial Times to 1901* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 82–123. For some comparative figures on the strength of British municipal police forces at the time, see F. C. Mather, *Public Order in the Age of the Chartists* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 111–17.

increase was by a factor of four and a half. Given the new emphasis on public order – for example, the UK Vagrancy Act of 1824 made it possible to prosecute people merely for being on the streets – it is not surprising that the vast majority of those indicted belonged to the lower classes. The results deserve to be called dramatic. After 1848 it was seldom necessary any longer to bring in troops for quelling riots, etc.; in Britain between 1850 and 1914 (when the curve changed direction and became horizontal), the rate of burglary per 100,000 of population declined by 35 percent, that of homicide by 42 percent, and that of assault by 71 percent.[40] Using the need to discipline the people as its excuse, the state set out to conquer entire city quarters that previously had been out of bounds, and remake them in its own image.

Even as its police forces were imposing acceptable standards of behavior on the people, the nineteenth-century state felt that the time had come to invade their minds as well. During most of history, education had been left almost entirely to the family and to the established church. Sparta, of course, was a notable exception; reflecting the practices of earlier tribal societies, male children were taken away from their parents at the age of six and raised in special dormitories from which they only emerged in order to marry. Prominent men of other ancient city-states also sometimes founded schools, but they did so in order to display their generosity to their fellow citizens, as part of the liturgies to which they were subject, rather than in a comprehensive attempt to control the minds of the young.[41] The Carolingian, Inca, Ottoman, and Chinese empires all boasted imperially run schools; but their student intake consisted almost exclusively of the relatives of court officials and, perhaps, some of the aspiring members of the bureaucracy. Whatever the system, and again with the very partial exception of the ancient city-states, the vast majority of the people were left to cope as best they could. Throughout history, this meant that the rural population in particular received scarcely any formal education at all.

Proposals aimed at setting up a state-run education system may be found in the works of such seventeenth-century utopian writers as Valentin Andrea and Gerrard Winstanley, whom we already met as an advocate of a national information-gathering apparatus. Possibly influenced by the Spartan example and also by Plato, Andrea wanted children of both sexes to be taken away from their parents at the age of six and raised in dormitories. Winstanley suggested that the ''Common-

[40] Figures from *Cambridge Social History of Britain* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 290.

[41] See A. R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959), pp. 111–17.

wealth'' assume responsibility for ensuring that no future citizen should be without the requisite moral and professional education needed for making a living, though just how this was to be done he did not explain. As the eighteenth century progressed schemes of this kind multiplied. All wanted to see education taken out of the hands of the church; but while some were motivated by what we today would call patriotic and national considerations, others merely reflected the desire to provide the nascent bureaucracy with a steady stream of compliant penpushers. The first type was exemplified by Rousseau who, in his *Considerations concernant le gouvernement de Pologne* (1772), suggested that the goal of education should be to make students replace the words *ubi bene ibi patria* (home is where life is nice) by their opposite.[42] The second included several detailed schemes submitted by Prussian and Bavarian theologians – Konrad von Zeydlitz and Heinrich Braun – to their respective royal masters during the 1780s.

In the event, so long as the old regime lasted, little came of these and similar proposals. Focusing on the negative side, most monarchs were content to make sure that nothing should be taught in church schools that was likely to undermine their own position; beyond that, it was merely a question of providing money and sometimes buildings for instruction in whatever subjects which for one reason or another excited their interest. Thus Louis XIV, prompted by Colbert, gave his support to a short-lived Académie politique as well as a few technical colleges, the most important of which was to develop into the subsequent Ecole des ponts et chaussées.[43] Another field that attracted the attention of the powers that be was officer training. Previously officers had been persons who, either working with their own capital or with that provided to them by others, received ''commissions'' from rulers to recruit soldiers. With the advent of regular armed forces after 1648 or so, the system changed: cadet schools intended for the sons of the impoverished nobility became fairly common, each of the main states (except Britain, where the form used by regimental commanders to enlist officers did not include a blank for education) founding at least one. By the end of the eighteenth century, they had spread from Europe to the new state across the Atlantic. Here two of them – the one at West Point and the one at Annapolis – were preparing themselves for a great future.[44]

The first ruler to take a practical interest in the education of his subjects

[42] J.-J. Rousseau, *The Government of Poland* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1977), p. 14.

[43] G. Thuillier, 'L'Académie politique de Torcy, 1712–1719,'' *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, 97, 1–2, 1983, pp. 54–74; F. B. Artz, *The Development of Technical Education in France* (Cleveland, OH: Society for the History of Technology, 1966), ch. 1.

[44] On the origins of officer schools, see M. van Creveld, *The Training of Officers: From Professionalism to Irrelevance* (New York: Free Press, 1989), ch. 1.

at large was Prussia's Frederick William I. In 1717 he claimed to have learnt that children were "grossly ignorant . . . of those things that are most necessary for their welfare and eternal salvation"; thereupon a royal decree was issued which ordered all parents to send their children to school, but since nothing was done to follow the matter up the results, if any, were minimal. Frederick the Great in his *Landschulregiment* (1763) decreed that all children between five and thirteen should attend school; nine years later he set aside 200,000 thalers to pay teachers and rescue his newly acquired Pomeranian subjects from what he called "their Polish slavishness."[45] Again little came of the matter, not least because parents were too poor, and local authorities unwilling, to bear the cost. For example, as late as 1792 only one out of six East Prussian villages had a school. In West Prussia the percentage was even lower; throughout the kingdom such schools as did exist tended to be concentrated in the royal domains, whereas Prussia's Junkers did little to educate their serfs. Frederick did, however, complete his father's work by bringing secondary and university education under the control of a state department. A school-leaving examination known as *Abitur* was instituted and became a condition for admission both to the universities and to the ranks of the Prussian administration. As the nineteenth century progressed, it also became a prerequisite for those who aspired to commissioned rank in the military.

While Prussia dawdled, Bavaria acted. The Peace of Luneville (1801) put an end to the old *sancta Bavaria* as it had existed from 1648 on. Not only was the country drawn into a tight alliance with Napoleonic France, but the annexation of territories formerly belonging to Austria brought with it a massive infusion of Protestants and Jews who could not be assimilated by the old system. Accordingly, in October 1802, the Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs was abolished and a Ministry of Education, the first of its kind in any country, founded. Besides making entry into the civil service conditional on the completion of high school, as in Prussia, the Bavarian authorities instituted compulsory schooling for all children, compliance to be secured by issuing a school-leaving certificate that would be required for permission to purchase real estate, practice a trade, or marry. Most of the cost was to be covered by fees paid by parents; the rest would come out of church property which was being secularized as fast as possible. A law of 1804 went further still, placing all existing schools under state supervision and making them nonconfessional. The curriculum was given a secular, utilitarian bent. Once instituted it was

[45] M. Baer, *Westpreussen unter Friedrich dem Grossen* (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1965 [1909]), vol. I, p. 550.

destined to remain in force until the next wave of reforms swept it away during the 1860s.[46]

Whereas in Bavaria commitment to education flagged after the Restoration, in Prussia things went the other way. Thanks to the efforts of Frederick William III, who took a personal interest in the question, a department of education was set up in 1808; nine years later its importance was formally acknowledged when it received cabinet rank. With higher and secondary education already under its own control, no sooner had the Wars of Liberation ended than it, provided with relatively ample means, began to found schools by the hundred. Finance came partly from the parents themselves, partly from contributions made by local government. The system covered girls as well as boys; not only Germans but Poles and even Jews were admitted, a real innovation for the time. The task of providing faculty fell on twenty-eight specially organized, state-funded boarding schools. In Königsberg, such was the shortage of qualified teachers that orphans in state institutions were summarily designated as future educators and, once their training had been completed, unleashed upon their fellow youngsters.

The results of the state "being turned into an educational institution writ large," as one official in charge of the curriculum put it,[47] did not take long to bear fruit. By 1837, 80 percent of Prussian children were attending school and, to allow them to do so, the first child labor laws were being passed. By mid-century 80 percent of the adult population were literate, compared to only 50–65 percent in Britain and France; among Prussian army recruits, only one in ten had failed to receive any schooling at all.[48] The final steps were taken by the constitution of 1849 which turned all teachers – including university professors, some of whom had to be dragged by the neck – into state employees. After 1871, and making use of the fact that the remaining states had long been in control over their own schools, the system was extended over the whole of Germany. As liberals turned their coats and gave their support to Bismarck, any doubts that the aim of schooling was to help make the Reich good and strong were overcome and the direction of German education

[46] See, for these reforms, K. A. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society: The Politics of Education in Prussia and Bavaria, 1750–1900* (Oxford: Berg, 1989), pp. 43–4; and G. Zuber, "L'école primaire de la Prusse à la veille de la fondation du Reich," *Revue d'Allemagne*, 20, 3, 1988, pp. 311–21.

[47] Johann Suevren, quoted in G. Giese, *Quellen zur deutschen Schulgeschichte seit 1800* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1961), p. 92.

[48] P. Flora, "Die Bildungsentwicklung im Prozess der Staaten und Nationenbildung," in P. C. Ludz, ed., *Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1972), p. 432.

was well and truly established on lines that were to be altered, if at all, only after 1945.

For reasons that cannot be examined here, other countries were slower off the mark. Bills which would have led to the establishment of parish schools were put before the British Parliament in 1796, 1797, 1807, and 1820; all were rejected, however, and it was only in 1833 that a paltry sum – £20,000 – was set aside "in aid for the education of the poorer classes."[49] By 1858, funding had increased to £700,000, not a negligible sum (among other things it provided for the training of 14,000 pupil-teachers), but this was still far short of the £24 million spent on defense in the same year. Meanwhile, motions for the establishment of universal and compulsory instruction controlled by a Ministry of Education continued to be defeated. In the face of opposition on the part of ratepayers, steps to extend schooling to larger segments of the population progressed only very slowly. In the main, they were limited to parliamentary committees of inquiry which looked into the way the sums which had been voted were spent.

By and large, and in spite of the existence of a much more centralized political system, the same was true in France. Napoleon's greatest contribution to the French educational system consisted of the two "great schools" – the Ecole polytechnique and the Ecole supérieure d'administration – that he founded. He also set up a series of *lycées*, intended for the sons of the middle classes and run on military lines; however, his interest in elementary education was limited and, far from ordering its expansion, he was content to have existing institutions placed under state supervision. In his capacity as secretary of education to Louis-Philippe, the historian François Guizot ordered the opening of an elementary school in each community. However, implementation was haphazard and those few institutes which were put into operation were run jointly by the state and the parish priest.

In the event, what galvanized both countries – and others as well – into action was the series of Prussian military victories that began in 1864. In 1866 von Roon, the minister of war, informed King William I that "the victor at Königgrätz was the Prussian *Volkschule* teacher."[50] Von Roon's original intention was probably to rob von Moltke's rapidly rising general staff of some of the glory; however, the phrase served other countries as their cue. The first step, taken in France, was to establish an *école normale primaire* in each *département*. Within a few years whole armies of teachers had been mass-produced and had embarked on their designated task of

[49] For the rise of state-directed education in Britain, see E. Midwinter, *Nineteenth-Century Education* (London: Longman, 1970), pp. 32ff.

[50] R. Rissman, *Deutsche Pädagogen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt, 1910), p. 219.

turning every Frenchman into a burning patriot ready to give his (nobody yet thought of a woman being made, let alone asking, to give *her* life) for Alsace-Lorraine.[51] Several other measures followed, until the process was crowned by the establishment of universal free compulsory education in 1882.[52] The person most responsible for pushing the scheme through parliament was Prime Minister Jules Ferry. Not accidentally, he also played a major role in the expansion of France's colonial empire into Tunisia, Madagascar, Tonkin, and the French Congo.

Faced with "the challenge of Germany,"[53] other states felt they had little choice but to follow. Compulsory, universal education – which sooner or later was bound to be made free as well – reached Japan (where it was part of the process known as the Meiji Restoration) in 1872. Italy's turn came in 1877, that of Britain in 1890, and that of Spain in 1908. But whereas in Germany it was the states which made up the empire that laid down the curriculum, the political system of most other countries tended to be more centralized, with the result that, around the turn of the century, it was claimed that the French minister of education, for example, could tell you what was being taught in each one out of a hundred thousand classrooms by simply looking at his watch. By the time World War I ended the measure had even been adopted by many Latin American countries,[54] albeit from then to the present day it has often remained largely on the statute books.

This was not so in the most advanced countries, where the reform had largely accomplished its goals. In 1895, 82 percent of all eligible British children were in fact attending school and the system was even beginning to provide some medical care as well as subsidized meals. On the eve of World War I, the social reformer Beatrice Webb was waxing lyrical over the "utopian" picture in front of her eyes: "7,000,000 children emerge every morning, washed and brushed . . . traversing street and road and lonely woodland . . . to present themselves at a given hour at their 30,000 schools where each of the 7,000,000 finds his or her own individual place,

[51] On the nationalization of French schools, see J. F. Scott, *Patriots in the Making* (New York: Macmillan, 1916).

[52] S. T. Greshman, "Good Workers and Good Soldiers: Attitude Formation in the Primary Schools of the French Third Republic, 1880–1914," *Proceedings and Papers of the Georgia Association of Historians*, 6, 1985, pp. 32–42; M. Garnier, et al., "The Strong State, Social Class, and Controlled School Expansion in France, 1881–1975," *American Journal of Sociology*, 95, 2, 1989, pp. 279–306.

[53] A. M. Kazmias, *Politics, Society and Secondary Education in England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966), pp. 107ff.

[54] C. Newland, "La educación elemental en Hispanoamerica: desde la independencia hasta a la centralización de los sistemas educativos nacionales," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 7, 2, 1991, pp. 335–64, provides an overview of these developments.

with books and blackboard and teachers provided.''[55] Reality, to be sure, was less idyllic. As early as the 1880s escorting truant children to school – and sometimes jailing their parents for failing to force them into doing so – had become a routine police duty in the ''best-ordered'' countries such as Germany.

Possibly because it costs more on a per student basis, the situation in respect to secondary and tertiary education was more variable. State funding to pay the way of the talented sons (much later, daughters as well) of the poor who wished to attend high school began to be provided during the 1880s, and again Britain provides a good case in point. From 1902, when a centralized organization took the place of the earlier school boards, 56 places out of every 1,000 in rate-supported schools had to be provided free of charge. Twenty-seven years later that figure was doubled; in 1932 a means test was introduced to distinguish between parents who were able to pay for their children's education and those who were not. Though parallel measures were taken in many other countries, by and large secondary education remained limited to the offspring of the middle classes, and it was only after 1945 that it was made anything like universal and free. In most countries the school-leaving age, which had originally stood at eleven, was raised first to fourteen and then to sixteen, that being a limit which not even the modern state, for all its self-righteousness and the unprecedented apparatus of coercion at its disposal, dares cross.

Since tertiary education requires high expertise on the part of the faculty, by and large governments were less able to control it. Relatively few countries followed the German example in turning all universities into state-owned institutions and all tenured faculty into *Beamter* (officials). Elsewhere there was a tendency for government to subsidize universities; for example, in Britain between the world wars the government provided one-third to one-half of their income. Surprisingly, one of the first countries to establish ''state'' universities was the United States. The first one to open its doors was Rutgers, the New Jersey State University, in 1766. This was followed by the University of Georgia in 1785, the University of Vermont in 1791, the University of Tennessee in 1794, and the University of Cincinnati in 1819.[56] Many of these public universities were set up in places too remote and too recently settled to be reached by money-conscious private ones. Perhaps not surprisingly, their prestige (and, presumably, their educational standards) has tended to lag behind the latter from the time they were founded to the present day.

[55] Quoted in A. Trop, *The Schoolteachers* London: Heinemann, 1957), p. 195.
[56] *World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1998* (Mahwah, NJ: K-III Reference Corporation, 1998), pp. 234–8.

Whereas, except in totalitarian countries, universities were for the most part given license to determine their own curriculum, the same was not true of secondary and, *a fortiori*, elementary schools. Consequently the instruction that they offered often became subject to the political demands of the moment; depending on how much states feared their citizens or trusted them, now practical subjects were emphasized, now more theoretical ones. While schools in all countries tended to replace religion with (national) history, German and French schools in particular were caught in the struggle between church and state. In Germany, Bismarck waged the *Kulturkampf* from 1872 on; in France a Radical government came to power in 1900 and closed all religious schools until 1914, when they were allowed to reopen. In an age when more and more people were receiving the vote, the state's desire to dominate the curriculum was partly motivated by the need to "educate our masters" (as one British MP put it in 1867). However, democratization could not explain why, in virtually every country, children were increasingly forced to study the "national" language at the expense of their mother tongue – quite the contrary. Nor can it account for the constant parading, flag-saluting, anthem-singing, and hero-worshipping that went on in many places, to say nothing of the need to "foster loyalty to one Kaiser, one army, one navy" (Germany); assist the "race" in its "battle for life" (Britain); and prevent "the power of national defense from lagging behind that of other countries" (the United States).[57]

Last but not least, having established a firm grip on the minds of the young, the state moved to acquire the allegiance of those old enough to perceive that their real interests consisted not of circuses but of bread. By and large, the early nineteenth century had been the heyday of *laissez faire*. Many of the old institutions were dead; having finally succeeded in drawing a clear line between government and ownership, the state had no desire to place limits on what might be done in the name of the latter. However, already during the 1830s the direction of the wind began to change. In Britain as the most industrialized country by far, there were no fewer than thirty-nine royal commissions appointed to look into the conditions of the poor between 1831 and 1842 alone. What they brought to light was masses of people living in squalor; neglected children who, to keep them quiet as their parents were at work, were given opium instead of an education; fourteen-hour work-

[57] Quotations, dating to the years around 1900, from prominent officials in all three countries in Schleunes, *Schooling and Society*, pp. 172, 226 (Germany), 230 (Britain), and 236 (United States). On the nationalization of education as it applied to Britain in particular, see also L. Simpson, "Imperialism, National Efficiency, and History, 1900–1905," *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 16, 1, 1984, pp. 28–36.

days for young and old; working conditions which, in many cases, could only be called appalling; wages which, even at the best of times, were barely sufficient to keep body and soul together; and no insurance against unemployment, accidents, illness, and old age.[58] Some reformers were motivated by a genuine concern for the welfare of the people; others, perhaps more numerous, by fear of the revolutionary consequences that might follow if nothing were done. Whatever the cause, states started laying their hands on social and economic life in ways, and to an extent, that would have been wholly beyond the imagination of previous political communities.

The first Factory Acts, prohibiting the employment of children under nine and limiting the working hours of persons under eighteen to twelve a day, were passed in Britain in 1834. As the name implies, originally they applied to factories only; they were extended to mines in 1842, merchant shipping in 1876, and railways in 1889. An 1844 law prohibited women from being employed for more than twelve hours a day – this being the first of a very long list of statues which the modern state, claiming that women were weak and needed special protection, enacted in their favor. As early as 1847 Parliament passed a ten-hour bill; however, it was not until 1874 that it was applied to all factories, whereas other workers, particularly those employed as shop assistants and in domestic service, began to have their working hours limited only early in the twentieth century. To enforce these laws, as well as the safety regulations gradually being enacted from the 1840s on, a system of inspection was established. During the early days it often met with resistance, not only on the part of employers who resented the intrusion but also on that of the workers themselves who did not want limits on the earning power of their youngest family members. Other countries followed Britain's lead, albeit reluctantly and often after a considerable interval. For example, Germany got the twelve-hour day only after unification in 1871; France, where conditions were in some ways worse than anywhere else, even later.

With working conditions increasingly falling under its own control, the state started expanding its power into other spheres of public welfare. In 1834 in Britain the old Speenhamland system of outdoor relief, dating to Elizabethan times, was abolished. Not only had the burden risen beyond the ability of individual parishes to bear; but its decentralized nature was incompatible with the demographic changes brought about by urbanization. Its place was taken by state-owned workhouses which admitted

[58] A classic account of the life of the masses is F. Engels, *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* (London: Allen Unwin, 1936 [1846]). For a succinct modern treatment, see H. Haerder, *Europe in the Nineteenth Century, 1830–1880* (London: Longman, 1966), ch. 6.

people on the basis of a means test. In an attempt to keep costs down, they were run on prison-like lines with conditions deliberately made as harsh as possible. Families were separated, and most forms of innocent amusement, such as smoking or playing games, prohibited, while the work provided was onerous and unpleasant. The reform's aim – namely, cutting cost – was achieved; until the 1860s, the sums spent on welfare actually fell. Precisely for that reason, it probably did little to help the poor. Still, this was the first time when authority was taken away from the Justices of the Peace and put into the hands of a central supervisory board. As such, it marked a major step toward the construction of the modern British civil service.

The first Public Health Bill was passed in Britain in 1848 and led to the appointment of local Boards of Health with power over water supplies as well as the paving, draining, and cleansing of streets. The act proved unpopular and in 1854 it was not renewed, the London *Times* claiming that John Bull had wearied of the ''perpetual Saturday night'' of cleanliness. Much to the chagrin of ratepayers, though, the setback turned out to be temporary. To note a few landmarks only, in 1853 vaccination against smallpox became compulsory (in 1898, the right of religiously minded parents not to have their children inoculated was recognized). In 1858 the General Medical Council was created to oversee education and licensing in the fields of medicine, surgery, and midwifery; in 1860 the Adulteration of Food Act was passed, and fifteen years later local authorities were given the power to appoint food analysts in order to enforce the law. A Lunacy Act, making compulsory hospitalization of the mentally ill conditional on the approval of a state-appointed physician, was passed in 1890; 1899 saw the establishment of the first ante-natal and maternity clinics, though the scheme became nationwide only in 1919. Finally the state began to build its own institutions for the physically and mentally ill, thus taking over from the church. As law followed law and inspector was piled on inspector, the call arose for a centralized organization; and a centralized organization inevitably sought to undertake additional tasks. The ultimate outcome was the establishment of a Ministry of Health, which took place in 1919.

Already by the 1840s these developments had gathered sufficient momentum to find their expression in socialist thought. Previous writers such as Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen – to say nothing of Rousseau – had put their faith for the salvation of mankind not in bureaucracy but in its opposite. To them the answer to contemporary social problems consisted of dismantling modern life and returning to the land; there groups of workers, having established autonomous communities with their own laws, would look after their own economic needs while living in freedom

and equality among themselves.[59] However, the advent of modern industry caused such a solution to lose its appeal. For all that the black satanic mills were undoubtedly evil, their contribution to industrial production was such that to turn one's back on them merely meant condemning oneself to isolation, backwardness, and even hunger. Hence would-be reformers such as Etienne Cabet in France and Edward Bellamy in the United States turned their hopes to the state. As they saw it, states as they existed in their time merely represented the political framework of capitalist exploitation; the problem was to make them work for society as a whole. Taking over from private enterprise, future states would substitute cooperation for competition and planning for individual caprice, thus vastly increasing production while at the same time providing employment, welfare, and plenty for all.[60] This optimistic view of the benefits of centralized planning was even shared by those visionaries who, like Marx and Engels, predicted that the state would "wither away."

The first to declare the citizen's "right to work" were the French revolutionaries of 1848. Attempting to turn theory into practice, Louis Blanc established his social workshops or *atéliers nationaux* of 1848–9; whether through his own fault or through that of his opponents, they turned out to be a disastrous failure and were soon closed. Other, perhaps wiser, minds set their sights lower and called for insurance plans that would ease the workers' lot during periods of hardship. The first such schemes to be turned into reality were promoted by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck of Germany whose goal was to wean his country's proletarians away from the growing Social Democratic Party. In 1881–5 old-age, sickness, and unemployment insurance schemes were pushed through the Reichstag and became law. The state, the employers, and the employees were all made to contribute; initially applying to factory workers only, the plan was later extended to other groups until, during the Weimar Republic, virtually all trades received coverage.[61] Quickly taking up the German example, the Scandinavian countries established their own schemes and by 1914 several of them were in operation. In 1893 Switzerland, too, began to experiment with a state-run, voluntary unemployment insurance scheme. It proved unable to meet its commitments and went bankrupt within four years; however, this failure did not deter others. By 1920 Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand, France, the Nether-

[59] The most important nineteenth-century "utopian" writers are analyzed in M. Berneri, *Voyage Through Utopia* (New York: Schocken Books, 1950), pp. 207–92.

[60] E. Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie* (Paris: Bureau populaire, 1848); E. Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (Boston: Ticknor, 1888). For a nineteenth-century caricature of the complete welfare state, see E. Richer, *Pictures of the Socialist Future* (London: Jarrolds, 1933 [1892]).

[61] See L. Preller, *Sozialpolitik in der Weimarer Republik* (Dusseldorf: Atheneum, 1978 [1949]), pp. 233–4, 282–5.

lands, Finland, and Belgium all possessed voluntary, state-run and state-subsidized unemployment insurance systems.

Having been the first country to industrialize, Britain was remarkably slow to establish any kind of social security system; still, in 1908–11 ten years of argument were brought to a close by the Liberal Party in the person of its remarkable chancellor of the exchequer, David Lloyd George. As in Germany, the reforms included a compulsory health and unemployment insurance system with contributions by employers, employees, and the state; on top of this came a 30-shilling ($7.50) maternity benefit and a universal, non-contributory, scheme for paying flat pensions to persons over sixty-five years of age with no other sources of income. Described by its originators as "the greatest scheme of social reconstruction ever attempted," the reform immediately ran into trouble because almost twice as many people turned out to receive benefits than had been expected – money having a remarkable power to flush out individuals whose very existence had previously gone unnoticed. By 1914 the cost of the program had doubled from the planned £6 million to £12 million annually, while the cost of all "social" spending combined rose from a modest £22,6000,0000 in 1891 to a staggering £338,500,000 in 1925.[62] This, however, did not prevent other countries, notably Germany and Ireland, from going way beyond the British model in extending their own social services during the interwar years.[63]

By that time even the United States, traditionally the stronghold of rugged individualism and low taxes (to make the House of Lords vote money for his plans, Lloyd George had threatened to create the necessary number of new peers), was feeling the need to do something for its working population. A modest first step had been taken in 1912 when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a law requiring the payment of minimum wages. However, it only lasted a few years; in 1923 a Supreme Court decision declared a State of Oregon minimum-wage law for women unconstitutional. Other measures to extend government control and limit private enterprise were equally unsuccessful. For example, the number of persons who benefited from a government vocational education scheme instituted in 1917 was so small that statistics about it simply ceased to be published. In 1920 a law calling for the abolition of child labor failed to make it through Congress. Five years later, a Kansas law for the compulsory arbitration of industrial disputes was similarly thrown out of the High Court. In 1929, the last year of prosperity, all

[62] E. Barker, *The Development of Public Services in Western Europe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 77.

[63] P. H. Lindert, "The Rise of Social Spending, 1880–1930," *Explorations in Economic History*, 31, 1, 1994, pp. 1–37.

American federal welfare expenditure combined only amounted to $0.25 per head of population,[64] which constituted perhaps one percent of its British equivalent.

In the event it took the Great Depression and 12 million unemployed to shake the United States out of the world of *laissez faire* and into the one in which, whatever the names attached to the various schemes, welfare came to be financed out of taxation. The foundations were laid in 1933 when President Roosevelt, ignoring howls of Republican opposition, set up the Federal Emergency Relief Agency (FERA). Its first director was a social worker, Harry Hopkins; armed with a war chest of $500,000,000, it provided work for at least some of those who needed it.[65] Over the next six years this and numerous other programs led to the spending of some $13 billion over and the construction of 122,000 public buildings, 77,000 bridges, and 64,000 miles of roads *inter alia* – all, however, without making a real dent in the Depression which only ended in September 1939 when, following the outbreak of war in Europe, the stock exchange went through the roof.

Administratively speaking, the *annus mirabilis* of the New Deal proved to be 1935. That year saw the introduction of social security including old-age insurance and assistance, unemployment compensation, aid to dependent children, and aid to the blind. In 1939 survivors' and disability insurance, already a standard feature in the most advanced European countries, were added to the list. By that time every American citizen had been issued with his or her social security card and the Department of Health and Human Services had been created to oversee the system's operation. Even the Supreme Court was prepared to cooperate, though not before Roosevelt, having fought a battle royal with Congress, packed it with his own supporters. In 1937 a Washington State minimum wage law was declared constitutional. Another ruling did the same for social security itself; the age of big government had truly begun.

Finally, just as totalitarian states went further than anybody else in indoctrinating the people, so they took the lead in disciplining them. This was particularly true of the USSR which turned itself into the complete welfare state – one that, however harsh the discipline it exercised and however low the quality of the services it provided, did try to cover the individual's needs from the moment that he or she was born to the time he or she was put into the crematorium or grave. Though neither Fascist Italy nor Nazi Germany went nearly as far as this, both regarded themselves as rooted in the common people. Neither embraced capitalism whole-

[64] E. D. Berkowitz and J. McQuaid, *Creating the Welfare State* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988), p. 76.

[65] See W. R. Brock, *Welfare, Democracy and the New Deal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), ch. 5, for the details.

heartedly, looking instead for a ''third way'' that was neither reactionary nor socialist.[66] Each, according to its lights, designed its social security system with the explicit aim of ending class warfare, restoring the dignity of the working people, and harnessing them to the state's aims.[67] In many ways – e.g., providing for paid vacations – these programs differed little from those of other countries.[68] Italy and Germany did, however, put an unusual emphasis on benefits such as marriage allowances, housing loans, and child payments (sometimes made conditional on the wife not working outside the home), all of which were meant to spur population growth and prepare the country for war.

The ''totalitarian'' regimes also made a determined effort to control the minds of the young by way of formal and informal schooling, often against the will of their parents who distrusted the experiment – with good reason, as it turned out. Except in Fascist Italy, where Catholic education was never completely suppressed and where the Concordat of 1929 led to its revival,[69] schools other than the state's own were simply shut down. The rest had their faculty vetted for political reliability, their curricula dictated from above in accordance with ideological considerations, and their classes subjected to supervision so strict that one could hardly turn a corner without being gazed upon by the Sun of Nations, Il Duce, or Der Führer.

Finally, and by way of backing up their control over both welfare and education the Communist, Fascist, and Nazi states also established police organizations far more terrible than anything seen in history until then. Thanks to the fact that they operated without requiring juridical authorization, the NKVD, OVRA (Organizazione Vigilanza Repressione Antifascismo), and Gestapo (Geheime Staatspolizei) counted their victims in the millions; their names still send shudders down people's backs. To compare the security forces run by the likes of Lavrenty Beria, Arturo Boccini, and Heinrich Himmler with the police apparatus maintained by the democratic countries of the West is less than fair. Yet it should be kept in mind that, however great the differences that separated them, in the end they were all offshoots of the same tree whose roots had been so firmly planted by Napoleon. All sought to achieve the same end, namely to make sure that no person and no institution should be in a position to

[66] See above all E. Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (New York: Holt, 1969).

[67] For Nazi welfare policies, see D. Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1966), pp. 73–113; and T. W. Mason, *Social Policy in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), pp. 151–78. For their equivalents in Fascist Italy, see E. R. Tannenbaum, *Fascism in Italy* (London: Allan Lane, 1972), pp. 214–30.

[68] G. Cross, ''Vacations for All: The Leisure Question in the Era of the Popular Front,'' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 24, 4, 1989, pp. 599–62.

[69] See D. A. Binchy, *Church and State in Fascist Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), ch. 1.

resist any ''lawful'' demands made on it by the state. The torture chamber and the concentration camp merely completed the work that the classroom had begun:

> What did you learn at school today
> Dear little boy of mine?
> What did you learn at school today
> Dear little boy of mine?
> I learnt our country is good and strong!
> Always right and never wrong!
> I learnt our leaders are the best of men!
> That's why we elect them again and again.
> What did you learn at school today . . .

Conquering money

The extension of the states' control over society, which is the most prominent development of the years 1789–1945, could never have taken place had it not also acquired unprecedented financial means to back up its claims. Previously the people and institutions that ruled society, such as noblemen and the church, had often possessed their own independent sources of revenue in the form of land and the serfs who worked it; although this made them less subject to central control, on the other hand, the arrangement had the advantage that, if the central authority broke down, the local one could carry on for what were often very considerable periods of time. Not so modern state-run police forces, education systems, and social services: possessing no resources of their own – and given that whatever fees they require are supposed to be transferred directly to the treasury – all of them are absolutely dependent on their expenses being paid, and paid regularly, if they are to function. To make such payment possible the state not only had to raise more money than ever before but to redefine the very meaning of that commodity. Once it had done so the financial constraints that had often held previous polities in check fell away, and the state's road toward war and conquest was opened.

As best we know, the first coins were minted in Lydia during the seventh century BC, though the use of gold bars of a set weight was known in ancient Egypt and is much older.[70] From Lydia the idea spread to the Aegean and the Greek cities all over the Mediterranean; the conquest of Asia Minor by Persia during the sixth century BC caused coined money to spread into Asia as well. Alexander's conquests opened up huge new sources of bullion and thus led to a very great increase in the

[70] See P. Grierson, *The Origins of Money* (London: Athlone Press, 1977), ch. 1.

use of money in the Hellenistic age as compared to the classical one. During the third century, it began to reach the Gauls on the western and northern shores of the Black Sea. From there it expanded westward to France, England, Ireland, and Scandinavia.

While the use of money spread, its nature remained unchanged. Unlike their successors, premodern rulers and communities did not themselves *create* value by fiat; instead, all they could do was to confirm, by adding their seal, that *existing* valuable commodities (mostly pieces of gold and silver, but sometimes also copper, bronze, and iron used for small change) did in fact conform to a certain standard of purity, weight, etc. In fact, the earliest coins seem to have been minted by private individuals, such as wealthy merchants, who used them for making payments among themselves. During the sixth century BC, control drifted into the hands of the temples which, in these as well as other societies, acted as banks; only during the fifth century did city-states assert their own control. However, it is characteristic of pre-state communities that, city-states apart, the concentration of all minting in a single hand was seldom achieved. For example, Augustus after he became *princeps* took the production of gold and silver coins into his own hands; but he left the minting of bronze coins to the Senate (for Italy) and to local authorities (in the provinces). In medieval Europe the – usually very profitable – operation of producing coins out of precious metal was dispersed among local lords, municipalities, and even abbeys.

Over time, the value of most coins tended to decline as rulers fiddled with their weight and the percentage of precious metal that they contained – especially but by no means exclusively as a method for financing wars. For example, between the time of Augustus and that of Diocletian three centuries later, the silver *denarius* lost 99 percent of its value, most of the loss being concentrated in the period from Nero on.[71] Another age-old factor that worked against stability was bimetalism. Rulers had no control over the relative availability of gold and silver. As new sources opened up, others ran dry: so long as both metals were in use as material for coins, the relative value of those coins tended to fluctuate. The ratio of gold to silver was set at 1:13.3 in the Persian empire, 1:10 by Alexander, and varied between 1:6 and 1:11 in sixteenth-century England. Often the official ratio did not correspond to reality or else there were different values set on the two metals in different countries. Either disparity could lead to the disappearance from circulation of either silver or gold coins, thus diminishing liquidity and hindering commerce.

Apparently the first rulers who tried to produce paper money, i.e., a

[71] For Roman inflation, see A. Cailleux, "L'allure hyperbolique des dévaluations monétaires," *Revue de Synthèse*, 101, 99–100, 1980, pp. 251ff.

medium of payment that would not be dependent on precious metal and thus entirely under their own control, were some Chinese emperors between about AD 800 and 1300. The last of these attempts was made by the Mongol emperor, Kublai Khan (reigned 1260–94). It became the subject of an enthusiastic description by Marco Polo who lived in China from 1275 to 1292;[72] like its predecessors, though, it was destined to end in monumental inflation as too large a supply caused the value of the currency to fall. Apparently influenced by the Chinese example, the shah of Iran tried to imitate it in 1294, issuing paper money known as "chao" and imposing the death penalty on those of his unfortunate subjects who refused to accept it. The experiment, which was limited to the city of Tabriz, was a complete disaster and had to be ended after just two months.

Given the decentralized nature of the political system and its instability, European rulers during the Middle Ages were generally in no position to imitate their oriental counterparts. Beginning already during the fourteenth century, though, banking and commerce revived; Italian banks in particular made great fortunes and were soon opening branch offices throughout the Continent. Bills of exchange were developed to facilitate financial transactions between those branches, and to the extent that they were made out to the bearer rather than to any individual they may be regarded as the first nonmetallic money in Europe. During the next two centuries the system spread to France, Spain, the Low Countries, and finally England. Note, however, that the money in question was produced not by the slowly emerging state but by private institutions. Before 1700 attempts to develop credit systems succeeded only in those places where private banking and commerce were so strong as to virtually exclude royal authority; in other words, where merchants *were* the government as in sixteenth-century Genoa and early seventeenth-century Amsterdam.[73] Common wisdom held that, whereas merchants could be trusted with money, kings could not. Concentrating both economic and coercive power in their own hands, all too often they used it either to debase the coinage or to seize their subjects' treasure.

While private institutions were thus beginning to develop paper money, rulers, on their part, were slowly imposing a monopoly on coinage. During the fourteenth century the thirty-two mints existing in France were successively closed down: e.g., Melgueil in 1316, Le Puy in 1318,

[72] Marco Polo, *Travels* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1972), ch. 22. For a modern account of the Chinese experiments, see F. T. Lui, "Cagan's Hypothesis and the First Nationwide Inflation of Paper Money in World History," *Journal of Political Economy*, 91, 1983, pp. 1067–74.

[73] See V. Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), ch. 2.

and Rodez in 1378. Seigneurial coinage disappeared from circulation until, at the end of the fourteenth century, royal coins reigned supreme throughout the realm.[74] Shortly before 1500 Ferdinand and Isabella closed the last private mints still operating in Castile; as already mentioned, the last remaining ecclesiastical mint in England was suppressed by Henry VIII in 1543–4. France, which owing to the civil wars had lost its early lead, followed suit under Henry IV in 1600. By this time the idea that the right to mint was one of the prerogatives of sovereignty had gained wide recognition. Though private individuals continued to operate mints, more and more they did so only as licensees of the king or government. It was typical of the *ancien régime* that minting itself was turned into a form of capitalist enterprise. Only in 1696 did the English exchequer create the first mint that operated entirely as a public service – i.e., at the hands of state employees and without charging a fee.

The earliest modern attempts to create a paper currency, thus dissolving the link between money and bullion and theoretically putting unlimited sums at the disposal of the government, were made in Spain and Sweden. In Spain during the 1630s the duke of Olivares, desperately in need of money to pay for the country's involvement in the Thirty Years War, confiscated consignments of silver arriving from overseas and compensated the merchants by means of *juros* or interest-bearing letters of credit. As might have been expected, their value depreciated rapidly. The result was financial chaos as well as the collapse of Spanish trade with the New World; either the colonists preferred to buy from other suppliers – both the Dutch and the English stood ready to take the place of Spain in this respect – or else they suspended trade altogether. Olivares' failure did not prevent Sweden from imitating his example in 1661. Finding the treasury empty and the country exhausted by decades of war (1631–60), the government made a serious attempt to create a negotiable paper currency backed up not by gold and silver, which it did not have, but by copper. Again, however, overproduction resulted in inflation, causing the attempt to end in a failure that was as spectacular as it was rapid.

Meanwhile events in England followed a different course. Compared to the Continent the country had long enjoyed relatively stable money. Only during the reign of Henry VIII did a great devaluation take place; and then the damage that it did was partly repaired by his stingy successor, Elizabeth, whose chief adviser for the purpose was none other than Sir Thomas Gresham (after whom the law is named).[75] This stability made people willing to accept tallies, a form of wooden money on which

[74] See S. Piron, "Monnaie et majesté royale dans la France du XIVe siècle," *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 51, 2, March–April 1996, pp. 325–54.
[75] See C. Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Knopf, 1955), ch. 9.

debts owing by the exchequer were recorded and which could be transferred to third parties.[76] Things came to a head in 1640 when King Charles I, having quarreled with Parliament, found himself in dire financial straits and suspended the payment of coins produced by the mint to his creditors, the goldsmiths and merchants of London. Like their opposite numbers in other countries, the latter had used the deposits of bullion in their safes as backing for letters of credit, which were negotiable; hence the king's action threatened to ruin not just them but all who had business with them. Against this background, pressure was applied on Charles, who eventually relented and paid his debt in full. However, the episode did show how important it was to have a public, or national, bank that would be immune to arbitrary interference by the throne.

Given that people were already accustomed to token money, proposals for establishing a public, note-issuing bank modeled on that of Amsterdam met with a favorable reception. The first successful attempt to turn it into reality was made in 1694, the year which marked the founding of the Bank of England. A privately owned joint-stock company, the Bank agreed to lend money to the government which was strapped by the expenses of the seemingly endless wars that had to be fought against France. In return, it received a lien over the revenues from certain custom duties as well as an assurance that all the money at the disposal of the government would henceforward be deposited exclusively with it. Using these revenues and deposits as its security, the Bank issued notes which it sold to the public and which were negotiable. All notes were printed on the same blank form, so that the sum in question had to be entered by hand.

The number of notes printed was too large at first, leading to a financial crisis in 1696. However, and contrary to similar experiments in other countries, the Bank survived. Though privately owned, it came to be accepted almost as a government institution. Though it did not enjoy a monopoly, following the Bubble Act of 1720 it was the only institution licensed to print notes redeemable in less than six months; hence it could beat its competitors and watch its notes circulate side by side with coin. Between 1685 and 1700 the establishment of the Bank contributed to a spectacular increase in government borrowing, from £800,000 to £13.8 million. By 1714 it had more than doubled again; yet the Bank remained solvent and had no trouble meeting its obligations. Since people were ready to take new paper in repayment of the old, the loan became permanent or revolving, meaning that the real cost to the Exchequer consisted of the interest paid which at first stood at 8 percent but later fell to 5 and even 4 percent. Lenders received what were, in effect, annuities.

[76] G. Davies, *A History of Money* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994), pp. 150–1.

The reforms of 1694–6 constituted the key to the financial power of Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[77] For the first time in history money in the form of notes was created and remained stable, thus leading to a vast increase in its supply without bringing about a notable increase in inflation. The difficulties resulting from the variable ratios between gold and silver also disappeared. Though silver coins remained in circulation, their importance diminished and, after 1750, the minting of new ones having all but ceased, Britain was effectively on a gold standard.[78] Once an expanding yet stable currency that was free from arbitrary interference existed, the road toward the industrial revolution, which from the 1760s on was to make Britain into the world's economic leader, opened. What really made success possible was the separation between the monarch's person and the state. After 1694 it was no longer the former but the latter, operating by means of the Bank and resting on an alliance between the government and the city, which guaranteed the notes.

Meanwhile, on the continent, financial developments proceeded at a slower pace. When Louis XIV died in 1715, the regent, the duc d'Orléans, found the treasury empty; attempting to fill it he turned to one John Law, a Scotsman who had fled to France after killing a man in a fight over a woman. Already famous for his skill with numbers, Law was author of *Money and Trade Considered, with a Proposal for Supplying the Nation with Money* (1705). His Banque de France assumed part of the government's debt, and in return was given permission to open a note-issuing bank in Paris; security consisted not of specie but of the fabulous wealth allegedly contained in the French territories in Louisiana to which Law and his partners in the Mississippi Company had purchased the rights. So successful was the scheme during its first three years that the shares of the Mississippi Company rose to thirty times their nominal value. Then, however, the wind changed and the public tried to cash in on its paper profits. On one day, so many people besieged the bank clamoring to have their money back that fifteen of them were crushed to death. While Law fled abroad, the failure of his company dragged others in its wake and ended by setting back the cause of paper money in France for the better part of a century. Absent a central bank free from royal interference, French *billets d'état* could not inspire public confidence and often had to be sold at 30 or even 40 percent below face value.[79]

Though all continental countries continued to use metal currency, one

[77] For the establishment of the Bank of England and its results, see E. Lipson, *The Economic History of England* (London: Black, 1931), vol. III, pp. 240ff.
[78] C. Oman, *The Coinage of England* (London: Pordes, 1967 [1931]), p. 352.
[79] J. P. du Verney, *Examiné du livre intitulé "Réflexions sur les finances et le commerce"* (Paris: n.p., 1754), vol. I, p. 225.

by one they also opened giro (i.e., note-issuing) public banks whose paper circulated side by side with coin and took the latter's place in carrying out large-scale transactions. By 1710 both Holland and the Austrian empire possessed such institutions; a Prussian giro bank was founded by Frederick the Great in 1765, and during the 1770s similar experiments were being made in Spain, Russia,[80] and (again, after an interval of seventy years) France where the *caisse d'escompte* was set up by Turgot in 1776. However, none of these banks was nearly as successful as the Bank of England either in handling the government debt or in increasing the amount of money in circulation. In particular, the *caisse d'escompte* ended in spectacular failure: caught between the need to repay the royal debt *and* to meet military expenditure at a time of rapidly falling revenue, the National Convention printed so many assignats that hyperinflation and the collapse of the currency ensued.[81] By 1797, when the Directory used the loot brought by Napoleon from Italy to put an end to the experiment, France had returned to a more primitive monetary system and was back on coin, if not barter. Meanwhile, in sharp contrast, Bank of England notes had become virtually the sole currency used in London, as the greatest commercial and banking center of the time. Only in the provinces were notes issued by other banks, all of them much smaller than the central one, still in circulation.

Even so, the real demonstration of the power of the Bank of England – and, with it, of the British state – to control money was yet to come. On 22 February 1797 a contingent of French troops, comprising ex-convicts, landed on Carregwastad near Fishguard in Wales; they were quickly rounded up and taken prisoner, allegedly because they had mistaken a distant gathering of women in Welsh costumes for Redcoats. Before it could be contained, however, rumors of the "invasion" caused a run on the Bank of England. The result was to bring about "so violent an outrage upon credit, property, and liberty as . . . has seldom been exhibited by the alliance of bankruptcy and tyranny" (Edmund Burke).[82] Under the Bank Restriction Act of 3 May 1797, the convertibility of paper into gold was suspended, first as an emergency measure for seven weeks and then for fully twenty-four years; turning Bank of England notes (together with those issued by the Bank of Scotland) into a "forced currency."[83] In 1812

[80] For the origins of Russian paper money, see W. M. Pinter, *Russia's Economic Policy Under Nicholas I* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 207–9.

[81] For the *caisse d'escompte* and its failure during the Revolution, see J. F. Bosher, *French Finances, 1770–1795* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), particularly pp. 231–75.

[82] Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 134.

[83] Today we would speak of a currency that is inconvertible. Earlier, however, currencies were linked not to each other but to gold. A forced currency was one that was not linked to gold so that people had to be "forced" to accept it.

a *cause célèbre* brought before Parliament led to the creation of a new term, "legal tender," meaning that paper *had* to be accepted in settling all debts, even those originally contracted in gold. As might be expected, the move caused a decline in the value of the pound both against precious metal and against foreign currencies. From 1793 to 1810, the number of notes in circulation grew by 170 percent. Yet the result was only moderate inflation, and Britain's economy kept on growing rapidly throughout the period.

By this time France and the United States both had banks which, though privately owned (in France, Napoleon and his family were themselves among the largest shareholders), carried out some of the functions of central banks by receiving government deposits and using them to issue notes. However, in neither country were the US Bank and the Banque de France the sole note-issuing bodies; even the Bank of England had to wait until 1844 before it was able to obtain that monopoly. Meanwhile a bewildering variety of notes belonging to many institutions remained in circulation, constantly changing their value against each other and occasionally losing all value as a panic struck or a bank went under. The road toward the establishment of a state monopoly in the United States proved particularly tortuous. Though minting had been centralized in 1798–9, President Jackson in 1833 removed government deposits from the US Bank into the state banks – pet banks, as they were called – thus turning the former into a mere *primus inter pares*. The decision of the Supreme Court in 1837 to uphold the note-issuing rights of state and private banks led to a banking free-for-all that lasted until 1861. In 1859 *Hodges' Genuine Bank Notes of America* listed no fewer than 9,916 different notes issued by 1,365 different banks. Even then, another 200 genuine – and 5,400 counterfeit – notes failed to be included.

With the advent of the Civil War, nevertheless, the United States government gave an even more impressive demonstration of what a modern state could do with the financial power in its hands. At the beginning of the conflict, the US Army numbered just 28,000 men all told; by the time it ended the Federals alone numbered around 1 million (to say nothing of 450,000 Confederates at their peak). This, too, in many ways was the first modern war. Sustained by the railways and connected by telegraphs, armaments and logistics grew to monumental dimensions beyond anything seen in history until then.[84] Obviously there was no way in which such an effort could be financed by traditional means, i.e., by paying out bullion or even making promises of future payment in bullion. In December 1861, to conserve the nation's supply of precious metal for the war effort, Congress put an end to convertibility. Three months later

[84] The federal logistic effort is outlined in J. C. Huston, *The Sinews of War* (Washington, DC: OCMH, 1966), pp. 159–239.

the federal government received approval for the Legal Tender Act which authorized it to issue "greenbacks," not redeemable in gold or silver.

Once the legal obstacles were out of the way, the printing presses were set to work. By 1865 no fewer than $640 million had been produced out of thin paper – a staggering sum, given that average federal expenditure in 1856–60 amounted to only $69 million annually, but dwarfed by the national debt which rose from some $170 million before the war to $2,756 million at its end.[85] In the same year a 10 percent levy was placed on the conversion of other notes into federal currency, effectively taxing them out of existence. The process was crowned by an Act of Congress that finally did away with all notes except those of the US Treasury. The decision did not go unchallenged. In 1870 in *Hepburn v. Griswold*, the Supreme Court rejected the government's monopoly as contrary to the Fifth Amendment; however, President Grant promptly added two chief justices, causing the court to reverse itself in the following year. Federal paper, properly printed (and often, it seems, counterfeited), has remained the national currency ever since. In 1875 the Resumption Act permitted the government to resume payment in specie from 1879 on. However, by that time public trust was such that people did not ask for gold and silver but accepted greenbacks instead.

Not surprisingly, the Civil War also marked a turning point in taxation. The first income tax in US history was imposed on 5 August 1861. Next, the Internal Revenue Act of 1862 led to a whole series of new taxes including stamp taxes, excise taxes, luxury taxes, gross receipt taxes, an inheritance tax, and a value-added tax on manufactured goods. To collect these taxes the Bureau of Internal Revenue was created. It quickly spread its tentacles through a network of 185 collection districts, turning itself into the most coercive civilian organ of the federal government and bringing many citizens into direct contact with it for the first time. It is true that the income tax was abolished when the war ended; however, many other wartime taxes – the sin tax, excise taxes, inheritance taxes, etc. – proved permanent. By 1865 the share of internal taxes out of total federal revenue had more than tripled from 20 to 65 percent, nor was it ever again to fall below 32 percent. As if this added burden were not heavy enough, in the North taxes paid to the individual states also rose by a factor of three to six between 1860 and 1870.[86]

[85] Figures from R. F. Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859–1877* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 169; and US Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1975), part 2, p. 1106.

[86] E. Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), pp. 469–70.

From 1850 on, the discovery of new gold fields in California and Australia caused a temporary decline in its value as compared to silver.[87] One after another the most important countries seized the opportunity to demonetize the latter, leaving their currencies linked to the former only. When the United States, a latecomer to the field, followed suit in 1894, the switch was substantially complete. By that time Britain (since 1819), France, Italy (after a period of *corso forzato* in 1881–8), Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria-Hungary, and Russia were all on a gold standard.[88] In theory any person in any of these countries was free to walk into the bank and exchange his notes for gold; except in London, though, those who had the nerve to try were likely to be sent away empty-handed whenever the sums in question were anything but trivial.[89] As time went on the banks of various countries vied with each other to see who could print the smallest notes (in Sweden, e.g., one-kroner notes, worth scarcely more than one British shilling or $0.25, were issued), thus causing even more bullion to disappear into their own vaults. Yet so much had the power of states grown that it scarcely mattered. Whereas French Revolutionary assignats were trading at 0.5 percent of nominal value within seven years of being issued,[90] the notes of pre-1914 states were literally as good as gold.

Even as states used all the above methods in order to impose their own control over money, they also increased the role of their central banks.[91] Regardless of whether they were privately or publicly owned, originally each such bank had only been one note-issuing institute among many, albeit one that, serving as the sole haven for the state's own deposits, led a charmed life and could hardly fail to grow at the expense of the rest. By 1870 or so, not only had they monopolized the issue of notes in most countries but they were also beginning to regulate other banks. Given that the central bank's reserves easily outstripped those of all the rest, it was inevitable that they should come to be treated as lenders of last resort. Acting as such, they not only set interest rates (the so-called discount rate) but were able to insist on the size of the reserves to be held by other

[87] Figures on the production and relative value of the two metals can be found in K. Helfferich, *Money* (New York: Kelley, 1969 [1927]), pp. 109–11.

[88] See M. de Cecco, *Money and Empire: The International Gold Standard, 1890–1914* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), for the details.

[89] G. Cassell, *The Downfall of the Gold Standard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 15–19.

[90] Data from H. See, "Histoire économique de la France," in F. H. Capie, ed., *Major Inflations in History* (Aldershot: Elgar, 1991), p. 11.

[91] See C. Goodhart, *The Evolution of Central Banks* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), pp. 1–12; and, in much greater detail, V. C. Smith, *The Rationale of Central Banking* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1990 [1936]).

banks, thus putting a cap on their operations.[92] Sooner or later the informal supervisory power thus created was anchored in law; some countries went further still, charging the central bank with licensing other banks, auditing them, and even setting the fees which they were permitted to charge. The United States as usual was slow to adopt these changes; but even here the era of free banking ended with the creation of the Federal Reserve in 1913. From this point on, not only the currency but also the money supply as dictated by private lending came under state supervision.

In the event, the state's movement toward imposing its own control over money did not come a moment too soon. World War I broke out in August 1914. Within a matter of days all belligerents showed what they *really* thought of their own paper by taking it off gold, thus leaving their citizens essentially empty-handed. Draconian laws were pushed through, requiring those who happened to own gold coins or bullion to surrender them. Next the printing presses were put to work and started turning out their product in previously unimaginable quantities. Precisely because the United States was only marginally involved in the war – German submarines apart, the nearest enemy soldier was thousands of miles away – it can usefully illustrate these developments without fear of exaggeration. Thus, in October 1917, the possession of specie was made into a criminal offense punishable by a $10,000 fine or, in the case of "a natural person," up to ten years' imprisonment (the government that can put a corporation in jail has not yet been invented). By 1919 the amount of currency in circulation had grown from $3.3 billion to $5.1 billion, whereas the total money supply, which had stood at $22 billion in 1916, had passed the $33 billion mark. Meanwhile the cost-of-living index (with 1914 as base 100) went from 118 in 1916 to 218 in 1919, an increase of 83 percent.[93]

That prices did not rise even more was, of course, the result of the state draining away the public's income and savings by taxes on the one hand and loans on the other. US federal non-debt receipts rose from $782 million in 1916 to $4.6 billion three years later; of this increase the lion's share – almost $2.5 billion – was due to the dramatic growth in the income tax paid by individuals and corporations. To this were added five successive "Liberty" and "Victory" loans, each but the last (which was floated in April 1919, i.e., when the war was already over) larger than the

[92] For the way the Bank of England, for one, came to regulate the rest, see W. Bagehot, *Lombard Street* (London: Murray, 1927 [1873]), pp. 280–2.

[93] These and other figures are from C. Gilbert, *American Financing of World War I* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), tables 18 (federal spending), 20 (nondebt receipts), 41 (government loans), 62 (money supply), and 76 (cost of living index).

previous one and eventually raising $24 billion between them. Matching the rise in income, federal spending went up from $742 million in 1916 to almost $19 billion in 1919. The bulk of this increase (about $11 billion) was accounted for by the War Office and the Navy; but other federal agencies also looked after themselves. As it happened, the largest single increment was enjoyed by the so-called independent bureaus – in other words, the huge variety of agencies and boards newly created for the war and which stood outside the existing departmental structure. The sum they commanded rose from $7.2 million in 1916 to $1.1 *billion* in 1918 and $2.7 billion in 1919; if this was not the season for penpushers, what was?

Having entered the war earlier and stayed in longer, the governments of other countries had to do much more in proportion. In Britain, e.g., total government expenditure had stood at approximately 15 percent of GNP during the last years before the war, which itself represented an approximately 50 percent increase since the Liberal government had taken office in 1906. By 1916–17 it had reached fully 85 percent, a figure so high that it could barely be improved on even during the largest conflict in history, i.e., World War II.[94] As in the United States, the increase in expenditure was paid for partly by printing money, partly by taxation (''tax them till they squeak'' was the response of Lord Rothschild when asked by Lloyd George how to raise money to pay for the war) and partly by issuing bonds at what were, by the inflationary standards that prevailed during much of the late twentieth century, remarkably low interest rates. Again the infusion of huge sums into the economy – between 1913 and 1920 government spending rose from £342 million to just under £1.7 billion annually[95] – led to inflation, though the bulk of it occurred *after* the war because, so long as it lasted, a combination of controls and scarcity meant that there was little to buy anyhow. Nor was Britain by any means the worst affected country. On the contrary, most of the remaining European belligerents made a much greater effort in terms of the number of troops raised per head of population, to say nothing of foreign occupation, physical destruction, and defeat suffered.

Except in the Soviet Union, on which more below, the ''Great War Robbery'' of 1914–18 was followed by a return to ''normalcy'' during the 1920s. Everywhere government budgets and taxes fell, though never again to pre-war levels which, in retrospect, appeared like the dream of a *laissez faire* enthusiast. For example, in Britain public spending fluctuated

[94] Figures from U. K. Hicks, *British Public Finances, Their Structure and Development, 1880–1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 12–13.

[95] Figures from Hicks, *The Finance of British Government, 1920–1936* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970 [1936]), p. 380, table 2.

between 25 and 30 percent of GNP (double the pre-war figure); to finance this outlay, standard income tax rates had risen by a factor of three and a half. Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the effect of the war on ordinary Americans may be gauged from the fact that the number of individuals and corporations subject to income tax leaped from fewer than 500,000 in 1916 to almost 7 million in 1920.[96] Sitting on top of history's largest gold mountain – acquired in return for goods of every sort shipped to the Allies during the conflict – and little fearing that anyone would seriously try to buy it up, the United States resumed payments in gold almost as soon as the war was over. Britain followed in 1925, and by 1929 most other major countries – including even Italy, the poorest but, under Mussolini, by no means the humblest of the lot – had done the same.

As it happened, the return to the gold standard proved largely illusory. Not only were gold coins not returned to circulation, but the times were long gone since anybody in his or her sound mind dreamt of making large payments by physically transferring bullion from one place to another. In this way about the only effect of the move was to contribute to a severe deflation which in turn put obstacles in front of trade and thus helped trigger the Great Depression of 1929.[97] To cut a long story short, in September 1931 a threatened pay cut caused the sailors of the British navy to go on strike. The newspapers exaggerated the event into a mutiny; a panic resulted, and the consequent run on the banks caused sterling and other currencies to be taken off gold, this time for good. In the United States, President Roosevelt, claiming that "gold held in private hoards serves no useful purpose under present circumstances," imposed drastic penalties to make owners disgorge their wealth. In March 1933 a bank holiday was proclaimed; when those venerable institutions reopened their doors the dollar had been devalued by no less than 41 percent.[98] The refusal of the Treasury to allow private citizens to exchange their dollars for monetized gold even at this rate meant that, from now on, all means of payment other than paper were definitely concentrated in the hands of the state. Conversely, whatever was paid out by the state was, by definition, made of paper.

With every major currency depreciating fast against gold – the French franc, as the last to hold out, was devalued in 1936 and public confidence

[96] G. K. Fry, *The Growth of Government* (London: Cass, 1979), p. 193; US Bureau of the Census, *Statistics*, part 2, p. 1110.

[97] J. K. G. Galbraith, *Money: Whence It Came, Where It Went* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), pp. 164–82, describes the return to the gold standard under the title "the self-inflicted wound."

[98] See E. Cassell, *The Downfall of the Gold Standard* (London: Cass, 1969 [1936]), pp. 112–35.

in it destroyed – many countries returned to forced currencies as did Germany, Italy, and, above all, the Soviet Union. In the former two this development was brought about by the world economic crisis; in the latter (in spite of its being the world's largest producer of gold) a forced currency had been in existence from the time of the 1917 Revolution and was backed solely by the word of Lenin, Stalin, and company. Whether called rubles or marks or lire, these currencies were inconvertible, which meant that in most cases they could be used only by citizens in transactions among themselves. The conduct of international business was monopolized by the state, which either created its own organs for the purpose or else operated through an elaborate licensing system. Often the shortage of "hard" currency was such that imports had to be paid for in gold (the Soviet Union) or by means of barter (all three countries, particularly in their dealings with each other and with the underdeveloped Balkans). Those who found themselves unable to trade and, indeed, threatened with death or a concentration camp if they ventured to do so were the unfortunate citizens.

So far from the totalitarian countries proving an exception, the road toward control over the currency that they took during the 1930s was followed, with only minor modifications, by the "free" ones during World War II itself. To repeat the story already told in connection with the events of 1914–18 would be tedious. There was little new except for even more stringent financial controls, even greater spending, an even tighter turning of the fiscal screws, and even greater loans. Even in the United States, as the richest and least affected country by far, expenditure exceeded revenue by a factor of one to two or three in each one of the war years 1942–5 – in spite of the fact that drastic tax increases caused that revenue itself to grow by a factor of six between 1939 and 1944.[99] As in World War I, the fact that spending and income no longer stood in any kind of reasonable relation to each other led to a sharp rise in prices. Again as in World War I, so long as hostilities lasted, attempts were made to keep the lid on inflation by various administrative mechanisms such as rationing. When those were lifted, the citizens of the victorious countries found that the value of their savings had been greatly reduced, while with the losers money had literally turned into so much paper and could be used, if at all, only for such purposes as patching up broken windows.[100]

Even more interesting than these developments was the change that

[99] Figures from *Economic Report to the President, 1974* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 324. Parallel figures on other countries can be found in G. Findlay Shirras, *Federal Finance in Peace and War* (London: Macmillan, 1944), pp. 77 (Canada), 149–50 (Australia), 171–2 (South Africa), and 217ff. (India).

[100] Data on US prices may be found in *Economic Report to the President, 1975* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1975).

came over the nature of money itself. Savings apart – what happened to savers has just been explained – to individuals it had always represented a means of purchasing commodities; to governments, a method by which they controlled the economy and allocated resources. Now, however, both functions were largely lost. From the citizens' point of view, this was because anything worth buying could be had, if at all, only in exchange for coupons. These were distributed on the basis of noneconomic criteria such as age, sex, and the amount of calories demanded by the kind of work in which one was engaged (needless to say, those with their hands on the levers of power looked after themselves; as Ludendorff once wrote, had he been made to eat ordinary rations, he ''could not have existed''). From the point of view of the state, the reason why money lost its function as a tool of government was precisely because its supply, depending solely on the printing machines, had become essentially unlimited. Consequently it could no longer be used to determine which products and services would be purchased and which ones would not. Thus total war marked the culmination of a 200-year process by which the state imposed its control over money. Having done so, the result was to leave that commodity without any real value – leading to some cases to a return to barter, as when urbanites traded their kitchen utensils for potatoes. By way of other not-so-subtle indications of what was taking place, the Bank of England was absorbed into the machinery of state[101] and the British secretary of the exchequer lost his traditional position as the first (after the prime minister) among equals; after 1940 he was no longer even a member of the war cabinet.[102]

Once money had been conquered – meaning that it could no longer place any limits on what government could buy – the extent of the war effort in each country came to be determined by the physical means of production. The most important ones were shipping, transport, raw materials, factory space, energy, and transportation, and of course the labor on which all the rest depended and for which they often competed among themselves. Already in World War I, all the most important belligerents had pushed through laws that effectively overrode their citizens' property rights and enabled governments to take those means into their own hands when necessary. These controls they used to decide who should produce what, how, where, at what prices, and with the aid of which workers possessing which professional qualifications and working at which wages during how many hours a day or week. To focus on the most important countries only, in Germany the task was entrusted to the

[101] See R. S. Sayers, *Financial Policy, 1939–1945* (London, Longmans, 1956).
[102] See A. Milward, *War, Economy and Society, 1939–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 99ff.

industrialist Walter Rathenau and his Raw Materials Department, an organization established against considerable opposition on the part of the military, who did not want civilians interfering with the conduct of the war. In Britain it was carried out rather more easily by the overbearing politician Lloyd George (later succeeded by Churchill) at the head of the newly established Ministry of Munitions; finally, in the United States it was done by the WIB or War Industries Board, whose chairman was the financier Bernard Baruch.[103]

But whereas in most Western states most of the controls were dismantled in 1918–19, in one country – the Soviet Union – they proved permanent. Large, ramshackle, and provided with comparatively few railways per square mile of territory, the tsarist empire had been less successful than most in mobilizing its resources for war.[104] Initially it was the armed forces which ran out of weapons and ammunition; by 1916–17 rampant inflation as well as shortages of virtually everything had made the country ready for revolution. Once the Bolsheviks took over power in 1917 they set out to change things with a vengeance. Not content with mere controls, they carried out their program of expropriating all means of production as well as services such as banking, insurance, communications, and transportation down to retail commerce and hairdressing. With control over labor equally complete – in a communist state any breach of working discipline was automatically turned into a criminal offense – the modern Behemoth swallowed up the economy lock, stock, and barrel.

The result of the revolution was the bureaucrat's dream come true. Claiming to serve the general welfare, but in fact working almost exclusively on its own behalf, the state owned everything, ran everything, produced everything, and bought and sold everything – all at prices, needless to say, which were determined by itself and which often had nothing to do either with the actual cost to producers or with the choices that consumers might have made if left to their own devices.[105] To carry out all these multitudinous functions and prevent them from running at odds with each other it also kept files and supervised everything by means

[103] German mobilization for World War I is covered in M. Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor in Germany, 1914–1918* (Providence, RI: Berg, 1993). For Britain, see S. J. Hurwitz, *State Intervention in Great Britain: A Study of Economic and Social Response 1914–1919* (London: Columbia University Press, 1949); and, for the United States, R. D. Cuff, *The War Industries Board: Business–Government Relations During World War I* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

[104] See N. Stone, *The Eastern Front 1914–1917* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), pp. 144–64, 194–211.

[105] For an analysis of the communist state very similar to the one here adduced, see M. Djilas, *The New Ruling Class: Analysis of the Communist System* (New York: Praeger, 1957).

of an administrative apparatus unlike any in history. In 1980 it was estimated that the mature communist state was producing 100 *billion* documents per year, which avalanche of paperwork was backed up by the education system, the propaganda machine, the secret police, the concentration camp, and, all too frequently, the execution wall.

Though other states did not at once follow in the wake of the Soviet Union, the respite granted their economies proved temporary. Throughout the interwar period socialist parties everywhere kept demanding that the most important means of production be nationalized so that their profits, instead of going to individuals, could be put to use on behalf of the community at large. In one country after another, some of their demands were met; this applied in particular to new industries such as broadcasting, telecommunications, air transport, and electricity generation. Additional pressure in the same general direction sometimes came from the nationalist right. For example, Rathenau as the part-owner and chief executive officer of the Allgemeine Elektrizität-Gesellschaft, one of Germany's largest industrial combines, was certainly no socialist; yet before the war was over he summed up his experience in *The New Economy* (*Die Neue Wirtschaft*, 1918). Partly a blueprint for increasing national power, partly a preemptive response to the socialist demand for eventual nationalization, the book argued that the days of unrestricted capitalism were over. Instead he advocated a new partnership between state and industry – one which, needless to say, translated into greater control by the former over the latter.

Nor did the dictators who came to rule Germany and Italy need Rathenau to teach them this lesson. Both Mussolini and Hitler shed their original socialist leanings at a comparatively early age. Having discovered which side of the bread was buttered – when Mussolini turned interventionist in 1915, his fellow socialists greeted him by crying "chi paga" (who pays)[106] – they were quite prepared to sing the praises of private enterprise; and in return, happily accepted its financial contributions during their struggle for power. Having seized it, they quickly moved to meet their obligations to their supporters by forbidding strikes, prohibiting collective bargaining, dismantling the existing trade unions, and putting their leaders in prison. This, however, did not mean a return to early nineteenth-century *laissez faire*; instead they proceeded to conscript labor by means of the new, state-run corporations and Deutsche Arbeitsfront. The next step for both Nazis and Fascists was to establish direct controls over industry, the best-known instance being the 1936 Four-Year Plan which made Herman Goering into Ger-

[106] G. Seldes, *Sawdust Caesar: The Untold Story of Mussolini and Fascism* (London: Barker, 1936), p. 46.

many's economic tsar. Both also embarked on constructing a whole series of state-owned industries in fields considered vital to the war effort but which for one reason or another could not attract private investment.[107] Among them were steel, synthetic oil, and rubber (the latter manufactured with the aid of concentration-camp labor), and, of course, the famous Volkswagen car.

Once World War II had broken out, the mobilization plans of 1914–18 were taken out of the drawers and dusted, in some cases literally so as those responsible went to see their predecessors, several of whom were still alive, to ask for guidance. Regardless of whether their regimes were communist or fascist or liberal, all states hastened to assume control over the means of production or, if they already controlled them, tighten supervision even further by introducing the police into the factories and prescribing draconian penalties for any "slackers." It might even be argued that a "democratic" country like Britain was able to go faster and further than "totalitarian" ones such as Germany, Italy, and Japan. None of the three had an elected government; hence, and for all the police apparatus at their disposal, initially at any rate, they proved more fearful of imposing sacrifice on their populations.[108] Be this as it may, once again the bureaucratic machines grew and grew. In the United States the number of federal employees rose from 936,000 in 1933 to 3,800,000 in 1945, though half of those were discharged after the war; in Britain the newly created Ministry of Food alone expanded from 3,500 bureaucrats in 1940 to 39,000 in 1943, only to melt away once hostilities had ended. By the end of the year the point had long been reached where, in theory and to a considerable extent in practice, not an ounce of raw material could be worked nor a screw produced unless it had first received government blessing and had been declared vital to the war effort.

The states having finally succeeded in their drive to conquer money, the effect of absolute economic dominance on the states themselves was to allow them to fight each other on a scale and with a ferocity never equaled before or since. Practiced to a larger or smaller extent, central planning and central control enabled hundreds of thousands of tanks and aircraft to come off the assembly lines and go straight into battle. While

[107] For the German Four-Year Plan, see Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Germany and the Second World War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 273–315; for Italy, see V. Castronovo, "La stratégie du conglomerat: l'état banquier et entrepreneur en Italie," *Entréprises et Histoire*, 1, 1992, pp. 13–25; and L. Ceva and A. Curio, "Industrie de guerre et l'état dans l'impérialisme fasciste des années 30," *Guerres Mondiales et Conflicts Contemporaines*, 41, 61, 1991, pp. 31–50.

[108] The measures taken to maintain German workers' morale in particular are discussed in S. Salter, "Structures of Consensus and Coercion: Workers' Morale and the Maintenance of Work Discipline, 1939–1945," in D. Welch, ed., *Nazi Propaganda* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 88–116.

business, fed by titanic state contracts, often made equally titanic profits, the effect on the lives of ordinary people in most countries was described in that grim caricature of World War II life, George Orwell's *1984*:

> Always in your stomach and in your skin there was a sort of protest, a feeling that you had been cheated of something that you had a right to . . . there [was] never enough to eat, one never had socks or underclothes that were not full of holes, furniture was battered and rickety, rooms underheated, tube-trains crowded, houses falling to pieces, bread dark-colored, tea a rarity, coffee filthy-tasting, cigarettes insufficient – nothing cheap and plentiful except synthetic gin.[109]

The road to total war

The concentration of all economic power in the hands of the state would not have been necessary, nor could it have been justified, if its overriding purpose had not been to impose order on the one hand and fight its neighbors on the other. Already Hobbes, the man who really invented the state, was prepared to do away with every kind of freedom (including specifically freedom of thought) in order to achieve peace; in his view any government was better than no government at all. Having gone through two total wars in a single generation and seen what states and governments can *really* do in the way of war and destruction once they put their minds to it, perhaps we ought to know better.

As has been noted in a previous section, the establishment of the state was very soon followed by the development commonly known as the military revolution.[110] Until then no European ruler had had more than a few tens of thousands of men under his command: the Battle of Rocroi, e.g., which in 1643 led to the replacement of Spain by France as the greatest power of the time, was fought by 48,000 men all told. Three decades later, the forces raised by Louis XIV and his opponents already numbered in the low hundreds of thousands. This kind of growth could not go on for ever and during the eighteenth century the size of warfare on land tended to stagnate. With a total of about 200,000 French, Imperial, British, and Dutch combatants involved on both sides, the Battle of Malplaquet (1709) proved the largest in European history until Napoleon, whereas the armies with which Louis XV waged the Seven Years War were scarcely, if at all, larger than those of his great-grandfather Louis XIV.[111]

If the scale of warfare on land did not increase by much, the eighteenth

[109] George Orwell, *1984* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1977 [1949]), p. 251.
[110] M. Roberts, *The Military Revolution* (Belfast: Belfast University Press, 1956); J. S. Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1983).
[111] For some figures on the size of European armies during the last years of the *ancien régime*, see Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, p. 17.

century did see an explosion in military operations at sea. The principal seventeenth-century naval powers had been Spain (which, until 1660, had been united with Portugal) and the Netherlands; now, however, their fleets were completely overshadowed by those of Britain and France. Put on a sound organizational footing by the likes of Samuel Pepys and Colbert, depending on the period in question the British and French navies each possessed between 50 and 150 so-called ships of the line. Each such ship measured approximately 1,000 tons and carried between 80 and 120 bronze cannon weighing as much as 3 tons each, to say nothing of innumerable smaller vessels known under a variety of names and suitable for a variety of purposes from carrying dispatches to raiding trade.[112] Provided with navigational aids such as the sextant, which were far superior to anything previously seen in history, these wind-driven armadas for the first time provided their owners with an almost unlimited reach. Soon there was no continent and no sea left on which they did not fight each other, often on a very considerable scale as dozens of French, British, and Spanish ships clashed in Far Eastern or West Indian waters. In this way the War of the Spanish Succession opened the era of global warfare, one which may only now, thanks to the breakup of one so-called superpower and the growing reluctance of the other to sacrifice its young people, be coming to an end.

Meanwhile, both the scale of war on land and its intensity remained comparatively limited. In part this may have been due to humanitarian sentiment, arising out of a reaction to the excesses of the Thirty Years War: as Montesquieu, representing all that was best in Enlightenment thought, wrote in his *Spirit of the Laws*, in peace nations ought to do each other as much good as they could and in war as little injury as possible. In the main, though, the limitations that governed eighteenth-century war were the result of the political structure of each of the principal war-making states. Having been imposed on their peoples, often by main force, governments (except for the British one, and then within certain limits) knew themselves to be unrepresentative of the latter. Being so, they did not care to impose intolerable economic burdens, introduce universal conscription, or distribute arms: there was always the danger that the troops thus raised and armed would fight against their rulers rather than on their behalf.

Consisting of men who felt no commitment to the state that they served – "the filth of the nation," as France's minister of war, the Comte Saint-Germain, once put it[113] – eighteenth-century armies could be kept

[112] The best work on eighteenth-century naval warfare remains A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower upon History, 1660–1763* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1890).

[113] C. L. Saint-Germain, *Mémoires de M. le Comte de Saint-Germain* (Amsterdam: Libraires associés, 1799), p. 200; see also General James Wolfe, quoted in J. A. Houlding, *Fit for*

in existence only by means of a ferocious discipline under the open eye of their aristocratic officers. The requirement for discipline, plus some of the technical characteristics of the weapons in use, made it imperative that they move and fight in comparatively tight formations advancing shoulder to shoulder in serried, orderly ranks. The need for such formations in turn dictated that they could not easily be used as skirmishers, on the pursuit, in terrain that was hilly or wooded, or at night. In addition certain logistic constraints applied. The dependence of eighteenth-century armies on their "umbilical cords of supply" has often been exaggerated; however, it is true that most troops could not be trusted to forage on their own but had to be very carefully supervised by a cordon of NCOs that used to be thrown out around them. Even if they could be trusted, many regions did not have a sufficiently dense population to permit large-scale warfare to take place in them.[114]

Eighteenth-century battles could be as ferocious as any. There was, as a rule, no attempt at taking cover or adopting camouflage; dressed in long, straight lines, approaching each other to the sound of drums at exactly seventy-five paces in the minute, the troops would halt at a range where they could see the whites of each other's eyes and start blasting away. As a result, it was common for as many as a third of them to become casualties within a period, say, of between six and eight hours.[115] On the other hand, soldiers were expensive and battles risky. Accordingly, commanders such as Turenne and the maréchal de Saxe spent entire campaigning seasons maneuvering against their opponents with only the occasional minor clash to relieve the boredom of marching and countermarching; the latter even wrote that a good general might spend his entire career without being brought to battle. In addition, there was the notion that the safety of each state depended on a careful balance of power with all the rest. Consequently it was thought that no war should be pushed too far[116] or allowed to end in the complete destruction of a belligerent; and indeed the possibility that this might happen often led to the reversal of alliances

Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715–1798 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), p. 268.

[114] On the logistics of eighteenth-century armies, see M. van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978), ch. 1; and G. Perjes, "Army Provisioning, Logistics and Strategy During the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 16 (Budapest: Academy of Sciences, 1965).

[115] For some figures, see D. Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough* (London: Batsford, 1976), pp. 302–7; Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, pp. 245ff.

[116] See the contemporary military writer Friedrich Wilhelm von Zanthier, quoted in M. Jahns, *Geschichte der Kriegswissenschaften vornehmlich in Deutschland* (Munich: Vorein, 1889–), vol. III, pp. 296–7; and M. S. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy 1450–1919* (London: Longmans, 1993), pp. 163–80.

and the creation of new ones. War was a question of occupying a district here and a province there, whether in Europe or, even more frequently, overseas, where some of the most significant exchanges took place.

With the outbreak of the French Revolution, these and other limitations on eighteenth-century warfare disappeared. The trinitarian division of labor between the government that directed the war, the armed forces that fought and died, and the people who paid and suffered remained as it had been since 1648; in some ways it became even stricter than before, given that officers ceased to be independent businessmen but came to depend exclusively on the state for advancement and remuneration. What did change was the forging of very strong links between the first and the last elements of the trinity, which in turn made it possible to vastly expand the second. As Clausewitz later explained, the real achievement of the Revolution was to enable the state to wage war with the full power of the nation – something which, in Europe at any rate, only very few political regimes had been able to do since the days of the Roman Republic at its zenith. The Revolution's opponents put it less politely, describing the French troops as "monsters . . . savage beasts . . . foaming at the mouth with rage and yelling like cannibals – hurling themselves at top speed upon soldiers whose courage has been excited by no passion."[117]

The first to institute the *levée en masse* was the French National Convention in its famous decree of 25 August 1792.[118] Written by Bertrand Barere, it called for the "permanent requisitioning" of men, women (who were to "work at the soldiers' clothing, make tents, and become nurses"), old men (who were to "betake themselves to the public squares and preach the hatred of tyrants"), and even children, who were to make lint of old linen. So much did the delegates like the rhetoric that they asked for the decree to be read twice over; from this time every citizen was to be a soldier and every soldier a citizen. In practice the infrastructure necessary for implementing the decree was deficient and the results less than perfect – the only persons actually called up were men between eighteen and twenty-five years old, and then only if they were unmarried. Even so, martial enthusiasm did not last for long; staying in France as a prisoner in 1807, Clausewitz was surprised and not a little disgusted to see recruits led to the *préfecture* in chains.[119] The size of the French army doubled from 400,000 or so during the Seven Years War to perhaps 800,000 in

[117] Mallet du Pan, quoted in H. Nickerson, *The Armed Horde* (New York: Putnam, 1942), p. 91.
[118] An English translation of the text is in J. F. C. Fuller, *The Conduct of War 1789–1961* (London: Eyre and Spottiswode, 1962), p. 32.
[119] P. Paret, *Clausewitz and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 130.

1795–6, though not all of them could be trained, armed (the shortage of muskets at one time led to the production of pikes), or even properly clothed.

Having taken over from Carnot as "the organizer of victory," Napoleon used the full power of the police to break such opposition to conscription as still existed.[120] Not only was the imbalance between men and arms soon corrected, but the result was to provide the French state with forces larger than any since Herodotus had Xerxes lead a million and a half men into Greece in 480 BC; however, there was nothing mythical about the Grande armée. Instead of marching in a single block, as had been standard practice from the day of the Greek phalanx to that of Frederick the Great, willy-nilly the French troops had to be spread out over a much wider front in order to live and move. The construction of such fronts both demanded and was made possible by the organization of the forces into *corps d'armée*. First proposed by the National Convention in 1796, each corps or "body" possessed a permanent commander in the person of a maréchal de France, a title which Napoleon did not invent but to which he gave a new, more precise significance. Each had its own staff and its own proper combination of the three arms (infantry, cavalry, and artillery), as well as its own intelligence, engineering, and logistic services. Each one constituted a miniature army in its own right, one which, as common wisdom went, was capable of performing its mission independently of the rest and of holding out for two or three days even in the face of a superior force attacking it.

With the reorganization of the forces, the entire nature of strategy changed.[121] Previously armies had maneuvered against each other in fronts that were seldom more than four or five miles wide; but Napoleon's corps were capable of moving 25–50 miles from each other while at the same time operating in accordance with a coherent, centrally dictated plan. Whereas eighteenth-century armies had merely tried to conquer provinces, now they sought to subjugate entire countries in rapid succession. Whereas previously they had been forced to besiege each fortress on their way, now the great majority of fortified places could simply be bypassed (whereas Vauban at the beginning of the eighteenth century had reckoned that there were three sieges for each battle, the number of sieges that Napoleon conducted may be counted on the fingers of one hand). Living off the country and aiming straight for the jugular, French armies

[120] I. Wolloch, "Napoleonic Conscription: State Power and Civil Society," *Past and Present*, 1986, pp. 101–29.

[121] For these changes and the revolution in strategy that they wrought, see van Creveld, *Command in War*, ch. 2; and R. Epstein, *Napoleon's Last Victory and the Emergence of Modern War* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1994), ch. 2.

marched for the enemy's capital. If they found their way blocked, they used their superior command-and-control system to focus overwhelming numbers at the decisive point and defeat the enemy in one of those tremendous *batailles rangées* of which Napoleon boasted to have commanded no fewer than sixty. The results of this system were as rapid as they were spectacular. Starting in 1799, the time of Napoleon's second Italian campaign and the first one in which he was in command of all of the country's military resources, it took the French fewer than ten years to overrun the whole of Europe from the Pyrenees to the Vistula.

By 1813, when Napoleon himself conceded that "ces animaux ont apprenu quel'que chose" (these animals have learnt a thing or two), the armies of other states were imitating the French methods. The process is perhaps best studied at the hands of Prussia which, following its defeat in 1806, set out to reform its army during the years that followed.[122] Conscription, which hitherto had followed the old *Kantonen* system and brought in only the doltish inhabitants of the countryside, was extended and applied to the educated sons of the middle classes. They were given the choice between serving for two years, like everybody else, or for one year at their own expense, a privilege that most of them took since it enabled them to acquire the much-desired rank of Reserveleutenant. The officer corps, which hitherto had been governed by social status on the one hand and by seniority on the other, was reformed in such a way as to put greater emphasis on schooling (including that remarkable finishing school for officers, the Kriesgakademie) and competence. A corps organization modeled on the French one was put in place. To control it, a proper general staff with headquarters in Berlin and branches throughout the army was established; during the years of the Second Reich it was to become the most prestigious institution in the country.[123] In the persons of Gerhard von Scharnhorst, August von Gneisenau, Carl von Clausewitz, and their comrades, the Prussians were also fortunate to possess officers who, in addition to their practical ability to command in war, displayed an exceptionally deep grasp of its history and theory. This quality enabled them to institutionalize the reforms so that they were passed from one generation to the next.

With all states busily reforming and expanding their armies to resist the French battalions, the scale of warfare changed out of all recognition. In 1812 Napoleon invaded Russia with no fewer than 600,000 men –

[122] The literature on the rebuilding of the Prussian Army is vast. See W. Goerlitz, *The History of the German General Staff, 1657–1945* (New York: Praeger, 1971 edn.), esp. pp. 15–49; and D. Showalter, "Retaming Bellona: Prussia and the Institutionalization of the Napoleonic Legacy," *Military Affairs*, April 1980, pp. 57–62.

[123] Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff*, pp. 60ff.

perhaps three times as many as had been concentrated in a single theater of war since history began. The largest contemporary battle was fought around Leipzig in October 1813; had it not been dubbed the Battle of Nations, it would have deserved the title Mother of All Battles. The total number of combatants present stood at 460,000 of whom 180,000 were French, the rest Prussian, Russian, and Austrian (assisted by a few Swedes). Indeed so large was the scale on which military operations were now conducted that it proved impossible to bring all the troops to bear on each other at the same time and place. Instead of lasting for one day, as had been the case of virtually all battles from prehistory until then, the one at Leipzig lasted for three. It really comprised three separate engagements fought simultaneously, with Napoleon himself rushing from one to another and controlling, if any, only one.[124]

During the years 1815–66 no other battles as large as this one took place between modern armies, though those which *did* take place were, relative to their size, quite as bloody.[125] This was the period of the Restoration and of the Reaction. Its outstanding characteristic was the fact that, from Moscow through Berlin and Vienna all the way to Paris, the crowned heads who occupied the various thrones feared their own populations more than they did each other. Accordingly there was a tendency to make armies less representative of the nation. France and most other countries did away with conscription, albeit not completely and in ways that usually made considerable reserves available to the standing peacetime forces.[126] The most important use to which armies were put was not to wage interstate war but to guard against revolution – *gegen demokraten hilfen nur Soldaten* (soldiers are the only cure for democracy), as the saying went. Thus French troops helped the Spanish government fight the series of civil conflicts known as the Carlist Wars. In 1830–1 a Prussian Army of Observation cooperated with the Russians as they put down the Polish insurrection in Warsaw. In 1848–9 French troops saved the pope by putting an end to Mazzini's Roman Republic, Austrian troops resorted to an artillery bombardment to reconquer their own capital, and Prussian ones were sent to drive the revolutionaries out of the southwestern German state of Baden. The climax came in May

[124] On the Battle of Leipzig and Napoleon's loss of control, see Vitzthum von Eckstädt, *Die Hauptquartiere im Herbstfeldzug 1813 auf dem deutschen Kriegsschauplätze* (Berlin: Mittler, 1910).

[125] Compare figures on the Battles of Leipzig (460,000 combatants, 90,000 casualties), Solferino (240,000 combatants, 40,000 casualties), and Gettysburg (160,000 combatants, 50,000 casualties), from *Harbottle's Dictionary of Battles* (New York: van Nostrand, 1981, 3rd edn.).

[126] For these developments, see G. Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1789–1870* (London: Fontana, 1982), pp. 191–309; and J. Gooch, *Armies in Europe* (London: Routledge, 1980), pp. 50–80.

1849 when Russian forces, acting on the invitation of the government in Vienna, invaded Hungary to extinguish the revolution there, an operation which they had to repeat in Warsaw fifteen years later.

While the scale of warfare was limited by its being put into a pressure cooker, so to speak, military technology flourished as never before. This is not the place to delve into the nature of the scientific revolution or the industrial revolution that followed it after a comparatively brief interval. Suffice it to say that, before the rise of the state around the middle of the seventeenth century, no weapon was capable of firing to a distance of more than perhaps half a mile or of moving faster than the pace of a galloping horse, while at sea the largest ships were still made of wood and possessed no more than 500–600 tons of deadweight. Given that military technological progress – including, above all, the invention of gunpowder – began to accelerate several centuries before the state appeared upon the scene, to blame the latter for the former would be less than fair, the more so since it is not at all clear whether military technology "pulled" technology (as Trotsky and others have suggested) or whether, on the contrary, weapons and weapons systems were merely one offshoot of technological progress as a whole.[127]

Even when all this is taken into account, however, the fact remains that modern means of death and destruction would never have been possible without the state, its ministry of defense (which, until 1945, was called simply the ministry of war), and its regular, uniformed, bureaucratically managed armed forces.[128] The forces of most previous political entities had been too disorganized and too temporary to offer scope for sustained military-technological progress. This was particularly true of feudal levies and mercenaries, both in Europe and in other parts of the world. The former were part-time warriors who, if not engaged in hunting and similar aristocratic pursuits, spent most of their time looking after their estates. The latter either led a nomadic life, moving from one employer to the next, or else simply went home each time a war was over. However, it was almost equally true of the standing armies built by some of the empires discussed in chapter 1 of this volume. Few of those really amounted to professional forces in the modern sense of the term, given that their officers were often selected less for their military ability than for their loyalty.

Once the modern state started introducing regular, standing armies

[127] See on this question J. M. Winter, *War and Economic Progress* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[128] The relationship between the state, its regular army, and the takeoff of military technology has never been investigated. For some remarks, see M. van Creveld, "The Rise and Fall of Military Technology," *Science in Context*, 7, 2, 1994, pp. 329ff.

and navies, the situation changed. To a greater extent than any of their predecessors, such forces provided a permanent market for weapons and weapons systems. Already toward the end of the seventeenth century the navy was the largest employer (as well as the largest buyer of goods and services) in the entire British economy;[129] such was the demand for uniforms created by the forces of Louis XIV that it led to the invention of the first primitive machines used for sewing buttons on cloth.[130] Almost for the first time in history, there now existed forces that received their entire income directly from the state and which, however much they might detest the ruler of the moment, were seldom engaged in conspiring against the institution itself. Increasingly excluded from participation in political life, gradually deprived of other functions such as police work, and deliberately isolated from civilian society, they possessed unprecedented freedom to devote their full attention to discovering new and better ways of killing and destroying others of the same kind.

When developing professionalism was joined to the industrial revolution spreading outwards from Britain, the results could not be anything but explosive. Armed with cannon manufactured according to the new Gribeauval system, Napoleon's forces would have made short shrift of Frederick's army a mere thirty or forty years earlier; but whatever progress took place during the years from 1760 to 1815 was dwarfed by the changes that started following each other from 1830 on. First came percussion caps, which finally did away with the need for flints to generate sparks and set off the powder. Next the muzzle-loading musket, which except for the replacement of wooden ramrods by iron ones had remained almost unchanged from Blenheim to Waterloo, was replaced by rifles capable of firing three to six times as often for a greater distance and, after some early experimentation, with greater accuracy – to say nothing of the fact that, being loaded from the breach rather than through the muzzle, for the first time in history they enabled men to fight while taking cover and without necessarily standing on their feet. Developments in artillery proceeded in parallel. Beginning in the 1850s, smoothbore bronze and iron muzzle-loaders were progressively replaced by rifled steel breech-loaders. By 1870 the best cannon were the Prussian ones. Manufactured by the firm of Krupp, they were capable of firing three times as far as their Napoleonic predecessors and possessed a rate of fire four or five times as large. For the first time since the sixteenth century, too, ammunition began to show some progress, with solid iron balls replaced by shrapnel

[129] J. H. Plumb, *The Origins of Political Stability: England 1675–1725* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), p. 119.
[130] L. Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine* (New York: Harcourt, 1970), pp. 150–1.

and high explosive shells which were provided with clockwork fuses.[131]

Even more important to the development of war and conquest at the hand of the state was the improvement that took place in the infrastructure of war. Traditionally military transport had been limited to horse-drawn wagons and military communications to mounted messengers; but now telegraphs and railways began to cover entire countries (later continents) with networks in such a way as to revolutionize the state's control over its territory, population, and armed forces. The first telegraphs – optical, not electrical – were constructed in France during the early years of the Revolution and, as might be expected, were no sooner completed than they were used for the conduct of war.[132] During the next three decades, Spain (which claimed to have designed a more important system than France itself),[133] Britain, Prussia, and Russia all followed, building systems that reached from London to Dover and Portsmouth, from Berlin to Trier, and from Moscow to Warsaw. While each of the systems was slightly different from a technical point of view, from the beginning all of them had as their overriding purpose serving the military needs of the state. After 1830 or so the place of optical telegraphs was taken by the more efficient electric ones. Their construction was paralleled by that of the railways; given that the efficient operation of the latter depended on the correct use of the former, the two tended to run together like siamese twins.[134]

Already during the 1850s the French engaged on the construction of a railway net specifically designed for military purposes, one that served them very well in the war of 1859 against Austria. Had it not been for rails and wires the American Civil War would have been absolutely inconceivable. The conflict of 1861–5 does, indeed, deserve to be called the first railway war; given that both sides very often made their moves dependent on the availability of track – as Sherman's invasion of the South was – or else aimed at disrupting that of the enemy (Sherman again, this time in his operations against Atlanta in 1864). Railways alone made it possible for the Federals to call up no fewer than 2 million men during the conflict, an achievement which, against a population basis of only 27 million dispersed over a huge country, was unparalleled until

[131] A short account of the nineteenth-century military-technological revolution is B. Brodie and F. Brodie, *From Cross Bow to H Bomb* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), pp. 124–71.

[132] A. S. Field, "French Optical Telegraphy, 1793–1855: Hardware, Software, Administration," *Technology and Culture*, 35, 2, 1994, pp. 315–47.

[133] A. Rumeu de Armas, "La línea telegrafica Madrid–Cadiz (1800), primera de España y segunda de Europa," *Hispania*, 42, 152, 1982, pp. 522–63.

[134] See for this entire story D. Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles: The Influence of Technological Developments on German Military Thought and Practice, 1815–1865* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975).

then. Almost equally unparalleled was the number of dead, which in a mere four years amounted to no fewer than 600,000 on both sides.

The real demonstration of what the marriage of the state and technology could do, however, was still to come. Unlike most European states, Prussia had not done away with conscription after 1815. More than most European states, its central position and flat, featureless terrain put it in a position to use the railways once the necessary capital and know-how became available – not a great step for a nation which, as we saw, already possessed the best education system in the world. Beginning in the 1850s, these factors led to the construction of an incomparably efficient railway network. Though the network was not governed exclusively by military considerations, Moltke as chief of the general staff was an *ex officio* member of the commission that governed it; that he was also a shareholder in the railways is interesting but, for our purposes, beside the point. Plans for mobilization were developed and rehearsed time and again with painstaking accuracy. In 1866, when the first great trial came, the world held its breath as the world's smallest great power called up over 300,000 troops and concentrated them on the Austrian border, all with unprecedented order and at unprecedented speed. Indeed, such was the superiority of the Prussian use of their railways in 1866 and 1870 that both wars in question were decided almost before the first shot was fired. Having been thrown off balance, both Austrians and French found themselves on the defensive and never recovered.

Whereas the American Civil War was all but ignored in Europe – as Moltke himself put it, there was nothing there but two mobs chasing each other across an enormous, half-deserted countryside – the Prussian victories were studied very closely. Beginning in 1873, one country after another did away with its antiquated military system and introduced universal conscription of the male population. By 1914 this even applied to Japan, which had only recently adopted what was known as "the standard of civilization"; the only remaining exceptions were Britain and the United States, both of which, however, followed the example of the rest during World War I. Conscription and an effective reserve system – itself made possible by the railways – in turn enabled monstrous armed forces to be created; when August 1914 came the most important powers counted their members not in the hundreds of thousands but in the millions.[135] Nor was this by any means the end of the story. Thus the German Army, which including its various reserves numbered almost 4.5 million men at the beginning of the war, grew to approximately 6.5 million in 1917 – most of the increase being concentrated in the technical

[135] For the strength of 1914 armies, see H. Kuhl, *Der deutsche Generalstab in Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Mittler, 1920), pp. 16, 63, 87, 103.

arms such as the artillery, the air service, and, above all, the signals corps. Between 1914 and 1918 the number of those who wore German uniform exceeded 13 million. Of these, approximately 2 million lost their lives. The total number of dead is estimated at about 10 million, not counting perhaps as many who died of war-related diseases.

By this time the railway and the telegraph had been joined by the motor car, the telephone, and the teleprinter. Making use of those instruments, the war also proved a turning point in terms of the ability of the state to mobilize its economy for military purposes. The result was a conflict fought on a scale inconceivably larger than anything before it. Thus, between 1914 and 1916 alone the average daily consumption of supplies per army division increased by a factor of three from 50 to 150 tons.[136] Whereas, at the beginning of the conflict, an army was considered very well prepared if it had in stock 1,000 rounds per artillery barrel, four years later there were batteries which fired that quantity of ammunition *per day*; meanwhile the German army's consumption of small arms ammunition had reached 300 *million* rounds a month. Other items, some of them traditional – throughout the war horse-fodder remained the single most bulky commodity shipped from Britain to France – and others newly invented were consumed or expended in proportion. Among the innovations were land and sea mines, produced and sown in the millions by all the belligerent states. Then there were hundreds of thousands of miles of barbed wire – to say nothing of that World War I specialty never before or since used on a similar scale, i.e., poison gas.

During the years 1919–39 much thought and goodwill were spent in attempts to find ways to prevent states from involving humanity in another catastrophe of the same kind.[137] As the failure of these attempts was to show, even greater efforts were devoted to discovering even more effective ways for states to fight each other. Some of these attempts were specifically designed to avoid a recurrence of the slaughter, as, for example, those of the British military pundit Basil Liddell Hart. Having been born in 1895, Liddell Hart was of exactly the right age to be gassed at the Somme in 1916 and thus knew the horrors of war at first hand. As he watched the names of most of his fellow students in pre-war Cambridge University appear on the memorial tables erected after 1919, he lost his previous faith in the wisdom of the British general staff.[138] The rest of his life he devoted to finding better (read faster and more economical) ways of

[136] Pre-war figures are from Oberste Heeresleitung, *Taschenbuch für Offiziere der Verkehrstruppen* (Berlin: Oberste Heeresleitung, 1913), p. 84; 1916 ones are from A. Henniker, *Transportation on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (London: HMSO, 1937), p. 103.

[137] See below, ch. 6, "The waning of major war," pp. 337–54.

[138] The most recent work on Liddell Hart's intellectual development is A. Gat, "The Hidden Sources of Liddell Hart's Ideas," *War in History*, 3, 3, July 1996, pp. 293–308.

fighting. His first suggestion was the so-called indirect approach, consisting of sophisticated operations launched not against the enemy's front, as in 1914–18, but into the spot where they were least expected and would do the greatest harm. Later, influenced by his fellow British military reformer, Colonel (later Major-General) John Frederick Fuller, he sought to carry out the operations in question by means of the new armored forces then being established. By the mid-1930s Liddell Hart had gained an international reputation and could justly claim to have invented the kind of operation that was later to become known as the Blitzkrieg, although in truth there is little to show that his views had any great influence on the practical soldiers of the time.[139]

Whereas Liddell Hart's attempt to find cheaper – read more effective – ways of waging war at least had the merit of sparing the civilian leg of the trinity, the same cannot be said of his Italian fellow theorist, General Giulio Douhet. Originally an army officer, Douhet had had plenty of opportunity to observe the futility of infantry attacks against a fortified defense – between 1915 and 1917 there were no fewer than eleven offensives on the Isonzo, all of which failed with horrendous casualties. There simply *had* to be a better way, and by the time the war ended he believed he had discovered it in the form of the aircraft. First used for military purposes during the 1911 Italian–Turkish war and then, on a vastly greater scale, in 1914–18,[140] the aircraft's outstanding qualities were its speed and flexibility, qualities which enabled it to switch from one target to another regardless of the intervening terrain and regardless (almost) also of the distance between them. Since all points could not be protected at the same time, this made it into an offensive weapon *par excellence*. Instead of wasting one's airpower to attack the enemy's strongest sector, i.e., his armed forces, Douhet wanted to see it used first against the enemy's air bases in order to obtain command of the air (a term he took from naval warfare and defined as the ability to fly while denying that ability to the enemy) and then his civilian population centers.[141] Basing himself on the German attacks on London during World War I, which had led to a handful of casualties as well as considerable panic, Douhet confidently expected such "strategic" bombardment to bring any country to its knees within a matter of days, even to the point where ground combat would be both unnecessary and useless.

[139] See B. Bond, *Liddell Hart: A Study of His Military Thought* (London: Cassell, 1976), particularly pp. 215ff.

[140] See L. Kennett, *The First Air War 1914–1918* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

[141] G. Douhet, *Command of the Air* (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), esp. ch. 1. A good account of interwar debates on airpower is E. Warner, "Douhet, Mitchell, Seversky: Theories of Air Warfare," in E. M. Earle, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), pp. 485–503.

In the event these and other visions of future war were destined to be overshadowed by, or perhaps one should say incorporated in, the work of another and, if not greater, at any rate more experienced thinker, the German Erich Ludendorff. As wartime quartermaster-general of the German army and *de facto* ruler of Germany, Ludendorff had an unrivaled opportunity to observe war at the top. Having spent two years in charge of the mightiest military establishment ever seen, he did not share the belief that a modern great power could be brought down by a few operations, however indirect, or even by fleets of aircraft bombing whatever there was to bomb. Both, to be sure, were to be employed for all they were worth; not only was Ludendorff himself unmatched as an operational expert – a quality he had proved by the series of brilliant victories won over the Russians in 1914–16 – but he was anything but squeamish in his resolution to use whatever methods were necessary for achieving victory. Modern war, however, could be won only by the total mobilization of all the state's demographic, economic, and industrial resources under the rule of a military dictator. Since such "in-depth" mobilization took time, it had to be started in peacetime, which in turn meant that the dictatorship, presumably under none other than the Feldherr Ludendorff himself, was to be made permanent.[142]

When World War II broke out in 1939 it at first tended to confirm the visions of Liddell Hart and Fuller in particular. Whether or not the operations that finished off first Poland and then Norway, the Low Countries, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, the British imperial positions in the Middle East, and (almost) Russia were indirect is moot; what is not moot is that they were spearheaded by armored forces made up of tens, later hundreds, of thousands of machines ranging from light reconnaissance vehicles (jeeps) all the way to personnel carriers, motorized or self-propelled artillery, and tanks. Maneuvering this way and that, those forces were supported by fleets of aircraft, albeit they owed little to Douhet and, initially at any rate, concentrated on military targets rather than civilian ones.[143]

However, the early victories proved misleading. If small and medium powers could be wiped off the map by a handful of Panzer divisions and the air fleets that accompanied them and provided them with cover, continental ones such as the Soviet Union and Germany itself could not. First the Wehrmacht, then the Red Army, and finally the armies of the Western Allies learnt that their reach was limited. Such were the logistic requirements of modern mechanized offensives that, whenever

[142] E. Ludendorff, *The Nation at War* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), pp. 11–85.
[143] See M. van Creveld, *Airpower and Maneuver Warfare* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1994), ch. 2.

they passed the 200-mile mark, they tended to collapse under their own weight, even when, as in Russia in the summer of 1941 or France in the autumn of 1944, enemy resistance was weak or absent.[144] As a result, though operational movements were much bolder and progressed much deeper than in World War I, World War II, like its predecessor, developed into a vast struggle of attrition.

As the belligerents proceeded to mobilize their entire economies for this struggle, they also turned to strategic bombing as a means to disrupt the other side's mobilization – thus demolishing the distinction between government, army, and people that had been built up so laboriously from 1648 on. The first who tried to bring entire countries to their knees by means of aerial bombardment were the Germans in Warsaw and Rotterdam (though the attack on the latter may have been the result of a communications failure). Next, they launched the so-called Blitz against Britain; but the German air force, having been built with a different style of war in mind, did not really have the aircraft or the staying power necessary for the purpose. In this way the honor of being the first – and, to this day, almost the only – ones to apply "strategic" bombing on a really large scale belongs to Britain and the United States. Whether or not their air commanders had read Douhet – and they probably had not – they were not backward in proposing that mighty fleets of aircraft, each propelled by four engines and each carrying perhaps three to five tons of explosive, could win the war against the Axis almost unaided. In the event their claims proved exaggerated; once they had been joined with radar, aircraft proved that they could fight quite as effectively on the defense as on the offense. Whether, given the technological realities of World War II, a better way of overcoming Germany and Japan than bombing their cities could have been found remains in dispute to the present day.[145] What is not in dispute is that some 2.5 million tons of bombs were dropped by the US Air Force and Royal Air Force together. When Allied troops entered German towns in 1945, they found them abandoned even by the birds.

Meanwhile, in an attempt to discover even more effective ways of demolishing each other, states had started mobilizing science for the purpose; instead of being left to private initiative, as had usually been the case before 1914, the process of scientific-technological invention itself was conscripted and put at the disposal of the state.[146] During World

[144] K. L. Privatsky, "Mobility Versus Sustainability," *Military Review*, 67, 1, 1987, pp. 48–61.

[145] The most recent contribution to the debate is R. Overy, "World War II: The Bombing of Germany," in A. Stephens, ed., *The War in the Air 1941–1945* (Fairbairn: Air Power Studies Centre, 1995), pp. 113–40.

[146] See W. H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force and Society Since AD 1000* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), pp. 170–4.

War II the scale of the effort was expanded, to the point that tens of thousands of scientists were set to work full-time in order to develop better weapons and incidentally, find out what the enemy might have had up his sleeve. Military-technological progress, which until the middle of the nineteenth century could usually be measured in decades, was accelerated until it took only a few years or even months to design a new weapons system and bring it into operation. For example, the German Messerschmidt 109 and British Spitfire fighters both made their debut in 1938–9. By 1944–5 the former had gone through nine model changes, the latter through fourteen, at which point both were replaced by new, even more powerful types.[147] This experience was entirely typical. A 1940-vintage tank did not stand the slightest chance against one produced only two or three years later, while the aircraft carriers with which the US navy, for one, ended the war were about twice as large as the ones with which it entered it.

The state's greatest triumph was, however, yet to come. Between 1939 and 1945 somewhere between 40 and 60 million people were killed with the aid of conventional arms; still not content with this, states continued the search for more powerful weapons. In secret desert locations, protected by miles upon miles of barbed wire, the best minds were concentrated, provided with unlimited funds, and set to work. In 1938 Otto Hahn in Berlin became the first to split the atom. The significance of the discovery having been explained to him by his former assistant, Lise Meitner, within two years articles on nuclear physics had disappeared from the international scientific literature – a clear sign that the defense establishments of the most powerful states had taken over and that not even the most basic secrets of the universe were any more safe from their clutches.[148] Such was the magnitude of the task that it could be accomplished only by the state, and then by the largest and most powerful state of all. On the other hand, the speed with which it was accomplished is astonishing, thus providing yet another proof of what the state could really do once it had made up its mind. Less than three years passed from the appointment of General Leslie Groves, an excellent organizer hitherto known mainly for his mania about secrecy, to head the Manhattan Project to the detonation of the first bomb at Los Alamos.[149] On the sixth of August 1945, a fine summer day, a single heavy bomber appeared over Hiroshima and dropped a single bomb. Moments later the sky was torn

[147] Details in E. Angelucci, *The Rand McNally Encyclopaedia of Military Aircraft, 1914 to the Present* (New York: Gallery Books, 1990), pp. 185–6.
[148] F. Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), is the best account of the Manhattan Project.
[149] See his firsthand account in *Now It Can Be Told* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

open. A thousand suns shone, 75,000 or so people lay dead or dying, and total war, which the states of this world had spent three centuries perfecting, abolished itself.

The apotheosis of the state

Born in sin, the bastard offspring of declining autocracy and bureaucracy run amok, the state is a giant wielded by pygmies.[150] Considered as individuals, bureaucrats, even the highest-positioned among them, may be mild, harmless, and somewhat self-effacing people; but collectively they have created a monster whose power far outstrips that of the mightiest empires of old. One reason for this is because, unlike all previous ruling groups, they do not have to pay the expenses of government out of their own pockets. On the contrary, they draw their nourishment from it; the rooms in which they meet, the desks at which they sit, and the computers with which they (nowadays) work are all government-provided. Another is that, again unlike most previous ruling groups, they operate according to fixed regulations and procedures without either anger or passion – although, to be sure, such as favor their own interests above all. But the most important reason is because they, unlike Caligula or Genghis Khan, e.g., possess a collective personality which makes them immortal. By merely waiting, the state can easily outlast any ''natural persons'' who dare cross its path. Hence ideally it should be able to rule its subjects by the buttocks rather than the fists – not that it has often been reluctant to use the latter, either.

At the time it first saw the light of day the state was comparatively small and weak, even to the point where megalomaniac rulers could sometimes look down on it and claim that it was identical with their own persons. From then on, however, it grew and grew. Stage by stage it separated itself from, and raised itself above, civil society. As it did so, it commissioned maps and used them to make political statements about itself; it built up an infrastructure of ''statistical'' information; it increased taxes, and, which is perhaps more important, concentrated them in its own hands. To complete its dominance, it set up police and security forces, prisons, armed forces, and specialized organs responsible for looking after education and welfare – all of which, as Max Weber noted, were themselves bureaucratic institutions *par excellence* and in some ways simply reflected the mechanism which they served.

Beginning in Britain during the last years of the eighteenth century, one

[150] The phrase is from H. de Balzac, *Bureaucracy* (Boston: Roberts, 1898; translation of *Les employées*, 1836), p. 84.

state after another also felt strong enough to spread its wings over the most important commodity of all, i.e., money. To be sure, the early attempts were hesitant and led to at least one spectacular bankruptcy; but after 1800 the switch from bullion toward state-issued paper imprinted with the picture of the sovereign proved unstoppable. During the nineteenth century most states still maintained the link between money and precious metal. Once World Wars I and II had caused that link to be severed and money had become simply so much paper, though, states used the need to fight other states as the excuse for dominating the economy directly by means of their own laws, regulations, and fiats. By and large, the process whereby the meaning of money was transformed took place not simply in this state or that but was very much part of the development of the state as such. From Washington DC, through London and Paris, and Rome and Berlin, all the way to Moscow and Tokyo, the principles were the same. The main difference between "free" and totalitarian states consisted in the fact that the former chose their rulers by democratic elections; although, as Hitler once pointed out, judging by his own popularity, the Nazi regime may have been the most democratic in history.[151] Hence they did not have to employ the instruments of coercion at their disposal quite as ruthlessly, or to the same extent, as the latter.

Initially the state was conceived as a mere instrument for imposing law and order: a body, made up of institutions and laws and people who served in them and carried them out, which would run like a machine in performing its task. However, almost exactly midway in its development between 1648 and 1945, it came across the forces of nationalism which, until then, had developed almost independently of it and sometimes against it. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century state had demanded no special affection on the part of its subjects, provided only its decrees were obeyed and its demands for money and manpower met; but now it could draw on nationalism in order to fill its emptiness and provide itself with ethical content. As conceived by Rousseau, Herder, and the rest, nationalism – if that is the proper word – had been a harmless preference for one's native country, its language, its customs, its modes of dress, and its festivals; once it had been adopted by the state, it became aggressive and bellicose. Digesting the stolen spiritual goods, the state turned itself from a means into an end and from an end into a god. Whether it lived in peace with them or fought against them, that god was usually quite prepared to respect the rights of other gods like itself to a sovereign existence – witness the elaborate courtesies that rulers and diplomats,

[151] Speer, *Errinerungen*, p. 79.

often even soldiers, extended to each other even in wartime (when Napoleon III was captured at Sedan in 1870, not only did he come to no harm, but he was allowed to go free). But from its subjects it demanded absolute loyalty even unto death, inflicting savage punishment on them if they dared disobey or evade service, a double standard which shows what it *really* thought of them.

Protected and often abetted by the state, modern science and modern technology were able to flourish as never before. As noted above, had it not been for printed forms on the one hand and gunpowder on the other, the state could never have seen the light of day. Later both Hobbes, as the person who really invented the state, and his fellow English political scientist, James Harrington, took a keen interest in science and resorted to scientific models as underpinnings for the political constructs they had in mind.[152] Tackling the problem from the opposite direction, Francis Bacon in *New Atlantis* (1637) described an imaginary state which systematically harnessed science to increase its own power. While jealously keeping its own secrets, the state dispatched sleuths to ferret out new discoveries from all over the world; as a result, not the least of their achievements were cannon capable of firing balls further, and with greater force, than anything that existed until then. Bacon's ideas caught on rapidly, as is shown by the fact that forty years had not yet passed since his death before all the most important European monarchs had established Academies of Science, one of whose main functions was to investigate problems and come up with inventions useful for the state.[153] By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the notion that science could be used to increase the power of the state had even reached backward Russia in the person of Peter the Great.[154]

These, however, were just the beginnings. Not only did the state use science and technology to enhance its military capabilities for combating other states, but the same devices also reinforced its grip on every inch of territory and the life of every individual. Thus, from about 1850 on, the governments of France, Prussia (later Germany), Piedmont (later Italy), and Canada all systematically promoted the construction of railways with the objective of linking their various provinces with each other and bringing them under central control.[155] In the United States, it was

[152] For Harrington, see B. I. Cohen, "Harrington and Harvey: A Theory of the State Based on the New Physiology," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 55, 2, 1994, pp. 187–210.

[153] See R. Briggs, "The Académie royale des sciences and the Pursuit of Utility," *Past and Present*, 131, 1991, pp. 38–88; and, in general, P. Carroll, "Science Power, Bodies: The Mobilization of Nature as State Formation," *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 9, 2, 1996, pp. 139–67.

[154] A. J. Rieber, "Politics and Technology in Eighteenth-Century Russia," *Science in Context*, 8, 2, 1995, pp. 341–68.

primarily political considerations which led to the construction of the north–south lines linking the midwest with the Gulf of Mexico as well as the east–west network, with the result, for example, that almost a generation had to pass before the transcontinental railway began to run more than one train a week and was able to show a profit. In Russia, as a comparative newcomer to the world of states,[156] so close was the link between the railways and the government which financed them that, to quote Lenin, "when the trains stop that will be the end."[157] Limiting ourselves to those countries which have been made the subject of detailed research, France, Russia, Japan, Argentina, and Australia all deliberately exploited the telegraph for the same purpose – even if, as happened in the first-named, the price to be paid for imposing a state monopoly over the field of telecommunications was technological backwardness.[158]

Finally, the transformation of the state into a god on earth both presupposed the existence of the popular press and helped the latter find a focus for its interests. This is not the place to trace the increase in readership that was brought about by the combination of improved technology with greater literacy. Suffice it to say that, in Britain alone, the annual number of newspapers sold increased from 7.5 million in 1753 to 25 million in 1826;[159] and this was before further advances which took place during the late nineteenth century brought circulation to millions *per day*. In Britain as in most other countries, what national papers existed were invariably based in the capital. Even where governments did not seek to keep them in their own hands, as was in the case of Russia in particular,[160] the outcome was to create an entire class of "public," meaning state-related, affairs which previously had concerned but a small minority and to impose them on the consciousness of the masses. The role of the press in fanning, for example, the Crimean War, the scramble for Africa, and the Anglo-German naval race has been amply documented. In addition, it was capable of manufacturing events out of nonevents as when the assassination of President Garfield made "all the English

[155] M. Merger, "Les chemins de fer italiens: leur construction et leurs effets," *Histoire, Economie et Société*, 11, 1, 1992, pp. 109–20; B. Mazlish, ed., *The Railroad and the Space Program: An Exploration in Historical Analogy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965), pp. 29–30.

[156] See below, ch. 5, "Toward Eastern Europe," pp. 264–81.

[157] On the history of Russia's railways, see V. Y. Larechev, "The Trend Towards State Monopoly in Pre-Revolutionary Russia's Railways," *Journal of Transport History*, 6, 2, 1985, pp. 37–47; the Lenin quote is from J. N. Westwood, *A History of Russian Railways* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), p. 7.

[158] P. Grisset, "L'état et les télecommunications internationales au début du XXe siècle en France: un monopole stérile," *Histoire, Economie et Société*, 6, 2, 1987, pp. 181–207.

[159] Figures are from G. A. Cranfield, *The Press and Society: From Caxton to Northcliffe* (London: Longman, 1978), p. 139.

[160] L. Reynolds, "Autocratic Journalism: The Case of the St. Petersburg Telegraphic Agency," *Slavic Review*, 49, 1, 1990, pp. 48–57.

race'' mourn a person of whose very existence they may previously have been unaware.[161] By the time of World War I, another US president, Woodrow Wilson, was meeting the press twice a week – as good an indication as any of its ability to make public life revolve around the state.

In return for fostering technological development which made possible a much-augmented standard of living the state exacted protection money. Essentially it consisted of unlimited blood and treasure, a development which climaxed during the first half of the twentieth century. Reveling in total war, the state demanded and obtained sacrifice on a scale which, had they been able to imagine it, would have made even the old Aztec gods blanch. Nor were the differences between the ''totalitarian'' and ''democratic'' countries as great as people at the time liked to believe. Other things being equal, those states whose regimes were most efficient in squeezing the last ounce of marrow out of their citizens' bones went on to victory, whereas those which were smaller or less successful in performing this praiseworthy task went down to defeat. As usual the price was paid by the citizens, not by the state *per se*. In the defeated countries a few leaders lost their heads, whether with or without a trial; they were, in any case, dispensable, as is proved by the fact that, without exception, the states in question had risen out of the ashes and were back on their feet within less than five years after the largest war in history had ended. The stage was set for the state's Indian summer – one last shining rise in its power before its inevitable decline. Before we can turn to that story, however, it is necessary to explain how the state spread from Europe, where it originated, to the remaining areas of the globe.

[161] M. Sewell, '''All the English Race is in Mourning': The Assassination of President Garfield and Anglo-American Relations,'' *Historical Journal*, 34, 3, 1991, pp. 665–86.