Modern War and the Decline of the Old Regime, 1763-1856[1]

The basis of democratization is everywhere purely military in character. . . . Military discipline meant the triumph of democracy because the community wished and was compelled to secure the cooperation of the non-aristocratic masses and hence put arms, and along with arms political power, into their hands.

Max Weber

General Economic History

The study of democratic development generally looks at recent transitions from authoritarian and communist regimes. This is understandable in light of events of the last few decades, but, ironically, democracy's origins in Europe are still not well understood. A wide array of thinkers, from across the political spectrum, and from many different periods of time, once generally agreed that rising bourgeoisies reformed state and society by building representative assemblies, the rule of law, and citizenship rights.

To most historians, this "bourgeois-revolution" thesis is lifeless, but nothing has taken its place, and its specter haunts the study of Europe. In recent years, important works have looked explored the nature of revolutions in the early modern world, but have

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[1] I thank my late friend and colleague Barrington Moore, Jr. for helpful comments on this article.

shed little light on the process of liberalization.[2] It is argued here that many liberal reforms credited to and claimed by bourgeoisies were products of aristocrat-dominated states responding to the demands of late eighteenth-century warfare. Furthermore, wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were themselves powerful engines of change, which brought broadly-based pressure for continued reform.

The Bourgeois Revolution Thesis

There was once widespread agreement on the end of the old regime and the development of democracy. Rising middle classes effected fundamental changes in state and society that led to the decline of aristocratic rule and the rise of liberal democracy. These revolutions, at varying periods of history, ended elite domination of the state and extended participation in government to middle classes, and ultimately to others. The strength of the bourgeois-revolution school stemmed from agreement across time as well as the political spectrum.

Contemporary observers of the English Civil War such as Michael Harrington and of the French Revolution such as Abbé de Sieyes interpreted those pivotal events as the result of rising middle classes.[3] In the nineteenth century, Whig Historians such as Walter Bagehot and William Stubbs, and French nationalists such as Jean Michelet and Adolphe Thiers congratulated their nation's middle classes for felling autocracy and building

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[2] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolution: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

[3] Michael Harrington, *Oceania* and Abbé de Sieyes, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat*?

liberty.[4] Their work attracted a legion of followers, resonated with growing nationalist sentiments, and became a working assumption for generations of historians, statesmen, essayists, and sociologists. An orthodoxy was born.

There is no greater evidence of the school's strength than in the arch-enemy of bourgeois rule's general acceptance of it. Karl Marx pored over the works of contemporary historians and concluded that, though their day would soon end, the bourgeoisie was performing a vital historical mission of sweeping away feudal domination, creating vast industrial powers, and modernizing state and society. Most importantly for Marx -- and here is his departure from the voices of middle-class ascendancy -- bourgeois rule brought about forces that would destroy it and usher in socialism.[5] At the outset of the twentieth century, conservative and radical thought alike accepted one form or another of the bourgeois-revolution thesis.

The disaster of the Great War undermined virtually every ideal and myth of the previous century. The proud claims of bourgeois thinkers were as empty as those that had predicted a quick war. Radical faith in the future gave way to postwar pessimism exemplified by Spengler and Toynbee, and was tainted by the bloodshed in Russia. Nonetheless, the bourgeois-revolution thesis was adopted by social history, a rising school that provided impressive grounding for it, though devoid of self-congratulation

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[4] Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution and Other Political Essays* (New York: Appleton, 1927); William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in Its Origin and Development* Three Volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896-97); François Furet, *Revolutionary France, 1770-1880* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), pp. 367-77.

[5] See "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 3 (London: International Publishers, 1975), pp. 3-129, 175-87; and "The German Ideology," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 5 (London: International Publishers, 1976), pp. 19-539.

and simplistic teleology. Social history came into its own in the interwar years and remains an important part of the social sciences today.[6]

Over the last few decades, problems have emerged with the time-honored thesis. Studies of the English Civil War and the French Revolution have weakened, if not vitiated interpretations of those events as bourgeois revolutions. Instead of the culmination of long-standing conflicts between the nobility and the middle classes, the English Civil War is now often seen as the result of political and religious conflicts unrelated to economy or class structure.[7] Efforts to relocate the bourgeois revolution in the Glorious Revolution, the Reform Bill, or the Repeal of the Corn Laws have had little success. Similarly, the French Revolution is seen less as the upshot of class struggle than as that of fiscal crisis and state paralysis.[8] The notion of inevitable conflict between noble and bourgeois has been questioned, to say the least. The nobility modernized agriculture, built mines, and engaged in commerce. The typical bourgeois eagerly took on the outlooks, norms, and lifestyles of the aristocracy, and, if fortunes permitted, angled for a peerage or married into a titled family. The idea that weak bourgeoisies in Prussia and Russia led to the regrettable retention of autocratic rule as well as to later

[6] R. H. Tawney, "The Rise of the Gentry," *Economic History Review* 11 (1941): 1-38; George Lefebvre, *Quatre-Vingt Neuf* (1939) and *The Coming of the French Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969 [1949]); Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1966); Andre Gunder Frank, *Lumpenbourgeoisie, Lumpendevelopment; Dependence, Class, and Politics in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972).

[7] Conrad Russell, *The Crisis of the Parliaments: English History 1509-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); Lawrence Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529-1642* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); "The Bourgeois Revolution of the Seventeenth Century Revisited," *Past and Present* 109 (1985): 44-54; Jack A. Goldstone, "Capitalist Origins of the English Revolution: Chasing a Chimera," *Theory and Society* 12 (1983): 143-80.

[8] Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); William Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

totalitarianism contains a circular argument: they didn't take power because they were weak; and it is certain they were weak because they didn't take power. Yet in both countries, legal and political changes necessary to modern enterprise took place -- important events, but ones that entailed no sweeping political changes. Perhaps most problematic for the bourgeois revolution school is the clear evidence that in almost all European countries, including England, the aristocracy retained the commanding heights of state and society until World War One.[9]

Military Modernization and Political Change

How then to account for social and political changes from the late eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth? The period undoubtedly saw the growing importance of representative government, extension of citizenship rights, and the rise of modern economies, all of which combined to erode the old regime and lay the foundations for the modern world. Drawing from recent works on the importance of warfare and military organization in history,[10] the present essay explains these changes as responses to armed conflict, from the Seven Years War (1756-1763) to the Crimean War (1853-1856). In order to fight modern wars, states were compelled to abolish key parts the old regime and

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[9] J. V. Beckett, *The English Aristocracy, 1660-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 78-87, 137-205; J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, *The French Nobility in the Eighteenth Century: From Feudalism to Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Arno Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

[10] Skocpol, *States and Social Revolution*, esp. pp. 161-293; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Robert Drews, *The End of the Bronze Age: Changes in Warfare and the Catastrophe, ca. 1200 B. C.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

authorize modern representative assemblies, citizenship rights, and free markets, thereby contributing to the making of the modern world.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, European states maintained standing armies of roughly eighty to a hundred and fifty thousand. Armies were recruited or levied from the nation-state and augmented by mercenaries (Swiss, German, and Celtic), as well as by militias. Officers were usually from an indigenous aristocracy, though service to a foreign king was neither unknown nor dishonorable. Life in the ranks was extremely harsh, as it was deemed paramount to instill blind obedience and fear of authority to prevent desertion and ensure discipline under fire.[11]

It is often held that, prior to the French Revolution, commoners were uninvolved in the arcane wars of kings, unless armies passed through their province, burning and looting. It would be more accurate to say that there was appreciable involvement before 1789. Soldiers were not all family-less dregs or foreign mercenaries, and had not been since the fifteenth century. They were more typically native peasants, conscripted, recruited, or coerced into military service, whose fortunes and fates were followed back home as much as possible. Early modern armies also comprised reserve levies of peasants, who, though often remaining in the village, were nonetheless parts of their country's military. Taxation, ever an issue to common people, especially since most nobles were exempt, rose sharply during wartime and attracted attention to distant events.

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[11] Otto Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im Alten Preussen 1713-1807: Die Anfänge der sozialen Militarisierung der preußisch-deutschen Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1962), pp. 1-163; André Corvisier, *L'Armée Française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul, Le Soldat*, Tome Premier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), pp. 109-28, 222-31; Christopher D. Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War, 1803-15* (Manchester, U.K.: University of Manchester Press, 1992), pp. 2-4.

Corvée labor frequently entailed work related to warfare. Victory, resonating as it did with folklore and legend, was evidence of the greatness of king and noble; defeat called into question their legitimacy and sacrifices made for them.

The army was the bulwark of the old regime. Of course, the army could be used for domestic repression, but peasant uprisings were rare between the Peasant Wars and the fall of the Bourbon monarchy, and to assume kings maintained themselves solely or even mainly through the army is to misunderstand the period by neglecting to see past the simplest, and often most misleading model of social organization -- force. The old regime attained considerable legitimacy -- what Weber called “power prestige”[12] -- among the masses in large part owing to successful wars, which were, after all, the raison d’être for medieval and early modern states. Military triumph bestowed a sacred aura upon kings and nobles that tapped into the glories abounding in the folklore of warriors such as David, Caesar, Vercingetorix, Arthur, Charlemagne, and Joan of Arc.[13] The social order and elite rule appeared appropriate and just, ordained from on high. Vast sacrifices and social inequities were necessary for the nation. To challenge that view was to challenge not simply the king’s army, but divine will and natural law as well.

In a brilliant set of essays, Otto Hintze pointed to various moments in western history, from the Roman Republic to his day, at which new military forms made older

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[12] The neglected relationship between war and the legitimacy has been pointed out in Max Weber, *Economy and Society*. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), II: 910-12; Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes* Translated by Heinz Norden (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1951 [1919]); Robert Nisbet, *The Quest for Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969 [1953]), pp. 38-44.

[13] Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 149-56, 259-70; Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Jessie L. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993 [1919]); Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Nationalism: A Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 20-42.

ones obsolete, and forced fundamental change in state and society -- changes as momentous as those Marx ascribed to the economy.[14] In the mid-eighteenth century, major European states reached one such point. Pressure to institute military reform, as well as political and fiscal ones, is often thought to have begun with the French Revolution, but it can clearly be found after the Seven Years War, especially in France, which suffered serious losses in men, treasure, and prestige. The officer corps was no longer seen as the affair of the noblesse, who, after cursory study of famous campaigns, assumed, as part of their birthrights, command of regiments and armies. Affected by Enlightenment ideas of applying Reason instead of deferring to tradition, but more importantly by the Seven Years War, military thinkers sought to create a modern science of war. France, Austria, and Prussia created schools for training young officers; engineer and artillery corps, usually led by middle-class officers (including a promising Corsican), brought science to war.[15] Further contributing to new military thought was England's defeat in the American colonies, which planted the germ of the idea -- no more than that -- of the importance of popular support and citizen-soldiers in future wars. Army staffs

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[14] Otto Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk (Berlin: Paul Parey, 1915); Staat und Verfassung: Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur allgemeinen Verfassungsgeschichte* Fritz Hartung, ed., (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1941); *Regierung und Verwaltung: Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Staats-, Rechts,- und Sozialgeschichte Preussens* Gerhard Oestreich ed, (Göttingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1967).

[15] Azar Gat, *The Origins of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to Clausewitz* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp. 1-9, 56-60; Ken Alder*, Engineering the Revolution: Arms and Enlightenment in France, 1763-1815* (Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press, 1997).

looked for ways to motivate soldiers and allow for tactical innovation and new infantry formations, but little could be done under an essentially servile social order.[16]

The French Revolution and the wars that followed led to development of these inchoate trends. Lingering discontent from the Seven Years War, state paralysis, and peasant unrest destroyed Bourbon autocracy, plunged Europe into a quarter century of war, and revolutionized armies, states, and societies across the continent. Representative government, based at least as much on anti-elite sentiment as on purely democratic principles, came to the fore after 1789. The royal army purged many noble officers. Non-noble officers rose rapidly in the ranks, some to the august level of marshal. The Revolutionary government mobilized huge armies, and, arguing that the nation and its newly won liberties were imperiled, fielded an army of motivated conscripts. Those armies, but more importantly Napoleon's Grande Armée, inflicted devastating defeats on the great powers, forcing them to garner support through parliaments and reform or face neo-vassalage if not destruction.

In brief, new requirements of warfare, begun in the aftermath of the Seven Years War and further developing amid the wars of the French Revolution, compelled states to dismantle key parts of the old regime by reducing long-standing privileges, extending citizenship rights, and building representative institutions, effecting movement in the direction of modern democracy.

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[16] John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); V. G. Kiernan, *Colonial Empires and Armies, 1815-1960* (London: Sutton, 1998), pp. 11-12; Theodore Ropp, *War in the Modern World* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1962), pp. 98-99. Citizen-based armies had long existed in the Swiss Confederation and Sweden, but inasmuch as the former had never been a major power, and the latter had not been one since its crushing defeat at Poltava (1709), their influence on continental armies was negligible.

Representative Institutions

France's defeat in the Seven Years War gave rise to sharp, open, and widespread criticism of the Bourbon regime. Pamphlets, plays, and talk in the towns and villages questioned the aristocracy's privileges, and lamented life under tyranny.[17] Regional assemblies and parlements, cowed since the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), became more assertive and called for a return to constitutional government, which, before the rise of autocracy, had gave them voice in the state.[18] Salons buzzed with discussions of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and other Enlightenment figures who praised the ideals of democracy. The monarchy was able to deflect discontent until expenditures supporting the American Revolution (1776-1783) made immediate fiscal reform essential. Reluctantly, the king sought to settle the state's revenue crisis in the manner that medieval princes throughout Europe had: by convening a national assembly.

The Estates-General of 1789, the first since the Thirty Years War, convened to solve fiscal problems but evolved into a full assault on autocracy and revolution. A representative assembly governed France, abolished scores of privileges and immunities, but faced antagonistic factions, internal rebellions, external dangers, royalist intrigues, and angry mobs uncomfortably close to its chambers -- the worst of times for an embryonic democracy. For all its promise at the outset and mythology in the aftermath,

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[17] Robert Darnton, *Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: Norton, 1995), pp. 147-66; François Furet, *Revolutionary France,* pp. 14-17.

[18] Bailey Stone, *The Parlement of Paris, 1774-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 3-15; James C. Riley, *The Seven Years War and the Old Regime in France: The Economic and Financial Toll* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 192-222; Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1989), pp. 100-4.

the French Republic witnessed the concentration of power from a national assembly to smaller executive bodies and ultimately an emperor.[19]

Warfare had brought about representative government; warfare put an end to it. Facing foreign coalitions and regional revolts, the National Assembly built an immense army of over five hundred thousand troops, but, despite its origins in fiscal reform, the Assembly was never able to supply them adequately. As the army crossed into Italy, Holland, Belgium, and the Rhine valley to defend the nation, it had to supply itself by forage, plunder, and forced loans.[20] The Assembly purged the army of many officers, spied on generals, and tried to instill Revolutionary fervor in the rank and file,[21] nonetheless events led to a serious breech between army and government. Soldiers saw civilians as unappreciative slackers living well back home, and also resented being used to suppress public unruliness. More importantly, soldiers thought less of their civilian leaders than they did of their military ones, especially the seemingly invincible Bonaparte. Seeing the faltering civilian government as a danger to the Republican reforms of the past decade as well as to France itself, army leaders suppressed the assembly and assumed control of the country.[22] Marx's account of a later period also

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[19] Furet, *Revolutionary France*, pp. 215-17.

[20] Jean-Paul Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution: From Citizen-Soldiers to Instruments of Power* Translated by R. R. Palmer (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 286, 349-52; John R. Elting, *Swords around a Throne: Napoleon's Grande Armée* (New York: Free Press, 1988), pp. 50-53; Alan Forrest, *Soldiers of the French Revolution* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1990), pp. 127-32.

[21] John Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), pp. 79-83, 119-62; Bertaud, *Army of the French Revolution*, pp. 84-86.

[22] Bertaud, *Army of the French Revolution,* pp. 291-312, 332-52; Forrest, *Soldiers of the French Revolution,* pp. 177-86.

holds true here: "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* [were replaced] by the unambiguous words: Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery!"[23] Ironically, the army that marched across the continent forcing liberal political, social, and military reforms, was no longer guided by democratic institutions or ideals.

Napoleon's armies thrust into the heart of Europe and, in battles at Jena and Auerstädt (1806), crushed the vaunted Prussian army, setting into motion a period of state-directed reform. Defeated, required to pay indemnities, but not completely occupied, Prussia sought to restore its finances and garner a measure of popular support for the failed regime. Ministers such as Stein and Hardenberg, and commanders such as Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, reluctantly found an answer to both in representative government.

Support came from disparate sources. Backward-looking nobles -- Prussian Montesquieus -- sought to return to government by the estates, which the Great Elector had ended in 1655. Practical voices thought assemblies would reduce the costs of government by shifting revenue collection to unpaid elected officials, thereby paying Napoleon's indemnities somewhat easier. But military matters were paramount: "It was only from the aspect of enhancing political striking power that the reform laws of Freiherr vom Stein seemed necessary and useful to Gneisenau."[24] A national assembly

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[23] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

[24] Gerhard Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany, Volume I: The Prussian Tradition, 1740-1890* (Miami, Fla: University of Miami Press, 1969), p. 73.

would break down lingering regional loyalties, bring legitimacy to a tottering sword and scepter, and energize the country for a hoped-for war against France.[25]

Debates went back and forth among reformers. Some advocated a national assembly of nobles, burghers, and peasants, while others called for a collegial ministry in which various social groups were represented. Amid the debate, local assemblies regained vitality, especially in East Prussia, to which much of government had fled after the defeat. A few years into the reform era, the East Prussian assembly was managing war debt and indemnities.[26] More importantly, it was helpful in rallying popular support for the Hohenzollern monarchy, whose legitimacy had been challenged by public grumbling and sporadic peasant unrest. In so doing, the assembly helped to make a new war possible in 1813, after Napoleon's army had been devastated in Russia. The seed of representative government had been planted and begun to sprout, and though counter-reform would set in after the war, it could not be uprooted.

One of Napoleon's long-standing foes was England, where an appreciable measure of representative government had survived the military revolution of previous centuries.

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[25]Reinhart Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution: Allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und Soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848* (München: Deutschen Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989), pp. 173-83; W. M. Simon, "Variations in Nationalism during the Great Reform Period in Prussia," *American Historical Review* 59 (1953-4): 305-21, and *The Failure of the Prussian Reform Movement 1807-19* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1955), pp. 12, 35-36, 52-62.

[26] Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution,* pp. 179-83; Robert M. Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility: The Development of a Conservative Ideology 1770-1848* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 105-55. A defeat forced the Teutonic Knights to allow an estates in East Prussia in the fifteenth century. See Karol Górski, "Die Anfänge der Repräsentation der Communitas Nobilium in Polen, im Ordenstaat Preußen und in Ungarn im Mittelalter," *Studies Presented to the International Commission for the Study of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions* 36 (1966): 19-24; Michael Burleigh*, Prussian Society and the German Order: An Aristocratic Order in Crisis, c. 1410 - 1466* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 134-70.

Hardly the blessed isle aloof from continental strife that some histories depict, England waged war on the continent during the War of the Spanish Succession, the War of the Austrian Succession, and the Seven Years War. Each time, it emerged victorious and fiscally sound. Indeed, it often emerged, especially after the last conflict, with new possessions contributing to state revenue.

These wars strengthened representative government by bringing about a cooperative rhythm between Crown and Parliament.[27] England faced defeat and loss of territory when the American colonies won independence in 1783, but these were hardly its most lucrative colonies and the modest loss brought no legitimacy crisis. It did, however, bring down the North government, ending what had been a long-standing Whig domination. The loss breathed life into party competition, leaving no vacuum into which Hanoverian ambitions might have rushed.[28] War debt required no reluctant convocation of the estates of the realm by a beleaguered monarch; it led to reform in public service that reduced the influence of well-connected squires in placing kith and kin.[29]

After the Revolution, England battled France intermittently for almost a quarter century. Though there were setbacks and failures by coalition partners, the country experienced no jarring defeat, as did the Prussians at Jena-Auerstädt and the Austrians at Austerlitz. The wars led to high taxes, inflation, and unrest, but these were offset by the unifying effect of "Boney's" invasion threat, spectacular naval victories at the Battle of

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[27] J. R. Jones, *Country and Court: England, 1658-1714* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 26.

[28] Ian Christie, *Wars and Revolution: Britain, 1760-1815* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 128-57; Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain* (New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 17-18.

[29] Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State*, pp. 25-27.

the Nile and Trafalgar, and limited wins against Napoleon in Spain -- all of which culminated in the proudest victory in British history, Waterloo (1815). Parliament maintained sufficient support for the war throughout. Whigs and former Whigs were given portfolios in Tory governments; indeed, the two parties formed a wartime coalition of sorts in the Ministry of All the Talents (1806-7).[30]

Russia, like England, avoided disaster in the wars of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but later wars brought defeat -- and reform. Russia changed sides in the Seven Years War, thereby saving Prussia from disaster, and perhaps avoiding defeat for itself. Wars against the faltering Ottomans were generally brief and successful, bringing the country new lands as well as prestige as champion of Slavic peoples. The quarter century of war ushered in by the events of 1789 brought no major defeat or pressure for reform.

Pressure for representative government, from below or above, was light. Prior to 1789, intellectuals in St. Petersburg and Moscow familiar with Enlightenment thought highly of representative institutions, but the Empress rebuffed the idea, though she did grant nobles a charter of rights. With the execution of the French king and the outbreak of war, talk of reform became treasonous. Representation was limited to town councils,

[30] Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State,* pp. 60-63.

where business elites (often from state industries) handled local matters, but nothing of national import.[31]

Russia vehemently opposed the Revolution's threat to old regimes across the continent, and entered a coalition against Napoleon soon after he seized power. Russia suffered defeat along side Austria at Austerlitz (1805), but it entailed no devastating blow to the army as a whole, no burdensome indemnities, and no loss of sovereignty, as with Prussia. A truce followed, amicably arrived at by Alexander and Napoleon on the famous raft near Tilsit. Angry at Russia's refusal to abide by his embargo on English commerce, Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, the result of which is known to anyone with a basic knowledge of military history or classical music. The Russian army fought delaying actions, inflicted severe losses on the French at Borodino before retiring in good order, and, once Napoleon quit Moscow, harried his retreating army until it disintegrated.[32]

Talk of representative government persisted even after the expulsion of the French and Napoleon's defeats at Leipzig (1814) and Waterloo (1815). Statesmen, diplomats, and especially military officers admired legislative bodies in Prussia and England as well as in Russia's pre-autocratic past, not only for their democratic ideals but also for their usefulness in warmaking. However, in the aftermath of a successful war, there was little

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[31] Robert E. Jones, *The Emancipation of the Russian Nobility, 1762-1785* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1973); James Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1970), pp. 217-68; W. Bruce Lincoln, *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990), pp. 134-37. Merchant councils were not unheard of under absolutism. See Thomas J. Schaeper, *The French Council of Commerce 1700-1715: A Study of Mercantilism after Colbert* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), pp. 73-104.

[32] William Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914* (New York: Free Press, 1992), pp. 178-218. Fuller argues that the effects of the Russian winter on the French army were greatly less than those of Russian and Cossack troops.

impetus to change. The Decembrist Movement (1825) was made up mainly by army officers who sought to modernize Russia by building western-style institutions, including a parliament, which would bring the country, politically, socially, and militarily, up to the levels of its European counterparts. Their efforts failed and the cause of reform languished during the harshly conservative rule of Nicholas I, who sought to crush reform, in Russia and throughout Europe.[33]

The Crimean War breathed new life into the cause of representative government. The country that had repulsed Napoleon forty years earlier was humiliated on its own soil by modern military and industrial powers. The tsar's army performed poorly; problems of supply and manufacture abounded; and the country's finances were in a shambles. Society abounded with complaints of tyranny, backwardness, and inequities.[34] Among the many reforms instituted by the state, the creation of local assemblies, or *zemstvos*, which came into being not from ferment from below but from the state, which sought to reduce the considerable costs of governing a sprawling empire. Local councils, the reform ministers held, would shift the costs of government from St. Petersburg onto the towns, districts, and provinces, just as Prussian counterparts had reasoned during the Napoleonic Wars.[35] Zemstvos had three chambers, one for the nobility, the middle

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[33] Anatole G. Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 46-116; W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp. 17-231.

[34] Fuller, Strategy and Power, pp. 263-66; Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1979), pp. 183-267; Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 29-154.

[35] S. Frederick Starr, *Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 1830-1870* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 12-22; Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 58-75.

classes, and, surprisingly enough, one for the peasantry. Though ties between them were not allowed, leaders constituted a liberal presence previously confined to non-institutional centers. It is important not to overstate the impact of reform. The influence of the zemstvo was only local, participation was rarely strong, and they did not unify into a force that could bring a national assembly.[36] That would require defeat at the hands of Japan a half century later, when the tsar would convene the first national assembly since the seventeenth century.

Privilege and Citizenship

The old regime contained countless privileges extended to nobles and tradesmen. Carolingian and Hohenstauffen warlords established feudal orders in which their ablest warriors, in exchange for military service, were given tax immunity and conditional land. In addition, warriors controlled local administration, justice, and serfs, who provided payments in labor and kind, from which the lord outfitted his armed bands.[37] The old regime later established an array of privileges for burghers engaged in commerce, from which the lord garnered revenue, and to various guildsmen and artisans, who similarly contributed to state coffers.

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[36] Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, pp. 452-54; Lincoln, *The Great Reforms*, pp. 169-70; Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, pp. 56-57.

[37] See Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 247-48; Max Weber, *General Economic History* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Press, 1981), p. 53, and *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations* Translated by R. I. Frank (London: Verso, 1988), pp. 352-53; Joseph R. Strayer and Rushton Coulborn, "The Idea of Feudalism" in Rushton Coulborn, ed., *Feudalism in History* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1965), pp. 3-11; Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 13.

By the eighteenth century, these privileges were increasingly seen as legal and administrative nightmares that held back economic development. Amid war, in response to debt and defeat, states were compelled to abolish privileges and open up trades and civil services to all. Attendant with this was the reluctant extension of rights, legal protections, and sometimes the right to vote, to lower classes, even recently emancipated serfs. In this regard, the period saw the re-emergence of citizen-based armies. Armies of ancient Greece and the Roman Republic were composed of citizen-soldiers, whose service gave them fundamental rights, including the franchise. As wars lengthened and armies grew, the state extended citizenship to Italian allies and in emergencies to slaves, who won their freedom by military service.[38] By the late eighteenth century, European states were increasingly concerned by the inefficacy of conscripts, dregs, and mercenaries. The rote and brutality of the standing army limited innovation, maneuverability, and motivation. General staffs looked for solutions and experimented with light infantry, but significant change had to await the clarity and motivation provided by the threat of imminent extinction.[39]

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[38] P. A. Brunt, *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), pp. 5-16; Claude Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome* Translated by P. S. Falla (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 94-95.

[39] In a recent work, Rogers Brubaker sees the rise of citizenship in the Revolutionary era, but perhaps ascribes too much importance to previous intellectual ferment and purely legal mechanisms, both of which are seen here as products of the discontent after the Seven Years War. See *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992). The present argument draws more from the work of Max Weber and Charles Tilly, who see citizenship emerging because of the demands of war, whereby previously excluded groups bargain with states, exchanging military service for citizenship rights. It is argued here that states were loathe to do so, but were so weakened by war that they were compelled to confer rights in order to survive -- a bargain of sorts, but one done under duress, though one with beneficial results for democracy. Furthermore, demand from below had not been strong until defeat fostered a climate of malaise. See Weber, *General Economic History* New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Press, 1981), pp. 324-25; Tilly, "Where Do Rights Come From?" in Theda Skocpol, ed. *Democracy, Revolution, and History* (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 55-72.

Any schoolbook will recount the abolition of privilege at the outset of the French Revolution. The newly convened National Assembly's first order of business was to do away with dues and services required of peasants to nobles. The Assembly soon also ended many monopolies, price controls, and guild organizations.[40] Here, generations of historians proclaimed, was a rising bourgeoisie sweeping away the debris of the old regime and building a new economic and political order. Closer examinations have shown that many of the members of the Assembly were hardly part of an economic middle class that stood to gain from the end of privilege.[41] The early acts of the Assembly might be better seen as part of an anti-elite tide that began after the Seven Years War, and gained new strength after failed harvests and state paralysis.

The defeat of 1763 led to widespread malaise, hostility toward privilege, and anti-elite sentiment. Bourbon centralization from the early seventeenth century had taken justice and administration out of the hands of local nobles, leaving them, in the eyes of the peasantry, as a rentier class redeemed only by the glory won in war.[42] Tarnished by defeat, they were now resented, ridiculed, and despised. Another consequence of the war was an immense debt, aggravated by the country's support of the American colonies against the British nemesis, which, though successful, brought the country nothing but a

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[40] Furet, *Revolutionary France*, pp. 70-89.

[41] Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution*, pp. 36-67; Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution,* pp. 7-40.

[42] See Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancien Regime and the French Revolution*, Part Two, Chapter Two. Tocqueville notes that English nobles paid taxes to ensure control of the state, while French monarchs retained noble immunities to ensure their impotence.

small sense of revenge.[43] The state looked to solve its fiscal troubles by ending many privileges.

One effort was to increase taxation on the nobility, who had lost complete immunity in the War of the League of Augsburg (1689-1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), but who nonetheless avoided many of the country's arcane tax codes, either legally, illegally, or somewhere in the vast and hazy middle ground of absolutism. Monarchs had long sold tax-collecting rights to nobles and middle-class parvenus, but the system was now seen as corrupt and inefficient, allowing tax farmers to squeeze out money from the public and deliver all too little to the state.[44] Results were limited. Rather than returning the state to fiscal health, it moved it toward paralysis and revolution. Nobles used the newly emboldened local estates and parlements to mount vigorous opposition, ironically but effectively blocking reform.[45]

The tottering Bourbon state also sought to ease its finances by stimulating the economy. The old regime was a patchwork of economic privileges, price controls, tariffs, and monopolies, absolutist creations designed to enhance revenue for war.[46] By the mid eighteenth century, however, the state saw them as fetters on production, which limited the wealth of the nation and therefor state revenue. Starting in the 1760s, the state abolished many economic regulations, tore down internal barriers, and even traded with

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[43] Riley, *The Seven Years War and the Old Regime*; Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 61-62.

[44] Roland Mousnier, *La vénalité des offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1971); Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 68-75; Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution*, pp. 117-18.

[45] Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 102-4.

[46] A venerable source on this is Charles Woolsey Cole's *Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism*, Volume I (Morningside Heights, N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 1939), pp. 102-64.

its traditional enemy across the Channel.[47] Elite opposition to reform found unlikely allies in the general public, who suffered from the inflation that followed the end of price controls. Between the end of the Seven Years War and the outbreak of the Revolution, there were three rounds of deregulation followed by popular protest and reimposition. Efforts to move the country in the direction of laissez-faire were thwarted, and the state found itself increasingly indebted and paralyzed.

The pre-Revolution years also saw challenges to aristocratic domination of the army. Old regime ideology held that noble blood provided the finest officers and generals, that honor and valor were assured by noble pedigree, and that their august position in society had been earned from Tours to Rocroi and countless other times. But they had lost in 1763, and squandered a considerable amount of the country's resources and empire, to say nothing of the sons and brothers who died. Enlightenment figures idealized the citizen-soldiers of Greece and Rome, but a contemporary example came after 1776. The spirited American militias' defeat of British regulars positively thrilled the country from educated society to humble commoner, some of whom had served with them at Yorktown and elsewhere. Military elites (including Guibert) were intrigued by the fighting spirit and tactical innovation of the Americans, uncouth though they were.[48]

Opinion grew in the public, military, and state, that the officer corps was in need of reform. Lower nobles grumbled that princes of the blood unfairly took command of the finest regiments and most-coveted positions. The state, despite its own noble

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[47] Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution*, pp. 96-97.

[48] Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution*, pp. 40-41; Schama, *Citizens*, pp. 47-49; Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770-1870* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), pp. 54-59.

predominance, began to prize training and education above breeding and politesse.[49] Purchases of commissions, though a source of revenue, were reduced but not abolished. Seeing the future of science in warfare, the state put more resources into the engineers and artillery, where non-nobles predominated, at the expense of the noble-dominated infantry and cavalry.[50] Inroads were made, but here too aristocratic reaction was formidable, skillfully redeploying old-regime ideology of martial skill inhering in their caste. In 1781, the Sègur Law again required noble heritage ("four quarterings") for most officers.[51] By 1789, the army was so rent by internal strife between reformers and their opponents, that it was no longer a reliable instrument of maintaining order.

Entrenched hostility toward elites worsened just before the Revolution, when harvest failures in 1788 led to unrest in towns and villages, providing the climate for abolishing privilege. A trickle of nobles leaving the country turned into a torrent once the royal family had been seized, tried, and executed (1793). Various forces rushed into the social vacuum created by the departure of elites. Peasants wasted no time in seizing land, creating the basis of a middle farming class.[52] Middle-class lawyers and professionals became important figures in the new state. But the flight led to important problems and opportunities in the most important institution of the old and new regime, the army. The army had been the institution par excellence of aristocratic privilege, from which nobles

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[49] Gat, *Origins of Military Thought*, pp. 56-58; Elting, *Swords around a Throne*, p. 9.

[50] Ropp, *War in the Modern World*, pp. 98-102; Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), pp. 38-39; Alder, *Engineering the Revolution, passim*.

[51] Samuel F. Scott, *The Response of the Royal Army to the French Revolution: The Role and Development of the Line Army, 1787-93* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), pp. 28-32; Strachan, *European Armies*, pp. 38-39.

[52] Albert Soboul, "The French Rural Community in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Past and Present* 10 (1956): 78-95.

garnered prestige and glory; with the Revolutionary government's stance as messianic liberators toward the surrounding old regimes, and the latters' wish to extirpate the Revolution root and branch, the Revolutionary army soon became the most important institution in national affairs and in social change as well.

The flight of many nobles in the first years of the Revolution mandated the promotion of non-nobles. Staffing the officer corps was troublesome however, since the Assembly's feared caesarist potentials, especially after public elation following Valmy (1792). The Committee on Public Safety, fearing royalist counter-revolution as much as caesarism, considered eliminating nobles entirely from the army, but this was impossible, and purges had to be limited. Nonetheless, the Committee executed over twenty generals between May 1793 and July 1794. This brought more non-nobles into the army and expedited promotions.[53]

The middle-class origins of new officers are well known, if not belabored. (It is often pointed out that Napoleon came from the middle-classes, but in fact Bonaparte came from a minor, impoverished noble family.) Emphasis on the middle classes -- the influence of the bourgeois-revolution thesis recurs here -- misses a crucial dynamic at work here, one involving those below the middle classes. In 1793, eighty-five percent of junior officers were former enlisted men, sons of peasants and sans-culottes, beholden to the new regime for enhanced pay and prestige. In fact, most of Napoleon's marshals came from poor families -- an inversion of the old social order.[54] Soldiers who remained

[53] Scott, *The Response of the Royal Army,* pp. 108-23; Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic*, pp. 79-83; Bertaud, *Army of the French Revolution*, pp. 84-86; Elting, *Swords around a Throne*, pp. 36-37.

[54] Strachan, European Armies, pp. 38-39; Alan Schom, *Napoleon: A Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), pp. 38-41.

in the enlisted ranks became citizens of the new Republic, though, as Tilly urges us to remember, not until the Estates saw the Republic threatened from abroad.[55] Soldiers were promised property rights from seized noble lands, thereby giving them a stake in the country and its wars. Leveling of privilege may also be found in the electing of many army officers, albeit those from a list drawn up by superiors. Widespread in the early days, it was rather short-lived, but the experience of having officers fete them was a heady experience for once brutalized soldiers.[56] In what might have been the first civics classes, the army indoctrinated new soldiers with revolutionary ideology in the hope that the democratic spirit would make for a stronger defense against the enemies of France.[57]

One of the many myths of the French Revolution proclaims that its armies, imbued with democratic ardor, energetically repelled the enemies of democracy and spread its ideals across Europe. The evidence, however, is that while indoctrination instilled a sense of basic entitlement that persisted even after the Restoration (1815), it ironically could not ensure loyalty to democratic institutions. The levies, including the legendary *levée en masse*, were not popular or even successful, indeed they triggered jarring regional uprisings. Desertions were eight percent in 1796 and 1797. The high motivations of the army metamorphosed into a corporate spirit, increasingly more loyal to victorious generals who gave them loot than to high ideals that gave them promises. In this respect, the Revolution's invocation of the Roman Republic brought along the

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[55] Tilly, "Where Do Rights Come From?" p. 67.

[56] Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic,* pp. 73-76; Bertaud, *Army of the French Revolution*, pp. 69-72.

[57] Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic*, pp. 119-62; Forrest, *Soldiers of the French Revolution*, pp. 89-124.

citizen-armies of Cincinnatus and Scipio, which soon developed into the private armies of Sulla and Marius, and ultimately to the imperial order of Augustus. But like the armies of imperial Rome, French soldiers retained a sense that they were citizens, *citoyens* with rights and honors due them from whatever regime might govern France.[58]

Prior to 1789, old-regime status orders were firmly established in Prussia, even more so than in France, though less so than in Russia. Junkers presided over hereditary estates and ruled over their serfs with iron fists. Serfdom was not a lingering institution of Hohenstauffen feudalism -- that had never been part of East Elbia -- it was the result of the "manorial reaction" of the sixteenth century, when grain commerce altered the relationship between lord and peasant.[59] Relations were cemented in 1655, when the Junkers bowed to autocracy in exchange for recognition of serfdom, tax immunities, and local administration.[60] Manufacturing, when it slowly came to a land with an unfree peasantry, was tied to the old regime by monopolies, privileges, guild regulations, and tariffs.[61]

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[58] Bertaud, *Army of the French Revolution*, pp. 272-75; Forrest, *Soldiers of the French Revolution*, pp. 58-88; Best, *War and Society*, pp. 90-94.

[59] Franz Carsten, "Die Entstehung des Junkertums," in Otto Büsch and Peter Neugebauer, eds., *Moderne Preußische Geschichte, 1648-1947: Eine Anthologie*, Band I (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981); Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility*, pp. 44-76.

[60] Fritz Hartung, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte vom 15. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* Achte Auflage (Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler, 1950), pp. 92-112.

[61] Hugo Rachel, "Merkantilismus in Brandenburg-Preußen," in Büsch and Neugebauer, eds., II: 951-93; Gerhard Oestreich, *Friedrich Wilhelm I.: Preußischer Absolutismus, Merkantilismus, Militarismus* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1977), pp. 62-70; W. O. Henderson, *Studies in the Economic Policy of Frederick the Great* (London: Frank Cass, 1963), pp. 38-84, 157-59; Hubert C. Johnson, *Frederick the Great and His Officials* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 188-242.

Prussia emerged victorious from the Seven Years War, though it would be better to say it barely escaped annihilation. Facing debt and troop shortages from the devastation, Frederick the Great (r. 1740-1786) and his ministers considered various reforms. British subsidies had ameliorated fiscal problems, but something had to be done about the badly mauled army. Perhaps the best known -- one at variance with contemporary trends -- was to cashier middle-class officers, who Frederick thought performed poorly, and to replace them with nobles, often foreign ones. The middle classes did however enjoy greater access to the civil service, especially in the judiciary.[62] The problem of the rank and file remained. Surrounded by hostile powers, Prussia needed either more troops or more effective ones.

Annexed territory could not provide large numbers of troops; indeed, the regions were unsuited for the Kantonsystem. Emphasis on rote and brutality, essential for instilling discipline in reluctant recruits, came into question, and ministers sought a way of building an army of loyal soldiers bound by a sense of "honor," a sense of belonging to a nation with attendant respect for its laws and institutions. Such an army would permit tactical and strategic innovation. Hussars and light infantry could be used behind enemy lines on raids, harassments, and reconnaissance -- operations that led to high rates of desertion under present circumstances. Warfare would no longer be lengthy maneuvers before decisive battle -- a burden on a relatively poor country.[63]

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[62] Gordon Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1660-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 25; Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 18-19. Best, *War and Society*, pp. 50-54; Hubert C. Johnson, *Frederick the Great and His Officials* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 259-62.

[63] Best, *War and Society*, pp. 50-54. Similar thought was found in French counterparts. See Ropp, *War in the Modern World*, pp. 99-102.

Freeing the peasantry from seigneurial domination and making them part of the nation was crucial to these military innovations. Shortly after the war, Frederick proposed ending serfdom in Pomerania, followed by similar programs throughout Prussia. But even the most visionary and energetic autocrat ruled through bureaucracy, and it was Frederick's dilemma that the more bureaus he built, the less his personal will counted, considerable though it was. Junkers blocked change by invoking the virtues of patrimonial rule and pointing out that Prussia had won the war and hence needed no reform. Serfdom was ended only on crown lands and a few noble properties, where it had little effect on the country as a whole. Recognition of the need to build a motivated rank and file did lead to lessening corporal punishment in the army -- an important step, especially to those in the army, but far short of constituting a citizen-soldier army. By and large, the military rested on its laurels, and stagnated.[64]

After the defeat at Jena-Auerstädt, reform could no longer be put off for further evaluation. Calls to the nation for a new army fell upon deaf ears, and Prussia became a tributary state in the Napoleonic Empire. As Hardenberg put it, "Pay! Pay! That is the song of the Emperor."[65] Unless substantive changes were made, Prussia would have to face the music for the foreseeable future. In 1807, just a year after the defeat, serfdom was abolished, ending centuries of serfdom. Baron Stein, influenced by Adam Smith (*der Geist von Smith*), saw reform as a means of increasing the wealth and military power of

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[64] Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility*, pp. 94-107, 152; Peter Paret, *Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform 1807-15* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 18-19; Gerhard Ritter, *Frederick the Great* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968). pp. 181-82; Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, pp. 23-25.

[65] Quoted in Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility*, p. 124.

the nation.[66] Ending servile relations would allow innovation, competition, productivity, incentives to work, and consolidate smaller holdings into larger, more rationally organized ones. Long-standing tax immunities enjoyed by Junkers were done away with; guilds and mercantilist policies were abolished; and the influential civil service was opened to talent.[67]

The end of serfdom had economic goals but also political ones, both of which relate to military power. Servile labor had no interest in the nation; it was merely a higher level of authority operated by and in the interest of the local lord. But a free land-owning peasantry, with new opportunities and outlooks, would see its stake in the country's independence. They would feel a public spirit (*Gemeingeist*) that would be channeled into the army and, in time, a war of liberation against France. The end of serfdom was part of military reform as well. The officer corps was opened to non-nobles, and promotions were based on talent rather than on a preposition preceding one's surname. New military formations (*Landwehr* and *Landsturm*) came into being to take advantage of and further emerging patriotic sentiment. In 1813, following Napoleon's defeat in Russia, a new call for a war of national liberation electrified the country, and

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[66] Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, pp. 167-69; Simon, *Prussian Reform Movement*, pp. 18-19; John G. Gagliardo, *From Pariah to Patriot: The Changing Image of the German Peasant, 1770-1840* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press), pp. 188ff.

[67] Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, pp. 163-71; Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility*, pp. 110-17; Gagliardo, *From Pariah to Patriot*, pp. 188ff; Simon, *Prussian Reform Movement,* pp. 46-47; Marion B. Gray, "Prussia in Transition: Society and Politics under the Stein Reform Ministry of 1808," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 76, part 1 (1986): 19-21.

ensuing victories at Leipzig and Waterloo became powerful parts of the national identity for a century. [68]

At the outset of the nineteenth century, Russia was the most backward country in Europe. Some nobles could claim hereditary rights, but most were a service nobility, whose claim to land depended on service in the state or army.[69] The bourgeoisie was tied to the state, either through the granting of privileges or integration into the service nobility.[70] The lot of the peasantry was dismal. Once among the freest in the continent, Russian peasants were gradually tied to the lord's estate and legally enserfed (1649) to support the military-nobility and to guard against insurrection.[71]

Inasmuch as military service meant manumission from the lord's control, army life was, in some respects, beneficial. Though service was for life (later reduced to twenty five years), the soldier enjoyed better food and pay; opportunities for plunder presented themselves; and indigenous guilds (artels) divided the proceeds from

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[68] Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter*, pp. 49-73; Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State: The Man, His Theories, and His Times* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 137-46; Gagliardo, *From Pariah to Patriot*, pp. 174ff; Simon, *Prussian Reform Movement,* pp. 146-57; Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, pp. 61-65.

[69] Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (New York: Scribners, 1974), pp. 52-109; A. E. Presniakov, *The Formation of the Great Russian State: A Study of Russian History from the Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Centuries* Translated by A. E. Moorhouse (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970).

[70] Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, pp. 191-201; Joseph T. Fuhrmann, *Origins of Capitalism in Russia: Industry and Progress in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972), pp. 175-89; Alfred J. Rieber, *Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Imperial Russia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 62-66, 140.

[71] Richard Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 214-33; Jerome Blum, "The Rise of Serfdom in Eastern Europe," *American Historical Review* 62 (1957): 807-36 and *Lord and Peasant in Russia: From the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 253-65.

miscellaneous work outside the army.[72] The army fared well against Prussia, Poland, and of course Napoleon's Grand Armée in 1812. Russia emerged from the revolutionary period without the nagging pains of defeat reminding of the need for reform. (It is interesting to ponder the course of Russian history had Napoleon freed the serfs in Russia, as he had in Poland, but this was not a reality that the Russian state had to face.)

The postwar army remained immense: 729,000 in 1826. It was the policeman of Europe, defending against threats to monarchy, and, after the Decembrist Revolt (1825), guarding against internal disorder. After 1825, Russia closed its doors to the West, sealing off access to liberal thought, but also to advances in the sciences that could have benefited the military. Though usually seen as an arch-reactionary, Nicholas I (r. 1825-55) considered emancipating the serfs in order to meet the industrial and military challenges from the West; but, as with Frederick II's plans in Prussia, the idea was thwarted by the nobility. Accordingly, the tsarist army became an immense, sprawling tribute to eighteenth-century warfare; its farmlands did the same to seventeenth-century agriculture.[73]

Russia faced modern industrial and military powers in the Crimean War. The army was immobile and plagued by nepotism and corruption. The conscription system culled only the dregs that local lords and elders wished rid of. Late in the war, only 13.5% of the soldiers had rifles, the rest used shorter-ranged muskets -- hence the slaughter at Alma and Inkerman. Russia lacked experts in engineering and logistics,

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[72] John S. Curtiss, *The Russian Army under Nicholas I, 1825-1855* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1965), pp. 96-112; Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, pp. 481-82; Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, pp. 172-74.

[73] Lincoln, *Nicholas I*, pp. 180-95; Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, pp. 239-42.

skills that had flourished in western armies. Though British and French logistics in the Crimea were far from textbook examples, they were sufficient to drive the point home on all but the most intransigent in St. Petersburg.[74]

Defeat brought on the Great Reform period. The military was but the most salient part of a decrepit social order. Reform of the former could only come from reform of the latter. Backwardness was a brake on industrial development and state revenue, both fundamentals of modern warmaking. The country needed to save money by trimming the standing army, yet foreign dangers required a sizable force. The obvious solution, one already adopted in the West, lay in a reserve system, but the prospect of training servile peasants in disciplined violence, then sending them back to the villages, was unsettling. The solution, Miliutin and other ministers concluded, lay in emancipation. In 1861, serfdom was abolished in all Russia. Nobles were to be compensated either by the state or by peasant payments. Schools were set up, administered by local zemstvos, to increase innovation and productivity. A further incentive to avail themselves of education (one with an amusing parallel to recent American history) was provided to the peasants by extending military deferments to students.[75]

The state encouraged industrial development through legal reforms, reduction of privileges, and direct investment. Nicholas's xenophobia had stymied economic growth and contributed significantly to the army's backwardness. His successor opened

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[74] Fuller, *Strategy and Power*, pp. 242-84.

[75] Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, pp. 575-592; Geroid Tanquary Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Régime: A History of the Landlord-Peasant World and a Prologue to the Peasant Revolution of 1917* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 64-93; Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*.

commerce to all, Russians and foreigners; legal reforms reduced interference in private corporations by the state and local nobles. State investment in industry, especially in railroads and river transport, was extensive, a process that would continue until the Bolshevik Revolution.[76] There was a portentous opportunity cost to state funding of industry. The state was unable to compensate nobles for liberated serfs, which meant that the peasants themselves would have to pay for their freedom. In law, they were no longer serfs but "temporarily-obligated." In practice, few peasant could afford redemption, leading to continued servile relations in the countryside.[77]

In the late eighteenth century, England was more constitutional than any European counterpart, except perhaps the Netherlands, but unlike the latter country, England was highly aristocratic. The peerage and gentry, despite a substantial middle-class presence, dominated the state. The army was overwhelmingly in the hands of aristocrats, though NCOs were commissioned in time of war. Roughly two-thirds of serving officers had purchased their commissions and risen in the ranks by benefit of purchase, a system that saved money and prevented another Cromwell from governing through the army. The staff kept abreast of continental military thought but saw no need for major changes.[78]

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[76] Thomas C. Owen, *Capitalism and Politics in Russia: A Social History of Moscow Merchants, 1855-1905* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 60-61, 79-115; Richard S. Wortman, *The Development of Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976), pp. 52-88 and *passim*. Owen notes the return of interference in later decades. See pp. 116-29.

[77] Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, pp. 592-600; Dorothy Atkinson, *The End of the Russian Land Commune, 1905-1930* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1983), pp. 22-27.

[78] Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why* (New York: Atheneum, 1982), pp. 21-26; John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 44; J. A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 100-3, 153-256.

The Civil War era (1641-60) saw the dissolution of many lucrative monopolies, but in the next century most contracts were awarded through aristocratic social networks. Ship-building, iron production, and timber industries were tied to nobles in Parliament. Beneath these large industries were hundreds of laws protecting guilds and controlling prices.[79]

England's wars with France (First Coalition, 1792-97; Second Coalition, 1798-1801, and the Napoleonic War, 1803-1815) constituted a protracted if intermittent struggle. But England was allied with major powers, avoided a fixed battle with Napoleon (until Waterloo), and never experienced a major defeat. Its army swelled to 250,000, its navy to 150,000, and though there were occasional problems (Wellington's army in Spain was once owed five months pay), the prosperous island financed the wars through public debt, as it had since the seventeenth century.[80] The wars led to an economic boom in England, especially in coal, cotton, and iron, providing a powerful impetus to the Industrial Revolution. Napoleon's blockade of English commerce proved ineffectual thanks to the corruption of French port officials. English merchant ships found themselves without continental competition, with only the Yankees to compete with in Atlantic commerce.[81]

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[79] G. Hammersley, "The State and the English Iron Industry in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," as well as other essays in D. C. Coleman and A. H. John, eds., *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England: Essays Presented to F. J. Fisher* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976), pp. 178-79; Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714-60* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 122-25.

[80] C. D. Chandaman, *The English Public Revenue, 1660-1688* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 1-228; P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit 1688-1756* (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 42-44; Christie, *Wars and Revolution*, pp. 235-38.

[81] Christie, *Wars and Revolution,* pp. 168-70; Hall, *British Strategy*, pp. 16-22.

There was no organized bourgeoisie yet; calls for laissez-faire came only from an eccentric Scottish moralist and a few pieces in the *Edinburgh Review*; and Mr. Bright's effort to repeal the Corn Laws was fifty years away. Yet the aristocrat-dominated state dismantled many of the old regime's fetters on production. A considerable portion of the road to free markets was paved not by Manchester mill owners, not by progressive Whig, but by Pitt the Younger, a Tory PM, who (like Baron Stein) admired Adam Smith and saw the utility of his ideas in modern war. Layers of wage and price controls were lifted, and Whig efforts to re-impose them were rebuffed. The Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 gave magistrates powers to deal with strikes, undermining the medieval guild system. Apprenticeship laws were ignored and ultimately abolished in 1809. One historian notes, "By the end of the French Wars paternalism sanctioned by legislation was dead; relations between masters and men were determined 'objectively' by market forces."[82]

The country's next major war, the Crimean, was the first war to have the public follow its day-to-day events. The war made *The Times* both popular and influential.[83] Britain and its allies defeated Russia, but with countless blunders, and even if the gallant six hundred didn't, many in the public tried to reason why. Tens of thousands had died from disease: nothing new really, but it was new to the public. The decisions of Lords Raglan and Lucan were questioned and even ridiculed (the latter satirized as "Lord Look-On"). *The Times*, during and after the war, harshly criticized the state and army, and

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[82] Christie, *Wars and Revolution*, pp. 170-80; Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State*, pp. 40-44. (Quote from Evans, p. 44.)

[83] Robert B. Edgerton, *Death or Glory: The Legacy of the Crimean War* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1999), pp. 2-11; Olive Anderson, *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War* (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 70ff.

called for reform of both. The army had failed to reform itself, even though a commission had called for it two decades before the war. Aristocratic control of high office came under fire. Ministries, the civil service, and the award of contracts should be managed according to rational, business-like principles. Reliance on debt to finance war should be lessened in favor of increased taxation on the privileged. And regardless of Tennyson's mythic ode, the public demanded to know who was responsible for the disaster at Balaclava: Raglan? Cardigan? Lew Nolan? Or an entire social order?[84]

It might be argued that this criticism of the aristocracy and the call for business-like principles in public affairs constituted a bourgeois revolution. A turning point had been reached, but criticism came not simply from bourgeois centers, but from almost all parts of English society. The aristocracy was not ousted from army and state; and the bourgeoisie did not suddenly leap to the fore. Aristocratic decline was rather slow, perhaps even barely noticeable, as was middle-class ascendancy. In the decades after Balaclava, aristocratic claims to privileged positions in public life could no longer invoke the formidable prestige once resonating with those voices.[85] Marlborough and Wellington were still revered, but recent events had tarnished the reputations of their descendants. Decline had set in, signs of dementia could be found, but death did not come until 1918.

The Crimean War affected the military less than it did state and society. Owing to the absence of horrendous casualties and a more or less successful outcome, far-reaching

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[84] Anderson, *A Liberal State at War*, pp. 51, 70-93, 101-15, 190-95; Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why*, pp. 74-95 and *passim*.

[85] David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 236ff.

military reform was not in the offing. A few commanders were disgraced and retired to their manors, but the purchase system remained. What calculating bourgeois would exchange twenty-thousand pounds for a colonelcy, even one in a hussar regiment, when opportunities abounded in shipping and manufacturers? Entrenched snobbery, too, kept the profession an aristocratic reserve.[86] After a couple of decades of doldrums, the army's prestige re-emerged with the popular imperial skirmishes around the world, which tapped into romantic ideals of war and went a long way in furthering them, especially with the romantic works of Kipling. Once again, reform could be delayed.[87]

The end came, as it did for all old regimes -- Hohenzollern, Habsburg, Romanov -- with the Great War. That long, expensive war required, for the first time, heavy taxation of nobles (including their lands), resulting in the liquidation of expansive estates and great houses. A prewar officer corps of less than thirteen thousand officers was inundated by the commissioning of over a quarter million officers (over a hundred thousand of whom were killed or wounded), most of them, needless to say from the middle and lower classes. Twenty percent of peers and their sons were killed in action.[88]

Victory and Counter-Reform

Defeat provides impetus to reform, but victory brings obstacles to it. Reform, it must be remembered, stemmed not from domestic pressure, but from foreign danger. After

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[86] Ian F. W. Beckett and Keith Simpson, *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 64-65.

[87] Kiernan, *Colonial Empires*, pp. 13-14, 167-78; Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army, 1868-1902* (Manchester, U.K.: University of Manchester Press, 1992), pp. 180-203.

[88] Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, pp. 96-97, 112ff; Beckett and Simpson, *A Nation in Arms*, pp. 64-87.

victory, the emergency disappears, as does much of the impetus to reform. State, army, and aristocracy -- the entire social order -- enjoy renewed power prestige. Inasmuch as religious upswings accompany war, sacred sentiments attach themselves to military figures, forming a basis for modern nationalism. Military leaders become Constantines, the fallen martyrs, and the country embattled Israelites delivered by Providence. States face a changed situation, and reform, never enthusiastically embarked upon, is delayed, limited, or even rolled back. A culture of victory provided political legitimacy and countered secularizing forces with romantic myths, atomizing effects with social solidarity.[89]

In May of 1815, late in the Napoleonic War, the dethroned caesar escaped from Elba, rallied his legions, and positioned them for a decisive battle. The Prussian king promised his country a constitutional monarchy with representative bodies at the local and national levels. A few weeks later, Wellington and Blücher (Blücher and Wellington in German historiography) decisively defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, ending once and for all the turbulent decades of war. Napoleon might have well taken Prussian reformers with him to St. Helena. Nothing came of the Prussian king's proclamation of only a few weeks earlier. Peasant reforms were re-evaluated and modified: the number of peasants covered by the edicts was reduced; services to nobles were partially reinstituted. Peasants remained legally free and allowed to own land, but the nobility came out of the period better off than they could have hoped in 1807.[90]

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[89] Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred* (New York: Norton, 1993), pp. 235-65.

Demonstrating a casuistic skill one might have thought a twentieth- century creation, army conservatives asserted, evidently with straight faces, that the disaster at Jena-Auerstädt had been caused by liberalism. The foreign contagion had sapped the army's energy and caused internal troubles that sinister enemies exploited. Military reform stalled then backtracked. The Landwehr, the democratic part of the military, was subsumed under the regular army. The military could smile wryly and note that the mass levies had not led to liberalization of the army, rather power prestige had militarized the masses, to their internalization of the army's norms and outlooks. Liberal ministers and senior civil servants were pushed aside. It would be mistaken to say that Prussia reverted to prewar form and that military absolutism had stamped out reform root and branch; a complete disassembly of reform might well have caused social unrest. It would be better to say that liberal reform, recently on the offensive, had lost its supply lines and been outmaneuvered. [91]

What was rotten in 1806 now seemed healthy. State, aristocracy, and army were no longer objects of scorn and derision; they were providential leaders who had rescued their imperiled nation. They had fallen in 1806, but they soon righted themselves and successfully performed the traditional mission of aristocracies, that of defending the homeland. Each stratum of the social order had played a role. Hardships and sacrifices born by the lower orders in daily life were necessary for the common good. The army saw itself as serving the most important role in the nation. It was their calling to be an

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[91] Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, pp. 65-75; Best, *War and Society*, pp. 208-10; Ropp, *War in the Modern World*, pp. 152-55.

elite within an elite, a conservative caste defending the country from all enemies, foreign and domestic.[92]

Power prestige won in the wars against Napoleon brought the birth of nationalism, or better put, to the development of various myths, lore, and beliefs into nationalism. Disaffection with domestic conditions shifted to concern with foreign invasions, which had a unifying effect. Napoleon had imposed an indemnity that weighed on all. His armies formed a threat to family, religion and local ways of life -- dangers overstated by Berlin, but no one near the French was unaware of them. War, especially military service, engendered a subsumption of individual concerns and a powerful sense of purpose. Wartime experiences harkened images from history and folklore: the hearty Germanic soldiers of Tacitus, Hermann's defeat of the vaunted Roman legions, the mythic *Drang nach Osten*, and the miraculous deliverance during the Seven Years War.[93]

News of Leipzig and Waterloo were greeted enthusiastically. Modern European sensibilities, which understandably link war with the senseless bloodshed and devastation of the twentieth century, and their American counterparts, who will think too readily of a later disaster in Southeast Asia, might fail to grasp the experience and importance of these events. But one might look to the jubilant celebrations Rome gave victorious generals; and images of the end of World War Two, distant though they now are, might provide a glimmer of what victory once meant. Victory brings an intoxicating elation, a

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[92] Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, pp. 80-81.

[93] Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, pp. 212-14; Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter,* pp. 97-99.

personal feeling of pride and accomplishment, a sense that all is as it should be. This was Berlin in 1815. Prussia, less now one's village or province, was great and glorious -- a remarkable change in less than ten years.[94]

Nationalist sentiment was conveyed in monuments, coins, works of literature, sermons, as well as in philosophy and history. Hegel actually saw Napoleon shortly after the battle of Jena, and at one point interpreted him as performing the mission of laying waste to feudal rule and opening the way to the unfolding of freedom, albeit because of personal ambition -- the cunning of reason on horseback. Later, he saw the Prussian state as serving a world-historical mission of bridging the individual with the universal, uniting all countrymen, and embodying their spirit as well as that of the world spirit on its path to absolute unity, a culminating point in world history.[95] The study of history, under the tutelage of Ranke, whose academic robes were adorned with military-style decorations, also lionized Prussia. He and his nationalist successors, who dominated the faculties of Prussia and Germany until the Great War, wrote of the importance of the nation-state, its kings and generals, its campaigns and battles, in the forging of the great events of the world.[96] While nationalism can aid the case for further reform by elevating countrymen to a level deserving of legal protection and fundamental rights, it more often limits

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[94] Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter*, pp. 81-82; George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (New York: Meridian, 1977).

[95] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right* Trans. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 155-223; Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960 [1941]), pp. 169-223. One wonders if Hegel's service in the *Landsturm* during the war had any influence on his thought.

[96] Georg Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1983); Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 232-38.

reform, as became clear in the course of German history in the nineteenth century. Criticism of the social order and those who presided over it, was rebuffed by decrying it as base consciousness, heresy, or as treason.[97]

The relative dearth of reform in England meant there was little to roll back after Waterloo. Protest was not entirely absent, but as long as the wars proceeded well, the political and social system as a whole was not in danger. Reading and correspondence societies cropped up to discuss inequities and other concerns. Aristocratic privilege was criticized, but neither widely nor intensely. Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791) enjoyed a following sufficient to warrant a royal proclamation the following year forbidding such seditious works. Higher taxes and food prices caused protest, but the economy boomed during the wars, ameliorating problems enough to prevent a return to wages and price controls. Naval mutinies broke out, but they were due less to radical thought than to long and arduous service before the mast.[98]

The wars were never popular, at least not until the end, but defeat was avoided and occasional successes buoyed the public. Wellington, like Marlborough before him, provided much for all Britons to cheer. He wore down the seemingly invincible French in the Peninsular Campaign and delivered a spectacular win at Waterloo. At sea, in keeping with the traditions of Drake, Nelson hounded the French fleet across the Atlantic, defeated parts of it off Egypt, and annihilated much of the rest at Trafalgar. His heroic

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[97] Hans Ulrich Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), p. 108.

[98] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1963), pp. 87-113; Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State*, pp. 42-81; Best, *War and Society*, pp. 134-35.

death made him akin to one of Fox's martyrs; his funeral was more like that of a beloved monarch or saint than an admiral's, and biographies remained popular throughout the century. Writings on the war and its leaders took on the hagiographic quality that was the hallmark of nineteenth-century history, replete with romantic, neo-feudal usages.[99]

Victory brought renewed legitimacy to the social order. Hardships and trials had been worth it. Elites, indeed all loci of authority, enjoyed enhanced prestige. The aristocracy could once more lay claim to its traditional role of defending the nation in time of war, a claim that had become hollow in the century after Blenheim, which saw them more concerned with bailiff reports than army service. As one historian put it, "[W]hile France eliminated a *noblesse d'epée* after 1789, England acquired one."[100]

Russia, too, had little reform to undo. The tsar's army, officered by hereditary nobles, destroyed the French invaders and later entered Paris. The new power prestige revitalized and inflated prewar myths that permeated peasant and noble cultures alike took: the tsar as "little father" with the interest of his people at heart; the need for powerful authority to prevent invasion and anarchy; Russia's capital as a Third Rome (replacing the decadent and fallen Rome and Constantinople); the messianic belief that Russia would save the world; and that the suffering of the people made them superior to Westerners and able to perform their mission. Russians saw recent events through the

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[99] Peter Gay, *The Naked Heart* (New York: Norton, 1995), pp. 161-67; Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 21-23. See Henry Adams's look at the English press during the War of 1812, a second front of the Napoleonic War, in his *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of James Madison (Second Administration)* Volume One, Chapter I.

[100] Clark, *English Society*, p. 118.

prism of their culture: Alexander and Suvarov had rescued the nation; the harshness of life in the village and military had been needed; victory elevated the country to greatness in world affairs; the defeat of Napoleon saved the world; and it had been made possible by the suffering of the humble descendants of Kuzma Minin.[101]

It was not confined to folk culture. Works of history sent the same message into schools and salons. Historians such as Karamzin (a student of Ranke), in the romantic prose and rich imagery of the early nineteenth century, proclaimed that Russia was great, its leaders visionary, its virtue had saved the decadent West. Tchaikovsky's famous *1812 Overture* conveys the destruction and suffering caused by the French invasion (signaled by the leit motif of *La Marseillaise*), the religious awakening in high liturgical quotations, culminating in thunderous and exultant volleys of timpani. The celebration of Mother Russia lasted for decades.[102]

Britain, Prussia and Russia emerged triumphant. Crown and nobility, military and state, prevailed and now enjoyed enhanced prestige, even sacredness. Below the elite level, middle and working classes generally accepted their positions in society and deferred to state and nobility, and formed no opposition to the form of government. Contrast to postwar France is stark and instructive. Defeated in and devastated by war, the country

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[101] Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, pp. 85-87; Paul Miliukov, *Religion and the Church in Russia* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1960), pp. 15-18; Edward L. Keenan, "Muscovite Political Folkways," *The Russian Review* 45 (1986): 121-25; Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Origin of Russian Communism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972); John S. Curtiss, *The Russian Army under Nicholas I, 1825-1855* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1965), pp. 258-59; Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Visions and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 16-17.

[102] Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, pp. 314ff; Breisach, *Historiography*, p. 349; Lincoln, *Nicholas I*, pp. 86-88.

lacked the stability of the victors. The French would never again look at their nobility as a military elite deserving high status, privilege, or deference.

Lingering regional animosities simmered, especially in the Vendée and other areas where uprisings had raged. Class divisions were sharp. Nobles remembered the Reign of Terror and sought revenge or at least strong repressive capacity. Peasants and sans-culottes, for whom the rallying cries of citizenship and equality retained meaning, looked at the nobility with fear of revenge and confiscation. There was resentment over the deaths of 750,000 French soldiers, but little agreement on who was to blame. Some looked upon the old regime as a halcyon period upset by the baleful rise of mass politics; others saw the Republic as a model to be recreated; still others yearned for the glory and prestige of the Empire.[103]

Postwar government developed less from internal processes than from the Congress of Vienna. Middle classes, the putative winner in the bourgeois revolution begun in 1789, were too fractured to form a governing class. The state was returned to the Bourbons and the aristocracy. The old rulers, accepted perhaps but widely resented, enjoyed no aura of victory that could inspire legitimacy or command deference. Balzac described them as "bourgeois and inglorious." A Russian exile, Alexander Herzen, also noted the contrast: "The aristocracy had its own social religion; you cannot replace the dogma of patriotism, the tradition of courage, and the shrine of honor by the rules of

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[103] David H. Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 44-72; Roger Magraw, *France, 1815-1914: The Bourgeois Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 1-93; Best, *War and Society*, p. 114. The debates over the past are reflected in G. P. Gooch's account of French historiography in his *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), pp. 151-264.

political economy."[104] There was no agreement on where the country should go, or even on what had transpired over the last quarter century. For the next quarter century, and more, France was chaotic, without consensus, nearly anarchic -- a crazy quilt of <u>isms</u>, riots, repression, revolts, attempted coups, and a successful one that brought back a new Napoleon, who ruled through a curious amalgam of populist democracy and power prestige, the latter garnered from colonial rather than continental undertakings.[105]

Social Change and Reform

The Congress of Vienna adjourned feeling that it had restored the world. The coalition had crushed the serpents of revolution and universal empire. Was this a return to the old regime? Was reform a spasm of panicked states that had no lasting significance? Though war's end brought the dismantling of many reforms, states were never able to revert to prewar arrangements. The wars had set into motion dynamics that prevented complete reversion and even advanced reform for decades to come.

As Tocqueville pointed out, once embarked upon, reform takes on a life of its own. It leads to the idea that political institutions are not unalterable, that social relations are not fixed by the hand of God or held together by unchallengable forces. Reform brings open criticism of the current regime: subjects, for the first time, publicly, and often vociferously, speak of problems, inequities, and injustices. Change becomes a routine expectation. The great powers could sign protocols, agree on terms, but could not undo

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[104] Quotes from Magraw, *France, 1815-1914*, p. 79; and Walicki, *Russian Thought*, p. 163.

[105] Sudhir Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen: The Second Empire and the Emergence of Modern French Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); Kiernan, *Colonial Empires*, pp. 13-14, 167-78.

the social and cultural changes percolating since 1789. The thrall of tradition was giving way to introspection and subjectivity, though now less under the aegis of Reason than under that of romanticism's project of re-enchanting the world that the Enlightenment and war had damaged. Liberty, citizenship, and representation became topics of discussion for much of the public, and principles of conviction for the emerging intelligentsia.[106]

Nationalism brought significant legitimacy and social theodicy to victorious countries, but this is a double-edged sword. Deference to authority is not the same as subjection to it. Lower classes were now parts of the nation, parts that had contributed to their country, by supporting the war and serving in the ranks at decisive battles, where national glory had been won. States could forget only at their peril that large-scale modern warfare now required popular support. Accordingly, states had to remain wary of counter-reform and attentive to public welfare.

The revolutionary period led to social dynamics conducive to reform decades after Napoleon's exile. Modern warfare requires huge amounts of economic output. Looking back on American history, it is easy to see the Civil War, the Great War, and World War Two as engines of economic growth that transformed the country, enriched it, urbanized it, and modernized it. The wars following the French Revolution did the same for Europe. Iron foundries, cotton mills, shipbuilding docks, and foodstuff producers thrived during the wars. After the war, devastated regions rebuilt by adopting recent methods. New technologies emerged, innovation changed production ways, and new

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[106] Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Régime and the French Revolution* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), pp. 180-203; Gay, *The Naked Heart*, pp. 37-64; Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility*, pp. 154-59.

products replaced embargoed ones, all of which contributed to the Industrial Revolution transforming the continent.[107]

Social dynamics followed as well. Induction into the army, migrations by liberated peasants, and relocations to the city, entailed a great deal of horizontal mobility. Newcomers to urban areas, during and after the wars, took on new norms, felt less constrained by older ones, and were open to protest and mobilization. Vertical mobility was in evidence as well, some of which occasioned by the deaths of millions of soldiers and civilians. Enlisted men had become captains and majors; peasants had become tradesmen; petty merchants built large trading houses. With peace, many of those who had prospered could send their children to better schools, where liberal ideals survived in a climate of counter-reform and often thrived. Prior to the wars, intellectuals believed in reason and orderly progress, but after so much bloodshed and turmoil, confrontation and action were the words of the day. Despite the aspirations of diplomats gathering in chambers overlooking the Danube, the world, socially, economically, and politically, had changed beyond what even their formidable powers could comprehend let alone control.[108]

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[107] John U. Nef, *War and Human Progress: An Essay on the Rise of Industrial Civilization* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 273-328; David S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 143-45.

[108] Louis Chevalier, *Laboring Classes and Dangerous Classes in Paris during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981); Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971 [1955]); Alfred Cobban, *In Search of Humanity: The Role of the Enlightenment in Modern History* (New York: Geroge Braziller, 1960), pp. 214-21.

Well prior to the French Revolution, England had a meaningful national assembly and a free peasantry. Owing to a benign medieval legacy, and aloofness from continental wars, Parliament played an important role in national affairs and its peasantry was never tied to the soil. The sense of greatness and nationalism emerging after Waterloo entailed neither blind reaction from above nor silent servility from below. Laboring classes protested social conditions rather than the entire social system, and governing classes, mindful of the French precedent in 1789 as well as the need for popular support in modern war, were not inflexibly opposed to change.

The wars led to rural dwellers moving to the cities in order to find work in the burgeoning manufactures there. The government's doing away with various controls and guild laws (Anti-Combination Acts) meant inflation, dislocations, and wage inequities, which did not go away after Waterloo. The postwar period saw Luddism, Chartism, the Peterloo deaths, and more generally what one might call the birth of a modern working class.[109] Various governments, Whig, Tory, Peelite -- competitive parties are relevant here -- granted minor reforms, in part, to "spike radical guns," to use one historian's highly appropriate simile.[110] Parliament passed laws covering factory inspections, limits on the work day, and countless other reformist acts. Perhaps most importantly, Parliament repealed the wartime Anti-Combination Laws, enacted to abolish guild control of production. The laws had been successful in weakening old laboring groups, artisans and craftsmen; their repeal (1824) allowed for a modern working class to form

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[109] Thompson, *The English Working Class*; Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1790-1880* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 176-95; Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State*, pp. 160-84.

[110] Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State*, pp. 268-29.

unions. In 1832, the Reform Bill was passed, less from concerted effort from middle classes -- the more prosperous of whom had had the vote in the boroughs -- than from elite recognition that the country had changed since the wars began, and that a modest expansion of the franchise (from 2.6% to 4.7%) would detach middle-class elements from radical ones, and convey an image of patriarchal magnanimity.[111]

Russia was the least liberal country of post-1815 Europe. The monarchy was powerful; the nobility had won important privileges in the late eighteenth century; and the peasantry was tied to the soil. But under the surface, rooted in experiences from the Napoleonic War, pressure for reform was present. In December of 1825, on the death of Alexander I, reformists, mostly from the military, attempted a coup d'etat that would bring needed reform to their country.

The Decembrists were the products of the revolutionary period they, ironically, fought to defeat. Educated, even cultivated, they had learned Enlightenment ideas that had once been greeted in Catherine the Great's day but had been repressed once their implications manifested themselves in 1789 -- and 1812. More importantly, the Decembrists had served in the war against Napoleon, seen nationalism at work in Prussian and Spanish armies, and seen parliaments and citizenship as desirable aspects of the West needed in their beloved but benighted mother country. Perhaps in their studies

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[111] Norman Gash, *Aristocracy and People: Britain, 1815-1865* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 142-65; Derek Beales, *From Castlereagh to Gladstone, 1815-1885* (New York: Norton, 1969), pp. 84-86. Statistics on franchise change from W. A. Speck, *Stability and Strife: England, 1714-1760* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 1-29. Speck notes that owing to growth in the laboring classes, the percentage of the franchised population had actually been higher in the early eighteenth century than after the Reform Bill of 1832.

they had come across Adam Smith's observation: "As it is only by means of a well-regulated standing army that a civilized country can be defended; so it is only by means of it, that a barbarous country can be suddenly and tolerably civilized."[112] In any event, the officers' efforts to liberalize Russia suggest that nationalism and reform can go hand in hand, though not necessarily successfully. Outmaneuvered and defeated, their failure ended aristocratic efforts to reform the country.[113]

The new tsar, Nicholas I, sought to isolate his realm from liberal thought emanating from the West. Universities were closely watched and travel abroad limited -- policies that served less to cut off liberal thought than to ensure economic and military backwardness. Usually seen as a simplistic reactionary, Nicholas was aware of the need for reform but feared that it would get out of control and result in another peasant rebellion such as Pugachev's, a receding but unforgotten event in early nineteenth-century Russia. Forbidden and dangerous, ferment from the war period survived amid official nationalism, dividing the emerging intelligentsia into one camp looking to Western liberalism for inspiration, and another despising it and holding fast to the idea of Russian greatness apotheosized in the Napoleonic War.[114]

Late in Nicholas's rule, before the outbreak of the Crimean War, a reform-oriented faction developed in the state, quite high in old rank system. For these "enlightened bureaucrats," Russia's autocracy, rigid bureaus, repressed peasantry, economic backwardness, and huge but archaic army, were badly in need of reform. Less influenced

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[112] Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* Book V Chapter I Part I.

[113] Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, pp. 264-66; Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution*, pp. 1-116.

[114] Lincoln, *Nicholas I,* pp. 180-95.

by philosophy than by geopolitics, they realized that Russia needed modern industries, a railroad system, spirited soldiers, and a culture open to innovation. The West had developed them, and if Russia were to remain a major power, it would have to do the same. It would take the Crimean defeat for them to make headway in the bureaus of St. Petersburg.[115]

Post-Crimean reform, as already noted, made important but incomplete movement toward the desired goals. This underscores an irony of reform noted by the period's finest students: a strong-willed ruler is necessary to overcome entrenched opponents and bureaucratic inertia.[116] Over the next few decades, amid defeat and diplomatic humiliations, liberal reformers competed with radical, nihilistic, and terrorist groups, the most significant of which knew well the importance of a strong central authority.

Enclaves of reform abounded in postwar Prussia. The end of serfdom (1807) had won popular support for war and had improved agricultural efficiency. But it was well known to reformers that freeing the serfs, entailing as it did the end of laws protecting them from nobles (*Bauernschutz*), would lead to estate expansion at the expense of small-holders and former serfs -- a plus for the economy perhaps, but one that posed political problems from a pauperized peasantry. The promise of a national assembly came to naught in the post-Waterloo celebration. Local assemblies, revitalized in the war years, receded in importance. In the decades after the war, however, local estates were foci of reform

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[115] W. Bruce Lincoln, *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats, 1825-61* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1984), pp. 1-42; Lincoln, *Nicholas I*, pp. 194-95.

[116] Lincoln, *The Great Reforms*, pp. 52ff.

pressure, especially when the king attempted to win their support in his fights with the bureaucracy.[117]

The French army left bastions of liberalism after its retreat from Moscow and Leipzig. In the Low Countries, Northern Italy, and the Rhineland, the French had instituted changes favorable to continued reform. The Rhineland was a quasi-colony, a closed export-market for the metropole, charged with supporting the occupying army and providing revenue for Paris. The French drove off aristocrats, placed government in the hands of local middle classes, and endowed all Rhinelanders with basic legal protections and access to trades and positions in the civil service. Occupied for almost twenty years, the Rhineland established liberal patterns in politics and culture, such that Prussia refrained from counter-reform when it established its "watch on the Rhine" after the wars.[118]

Rising incomes and birth rates after the wars brought about new, educated groups. Students attended universities in higher numbers than before the wars. They studied law, literature, the arts, and of course Hegelian thought, which was not always interpreted as a paean to the Prussian state, but as a call for liberal progress: the rational is the real. Talk of reform was all about; and to some, including the hirsute son of a Rhineland civil servant, revolution was needed and inevitable. Many students less inclined toward radical politics looked forward to careers in the civil service, but found their numbers

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[117] Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility*, pp. 154-59; Theodore S. Hamerow, *Restoration, Revolution, Reaction: Economics and Politics in Germany 1815-1871* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 38-55; John R. Gillis, *The Prussian Bureaucracy in Crisis, 1840-1860: Origins of an Administrative Ethos* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1971), pp. 18-20;

[118] Jeffry M. Diefendorf, *Businessmen and Politics in the Rhineland, 1789-1834* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1980); Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus*, pp. 144-45; Strachan, *European Armies*, pp. 79-80.

greatly surpassed the openings. The state responded to the glut with stricter entrance exams, which tended to drive a wedge between them and their elders.[119] The cause of reform garnered support from parts of the civil service, who opposed the king's efforts to reduce the bureaucracy's power and rule autocratically, as in the days of his forebears. A new reform era, they reasoned, would give them greater power, enhanced prestige, more resources, and higher income. By the 1840s, they were forming their own discussion clubs in Berlin society.[120]

By mid century, these sources of discontent and reform coalesced into a formidable challenge to Prussian counter-reform, which had held sway since 1815. In the bourgeois-revolution literature, the events of 1848 constitute the failure of Prussian middle classes to wrest control of the state from an obsolete and reactionary nobility. Fearful of plebeian movements with which they originally sided, the bourgeoisie abandoned the cause of reform and meekly hid behind the aristocracy, which protected them and their property from the unruly masses -- a portentous event that entrenched Prussia and Germany in authoritarian rule, and played no small role in the catastrophic events of the next century.[121]

Condemnation of the Prussian bourgeoisie for their timidity and the events that "followed" must be tempered by asking where in Europe had a bourgeoisie performed its putative historical mission of liberalization. French counterparts in 1848 might have

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[119] Konrad H. Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 22-77; Gillis, *The Prussian Bureaucracy*, pp. 40-48.

[120] Gillis, *The Prussian Bureaucracy*, pp. 18-20, 60-67.

[121] Hamerow, *Restoration, Revolution, Reaction*; Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967).

seemed close, but they would soon relinquish the reins to another Bonaparte and work amicably under him. England was still governed by landed elites and would remain so for decades, its bourgeoisie confined by the ledger and complacent with aristocratic government. Merchant elites had governed the Netherlands since the late sixteenth century, but had had no fundamental conflict with indigenous nobles, only with Habsburg intrusions. To the east, one can scarcely speak of a meaningful Russian bourgeoisie in the mid-nineteenth century, except as a beholden client of autocracy.

Stepping outside bourgeois-revolution frameworks, one cannot easily see the events in 1848 Prussia as failures. National assemblies convened and bickered, but the Charter of 1848 ultimately led to a bicameral assembly comprising an upper chamber elected by noble-dominated district governments and a lower one by universal male suffrage, albeit class-weighted (*Dreiklassenwahlrecht*). Further qualifications include the crown's veto power and ability to declare states of siege, as well as the army's allegiance to the crown rather than to the assembly or the constitution.[122] To be sure, the restrictions are important from the perspective of the next century, but for 1848 Europe, Prussian reform was a significant achievement. The national assembly remained a forum of debate and an important, if secondary, part of the state. It had less power than its counterpart on the Thames, but it might be noted that a laborer in Essen had the right to vote well before one in Manchester did.

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[122] Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, pp. 579-85; Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, pp. 118-23.

Wars led to critical liberal reforms in the century after the Seven Years War. In response to modern war, states put into motion revolutions from above, which convened representative bodies, terminated of old-regime privileges, and extended rights to subjects, including recently freed serfs. Furthermore, wars led to social changes that created reform pressure from below that complemented those from above, which flagged at war's end. Though venerable playwrights once gave them lead roles in their works, bourgeoisies played only minor roles in the drama presented here. Instead, aristocrats, chiefly those who stood from the perspective of the state rather than from that of the manor, initiated liberal reforms and pushed aside much of the old regime.

Accordingly, as Butterfield cautioned some time ago, vilifying them as "reactionaries" and obstacles to change is not conducive to understanding the periods they lived in and dominated.[123] And at this late date, one can only hope that a less than hostile account of aristocratic government will not be seen as endorsing noble pedigrees, the glory of war, or the knout. Furthermore, "reason of state," usually considered the enemy of liberty and reform, was the driving force behind liberal reform in this period. Perhaps now that aristocracies have faded into irrelevance, and calls of reason of state have lost their reflexive responses, their importance in history can be better appreciated.

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[123] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965 [1931]).