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Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power

Barry R. Posen

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War have precipitated an epidemic of nationalist conflicts. Nationalism was hardly quiescent during the last forty-five years: it played a key role in the decolonization process, fueling both revolutionary and inter-state warfare. But students of strategy concerned themselves with the dynamics of superpower conflict and its effects on regional enmities more than with the dynamics of nationalist rivalries. Thus, we lack sufficient analysis to explain our current predicament; instead, we invoke folk theories about ancient hatreds, or sorcerer leaders who have miraculously called them forth.

We fear nationalism because of its close association with the destructive warfare of the first half of the century. Many believe that nationalism permitted or even compelled leaders to conduct reckless foreign policies that produced wars; prolonged the wars by promoting escalation of war aims; increased the destructiveness of war by providing distilled industrial power in the form of vast quantities of armaments; and sustained the most intense combat imaginable with the energies and the blood of millions of young men.¹ Although these widely held propositions about the dangerous consequences of nationalism are by no means proven, when we express concerns today about the re-emergence of long-suppressed nationalism, this is what we fear.

Given that so much curiosity about nationalism is driven by its apparent association with war, it is noteworthy that few scholars have tried directly to connect the two phenomena. Most scholarship on the origins of nation-

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1. For an example of such views, see Michael Howard, *War in European History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 109–115; Carlton J.H. Hayes, *Nationalism: A Religion* (New York: Macmillan: 1960), pp. 120–124.

alism addresses the political, social, and economic development processes that have affected the formation of national identities. This literature is striking in its richness, but it pays little attention to war. Most scholarship on the origins and conduct of the great wars we associate with nationalism, especially the two world wars, traces only imprecisely their connection with nationalism.

In this article I argue that nationalism increases the intensity of warfare, and specifically the ability of states to mobilize the creative energies and the spirit of self-sacrifice of millions of soldiers. Several of the elements of nationalism long stressed by scholars of the subject are caused or intensified by the task of preparation for warfare, and by the experience of warfare, particularly "mass mobilization" warfare. It is not merely coincidental that nationalism seems to cause intense warfare; I argue that it is purveyed by states for the express purpose of improving their military capabilities.

Security Competition and Military Imitation

I define nationalism as the propensity of individuals to identify their personal interest with that of a group that is too large to meet together; to identify that interest on the basis both of a "culture" that the group shares, and a purported history that the group purportedly shares; and to believe that this group must have a state structure of its own in order to thrive.² Nationalism would thus help generate the individual commitment and the organized cooperation that make for combat power on the battlefield. Once nationalism is in place, the kind (although not necessarily the incidence) of warfare that we have seen since the French Revolution follows. Most of the interesting questions arise as to how both the beliefs and the shared culture come to be, and how they come to be in many states more or less simultaneously. Usually the answer to these questions is presumed to lie at the level of individual

2. This definition is consistent with that offered by Ernst Haas, "What is nationalism and why should we study it?" *International Organization*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Summer 1986), p. 709. It also draws on Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1966), chap. 4, "Peoples, Nations, and Communication," pp. 86–105. I have also borrowed from Ernest Gellner, who posits that a shared "high" or literary culture is the fundamental element of nationalism. Because he views culture as the glue that holds industrial capitalism together, he sees the spread of capitalism as the main cause of modern nationalism. Below I develop a different argument. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); for a useful summary, see pp. 139–143; and for elaboration, pp. 35–38.

societies; if nationalism emerges in many neighboring societies simultaneously, then it is assumed that they are all experiencing similar political, social, economic, or demographic changes.

By contrast, my argument stresses the causal role of the international system; structural realism deduces from the anarchical condition of international politics that states that wish to remain autonomous will compete for security. Military capabilities are a key means to such security, and thus states will pay close attention to them. States will be concerned about the size and effectiveness of their military organizations relative to their neighbors. As in any competitive system, successful practices will be imitated. Those who fail to imitate are unlikely to survive.³ The development of the professional officer corps in the 1600s was one such practice, which provided modern states with a permanent organization dedicated to the improvement of war-making capacity, and to the observation of such improvements by prospective adversaries.⁴

The mass army is a successful practice from the point of view of state survival in international politics. The mass army makes land powers much more capable of aggression. It is difficult to oppose a mass army without a mass army. Once the French Revolution, and later Napoleon, proved the efficacy of this pattern of military organization, others who valued their sovereignty were strongly encouraged to imitate this example. It is this imitation, I argue, that helped to spread nationalism across Europe.

THE MASS ARMY

Although historians, military and otherwise, speak of the rise of the “mass army” in the French Revolution, and its subsequent spread across the world,

3. The standard work is Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979); see esp. pp. 123–128. “Contending states imitate the military innovations contrived by the country of greatest capability and ingenuity,” p. 127. This is also the theme of Charles Tilly, ed., *Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). The essays in Tilly’s collection stress competition and imitation in the development of the whole administrative apparatus of states, including their military; they address the development of nations less directly. See also Stanislav Andreski, *Military Organization and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 68–71.

4. William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 123–124, views the Thirty Years War as the event marking the institutionalization of a “professional” officer corps in the sense of a Europe-wide, self-conscious group of technical experts in the “management” of violence, dedicated to the improvement of their craft. After the Thirty Years War, the institution of the standing army spread throughout Europe, providing regular employment for these professionals. As noted elsewhere in this article, the notion that one plied one’s trade for a single state throughout one’s career had not yet caught on.

clear definitions, as well as explanations of its emergence and spread, are hard to find. The essence of the mass army is only partly its size, although it *is* a great deal larger than most of its predecessors.⁵ The essence of the mass army is its ability to maintain its size in the face of the rigors of war: the attrition exacted by the unhealthy conditions of the campaign, the temptation of individuals to desert, and the firepower of the enemy. Its second essential quality is that it can also to a very large extent retain its “combat power.” Replacements can be armed, trained, and organized rapidly so that they can be maneuvered over great distances and employed in engagements. Thus the recruits must arrive with a certain willingness to become soldiers, a certain educability, and a certain commitment to the outcome of the battle. This makes political motivation, and ultimately literacy, key elements of the mass army.

The development of the mass army depended physically on a general increase in population and wealth, so that society could provide from its surplus the reserves of manpower, weapons and supplies necessary to its effectiveness. The army needed the spread of literacy, initially down to the level of the non-commissioned officer, to facilitate command, training, and political motivation. The first mass army depended ultimately upon a political revolution whose ideology, redolent of nationalism, stressed the equality and community of all Frenchmen;⁶ the first coalition’s invasion of France in 1793 forced a beleaguered leadership to order mass conscription.

Finally, the politically motivated mass army was a response to a “technological” problem—a constraint. (Developments in military technology reward some behaviors and penalize others, but they seldom directly determine military practice.) By the mid-1700s improvements in firearms made infan-

5. Louis XIV put the largest *ancien regime* army into the field; at 450,000 it represented a feat unequalled by his royal successors. Russell F. Weigley, *The Age of Battles* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 260. By late 1793, the revolutionary government had 700,000 soldiers. Jean-Paul Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution*, trans. R.R. Palmer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 243. Under Napoleon strength fluctuated, but between 1800 and 1812, 1.3 million conscripts were reportedly absorbed. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power*, p. 200.

6. The germ of this argument is found in Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, 1984), pp. 591–593. Of France he notes, “in 1793 a force appeared that beggared all imagination. Suddenly war again became the business of the people . . . all of whom considered themselves to be citizens. . . . The full weight of the nation was thrown into the balance.” Of the consequences, he wrote, “Since Bonaparte, then, war, first among the French and subsequently among their enemies, again became the concern of the people as a whole. . . . There seemed no end to the resources mobilized; all limits disappeared in the vigor and enthusiasm shown by governments and their subjects.”

trymen potent killers on their own and, combined with improvements in artillery, made it dangerous for more than a few infantrymen to cluster together.⁷ Dispersal would improve the odds for survival. Since the 1700s, professional soldiers have understood that the motivation, command, and control of dispersed infantry on the battlefield are extremely difficult.⁸ The problem becomes how to keep these dispersed, scared, lonely individuals risking their own lives, and cooperating to take the lives of others. An important related problem is how to replace the high casualties that may arise from armed clashes using these technologies. The deliberate sponsorship of both the cultural and ideological components of nationalism was perceived by many as a critical element, sometimes as *the* critical element, of the solution. Those states who do this better, all other things being equal, will be more competitive than others.⁹

States, therefore, act purposefully to produce nationalism because of its utility in mass mobilization warfare. Two aspects of nationalism—literacy and ideology—are subject to state action through schools, media, and indoc-

7. Most historians date the problem to the appearance of muzzle-loading percussion-fired rifles in the mid-1800s, but I find evidence that the problem emerged and was recognized a century earlier.

8. By the end of the Napoleonic wars, fighting in open order, or skirmishing, had become common practice in many European armies. Three different methods had been developed to produce troops who could use these tactics. The first was to train them from birth, as on the border of the Austro-Hungarian empire or the American frontier. This method was unavailable to central Europeans. The second was to drill and train the troops meticulously, as was pioneered by the British. This could not produce large numbers of troops, nor replacements for high attrition. It was uniquely suited to an offshore seapower which could control the size of its land commitment and the pace of battle, as did Wellington in Spain. The final mechanism was to improve the political motivation, solidarity, and learning skills of the average recruit, as pioneered by the French Revolution. This method spread throughout continental Europe, and ultimately the world, in the form of the mass army. For a superb introduction, see David Gates, *The British Light Infantry Arm, 1790–1815* (London: Batsford, 1987), esp. chap. 1.

9. Since the publication in the west of certain Second World War studies of the German Army, and particularly since the Vietnam War, the U.S. security studies community has stressed the impact of “small unit cohesion” on the combat power of infantry units. Much of this work was stimulated by E.A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, “Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Summer 1948), pp. 280–315. See also Martin van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939–1945* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1982). The impact of ideology, patriotism, or nationalism on combat power has until recently been derogated. There is, however, new literature that goes some way to restore sensitivity to the impact of these “wholesale” factors on combat power. Cited at length below is John A. Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic, Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791–94* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984). See also Omer Bartov, *Hitler’s Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986). All three of these works stress the conscious systematic manipulation of soldiers’ attitudes.

trination within the military. States promote compulsory primary education to spread literacy in a standard version of the spoken language to enhance the technical military utility of their soldiers. In doing so, they spread the “culture” and the version of history that are central to the national identity. Culture means mainly a written language, but also a shared set of symbols and memories. Both formal language and these shared symbols and memories facilitate communication, training, and geographical and social mobility.¹⁰ Although Ernest Gellner believes these arise from economic requirements, any argument that one can make for the economic function of literacy and a shared culture is at least as plausible for a military function, particularly in mass warfare.¹¹ The military fate of armies composed of several distinct communities and faced by relatively homogeneous armies tells the tale; the Austro-Hungarian army was nearly the least successful army of the First World War.¹²

The regimented presence of boys and young men in classrooms and in military units is also exploited to spread crude nationalist ideology among them. Schools, military training, and the newspapers spread the idea that the group has a shared identity and fate that can only be protected by the state. A highly patriotic and militarized version of the group’s history is a critical building block of this idea.

States institute compulsory education and engage in propaganda because military and political leaders believe that such ideas enhance the commitment of the troops to the purposes of the war, increase their willingness to sacrifice their lives, and improve their solidarity with one another. Wars provide new incentives for both the winners and the losers to purvey the elements of

10. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 57. “It [nationalism] means the generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind.”

11. “There seems to be in most countries a direct proportion between the degree of popular literacy and that of unquestioning national loyalty.” Carlton J.H. Hayes, *Nationalism: A Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 87. He goes on to note the difference in resilience between the illiterate Russian conscripts of 1914–18 and the literate ones of 1941–45.

12. Max Weber, commenting on the Austro-Hungarian Army during World War I, argues this position: “Consider the fundamental difficulty confronting Austrian officers, which stems from the fact that the officer has only some fifty German words of command in common with his men. How will he get on with his company in the trenches? What will he do when something unforeseen happens, that is not covered by this vocabulary: What in the event of a defeat?” Weber, quoted in David Beetham, *Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1985), p. 129.

nationalism, if the wars demonstrate the military advantages that come with literacy and solidarity. War also provides new ammunition, from disastrous military history as well as glorious, for subsequent purveyors of nationalism.¹³

Below, I focus largely on developments in land warfare from 1750 to 1914 and how they affected the development of nationalism in Prussia (and ultimately Germany) and in France. The patterns identified in this limited case study suggest that nationalism will be found to be part and parcel of preparation for mass mobilization warfare of any kind.

THE CASE

To evaluate the plausibility of the argument outlined above, I examine the competitive relationship between France and Prussia/Germany during the period from the Seven Years War (1756–63) to the eve of the First World War. The purpose here is not to test the theory systematically against any of its competitors; rather it is to establish its plausibility. This case should be relatively easy for the theory to pass: France and Germany share a gentle border and a long history of security competition; their struggles from the late 18th through the 20th century are often associated with an obvious and intense nationalism; the professional militaries of the two countries developed more or less simultaneously; and their literatures were easily accessible to each other. There is a vast secondary literature on this competition. Thus both substantively and bibliographically I am, in the parable of the drunkard's search, looking under the light. But if this case does not lend some plausibility to the theory in this military competition, then it probably is a "critical case": if the theory cannot survive here, it probably would not elsewhere, and so we should spend little additional time on it.

The purpose of my argument is not to deny the influence of other political, social, and economic phenomena on the development of nationalism. It is, rather, to stress a causal chain that I believe has received insufficient attention in studies of nationalism and war, and one that I believe has a great deal of potential to explain the spread of nationalism and variations in its virulence.

13. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 159, 180. Greenfeld notes that France's defeat in the Seven Years War stimulated the growth of nationalist sentiment in the French elite, quoting R.R. Palmer, "The National Idea in France before the Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 1 (1940), p. 100. Simon Schama offers a similar judgment in *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1989), pp. xv, 32–34, 858.

An effort to weigh the power of these military causes, relative to other types of causes, will have to await further research. Nevertheless, if the argument is persuasive, then it suggests that nationalism can be expected to persist wherever the military security of states depends on mass mobilization, and that we must expect future military organizers with even a mediocre knowledge of military history to imitate this military format.¹⁴

THE PREDICTIONS

From the theory I have developed follow certain predictions about the case. First, we should expect to find that the explanations offered by important actors, such as statesmen and soldiers, of what they do are made in terms that are consistent with the theory. Since the theory predicts change over time in important practices, and since change is never easy, someone has to argue for it. If they argue for it for the reasons I have specified, then the theory is strengthened.

Second, we should find that changes in a given state's military or educational policies often follow the big wars that demonstrate the effectiveness of alternative policies, especially if they are successfully demonstrated by a potential adversary. For example:

- We should see states adopting mass armies if they have been beaten by mass armies, or they expect to have to confront one.
- We should see states embarking on literacy campaigns for the explicit purpose of producing better soldiers.
- We should find that educational materials used in primary schools have both a high nationalist content and a high military content.

Our purpose is to see whether states consciously imitate the successful practices of others, whether the mass army is deemed to be such a successful practice, whether nationalism correlates with the success of the mass army, whether the intensification of nationalism in one's own country is viewed as an essential component of a mass army, and whether actors connect literacy to military success and sponsor literacy to improve military effectiveness.

14. The concept of a "military format" is borrowed from Samuel E. Finer, "State- and Nation-Building in Europe: The Role of the Military," pp. 89-90, in Tilly, ed., *Formation of National States*, pp. 84-163. He includes, in the concept of format, the "service basis" of the military force, its composition in terms of main arms, and its social stratification. Finer's general approach in the essay helped inspire my own treatment below.

Third, if we find that states do these things even when they have other reasons not to, the theory is strengthened. And indeed, there are such reasons: narrow elites, such as the Prussian elite during the period in question, have good reason to avoid the mass army because it legitimates popular claims for political participation. Nationalist ideology does the same. By recruiting from every class, the mass army loses its utility as an instrument of domestic repression, and thus changes the balance of power between rulers and ruled. (It also diffuses some military skill throughout the society, as trained conscripts return to civilian life.) Increases in literacy also change the domestic balance of power by improving the political organizational abilities of the newly literate. Thus narrow elites should be opposed to the mass army, to nationalist ideology, and to compulsory education. If they nevertheless opt for the mass army and its necessary supports for security reasons, it strengthens my claim that systemic forces are a powerful cause of the diffusion of nationalism.

Narrow elites will wish to dispense with the mass army and its educational and ideological supports as soon as the national emergency passes, but according to realist theory, this is extremely difficult to do. The problem is somewhat akin to unilateral disarmament: since states cannot easily predict when and whether their neighbors can return to this successful offensive format, they must preserve a capability to return to it themselves, even if they would rather not do so for other reasons. Clausewitz summarized the lessons of mass mobilization in the Napoleonic wars: "once barriers—which in a sense consist only in man's ignorance of what is possible—are torn down, they are not so easily set up again. At least when major interests are at stake, mutual hostility will express itself in the same manner as it has in our own day."¹⁵

An alternative theory argues that narrow elites purvey nationalism as a kind of "false democracy" when they are under internal assault.¹⁶ Nationalism is viewed as a confidence game in which elites try to convince the lower

15. Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 593. Elsewhere (p. 220) he observes, "All these cases have shown what an enormous contribution the heart and temper of a nation can make to the sum total of its politics, war potential, and fighting strength. Now that governments have become conscious of these resources, we cannot expect them to remain unused in the future, whether the war is fought in self-defense or in order to satisfy intense ambition."

16. This argument is implicit in many historical analyses of Wilhelmine Germany. For example see V.R. Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914* (New York: St. Martin's: 1973) pp. 29–31. Stephen Van Evera develops it briefly in "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War," *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Winter 1990–91), pp. 28–29.

orders that they are all members of the same community; inequalities of power and wealth are deliberately obscured. But even if these same elites promote nationalism, however, they should avoid the mass army and compulsory education, since these would shift the internal balance of power.

One could argue that nationalist ideology is a mechanism to counterbalance the democratizing force of conscription and compulsory education when the international system forces these expedients on narrow elites. Still, if this were the case, one would expect to find more democratic states purveying nationalism less intensively than less democratic states: the French state should purvey a less virulent nationalist ideology, and do so less intensively, than the German state. Such a fine-grained measurement is beyond the scope of this article, but the case described below does permit the reader to make a crude comparison; I see no obvious differences.

Theories of nationalism that stress its internal cultural sources seem to suggest the unlikelihood that successful military practices will be borrowed from abroad, although no theory explicitly advances this proposition. If nationalism was largely the organic result of a special internal process, borrowing of even successful enemy military practices would be taboo. Where states might argue their own national uniqueness and the complete "non-importability" of foreign models, but instead imitate the military institutions and practices of those who have defeated them, repackaged with a veneer of indigenouslyness, credibility is lent to the argument that military competition is an important cause of the spread of nationalism.

The Eve of Revolution

From the close of the Thirty Years' War to the end of the eighteenth century, the monarchs of Europe made war with small long-service armies, the rank and file of which were often at least partly "foreign," commanded by a mix of aristocrats, profiteers, and free-lance professionals. These armies tended to fight as relatively compact formations. Combat performance depended in part on drilling the individual soldiers until they could perform elaborate tactical maneuvers and shoot their weapons more or less automatically. Discipline was fierce. Frederick the Great of Prussia was the acknowledged master of this kind of war, and he is noted to have asserted that his troops had to fear their officers more than the enemy.

Already at roughly mid-century, some professional soldiers had become dissatisfied with customary military practices. This is sometimes attributed

to a generalized spillover from the Enlightenment to military thought. Rather than quarrel with this position I would add that a practical problem had emerged: European armies had become too good at making war the old-fashioned way.¹⁷ State financial and administrative apparatuses were strong enough to stay at war for several years at a time. But the combination of pre-war drill, improvements in firepower technology, and battlefield leadership had made actual combat almost too costly to sustain.¹⁸ Casualties of 20 percent or more per battle became common in the Seven Years War, and the war lasted long enough for a number of battles to be fought.¹⁹ Yet the infantry casualties could not be replaced at the pace they were incurred. Recruitment in wartime was difficult, and there was no time for the intensive training required to produce new infantrymen capable of the elaborate tactical combinations that officers preferred. The usual expedient was to add more and more artillery to the forces, but given the sheer weight of the guns, this impaired both large-scale and small-scale maneuver.²⁰

Prior to the French Revolution, French and German military thinkers were writing about the need for a better motivated soldier, and particularly for a soldier who had some loyalty to the state. The Count de Guibert's *Essai General de Tactique* of 1772 is cited as the main theoretical work of the period that argues for the great military utility of a committed citizen army.²¹ Perhaps of equal influence was the German Count Wilhelm zu Schaumburg-Lippe-Buckeburg, chief of a small German state the energies of which were dedicated totally to the count's avocation, "military organization and training."

17. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power*, pp. 158–166, views the Seven Years War as an immediate catalyst of a new round of innovative thinking in European armies that had performed poorly, particularly the French, and imitative behavior on the part of many others, particularly of Prussia. He also posits a host of other "causes" of strain for the warfare states of Europe.

18. Even Frederick the Great, whom historians consider noteworthy for his willingness to risk battles, nevertheless viewed them as chancy affairs, often forced upon him by the exigencies of the situation. See Hans Delbrück, *History of the Art of War Within the Framework of Political History*, Vol. IV: *The Modern Era*, trans. Walter J. Renfroe (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985; first published Berlin: 1920), pp. 369–383.

19. Weigley, *The Age of Battles*, pp. 179–195.

20. Dennis Showalter, "Weapons and Ideas of the Prussian Army from Frederick the Great to Moltke the Elder," in John A. Lynn, *Tools of War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp. 186–191.

21. R.R. Palmer, "Frederick the Great, Guibert Bülow: From Dynastic to National War," in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 107–108. Guibert was also an exponent of mobility, although this was not inconsistent with Frederick's military practice. Guibert did not expect an imminent political revolution that would provide the kind of soldiers he wanted, and later repudiated his arguments as to their utility.

The count, who had instituted universal military service in his little state, also operated a military academy and enjoyed an “international reputation as a soldier.” Gerhard von Scharnhorst, who led the reform of the Prussian Army after its defeat at the hands of Napoleon, was educated in this academy, from whence he derived many of his ideas about the value of an army that was representative of the population.²²

Reforms were also proposed to improve the treatment of the soldier in the ranks, which were rationalized on the grounds of increased combat power.²³ In Prussia in the 1770s, the regiments of the army began to set up their own schools to educate soldiers and their dependents. The main impetus was to improve their economic lot, not their military utility, but the movement represented a shift in attitude toward the soldier.²⁴

Similarly there was considerable debate about the utility of skirmishers—dispersed infantry fighting independently of the long, tightly-controlled lines then typical of European army tactics. The purpose of the line was to generate volume of fire, not accuracy; commanders aimed the whole line by maneuvering it into range of the enemy (50–100 meters) at well-chosen points. Skirmishers, in contrast, were meant to fight as individuals and to pick their own targets. The debate was well underway at mid-century, although historians do not quite agree on its causes. The main inspiration seems to have been the extensive use, in the Hapsburg armies, of irregular troops raised and recruited from the disputed lands bordering the Ottoman empire.²⁵ There soldiers seem to have been bred rather than trained, and they spent much of their everyday life in a war of small-unit actions and raids. When attached

22. Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State: The Man, His Theories, and His Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 60–62. Scharnhorst was born in Hanover, served first in that army of that state, and as was the custom of the time, was recruited by Prussia in 1801 on the basis of his established reputation as a soldier.

23. Peter Paret, *Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform, 1807–1815* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 18–19. By the 1790s there is some evidence that the treatment of the common soldier was beginning to improve; see *ibid.*, p. 107.

24. Paret, *Clausewitz*, pp. 46–51. Clausewitz spent his early years in a regiment known for its interest in education.

25. The flintlock musket with socket bayonet made the lone infantrymen a potent weapon. Arguably this weapon was not truly perfected until the mid-1700s, and most soldiers were trained for rapidity of fire rather than accuracy. If trained in aimed fire, a soldier could hit and kill individuals at ranges up to 80 yards, and clusters of individuals at 160 yards, while with the bayonet he could still defend himself in the clinches. With training he could fire three or four rounds a minute. It was now possible, where terrain permitted, to disperse infantrymen to fight alone, and in the right terrain, unseen. Compressed groups of men, the tactical combinations of the preceding century, were vulnerable to these skirmishers, and to artillery. If they failed to disperse, they too would be vulnerable.

to regular units for war in Central Europe, they proved useful for reconnaissance, flank security, and combat in close terrain. As similar units were organized in the Prussian and French armies, they were trained for aimed fire, and often armed with the rifle, rather than the cheaper, less accurate, but faster-loading smoothbore musket.²⁶ Such troops were slightly expanded in the Prussian Army prior to the French Revolution; expanded yet again in the last decade of the century; and yet again after the defeats of 1806. Light infantry made up 5 percent of the army in 1786, 14 percent in 1800, and 31 percent by 1812.²⁷

While the reforms attempted before the French Revolution were meager, they suggest that an important military problem had emerged even before the revolution facilitated the implementation of solutions.

As the early successes of the French revolutionary armies were studied in Prussia after 1795, their widespread employment of skirmishers—*tirailleurs*—became the central issue. Moreover, the connection between these tactics and the nature of the soldier was clearly understood. Peter Paret deserves quotation in full:

To a remarkable, possibly unique, degree all problems concentrated in this issue. If skirmishing was to be more generally employed, the soldier's education, discipline, and drill—all of which bore directly on his ability to fight in open order—would need to be changed. Nor could the old methods of recruitment, exemption, and reliance on mercenaries be retained; a more representative cross-section of the population in the ranks would turn the army into a more national body; the relationship between officer and man, soldier and citizen, and between soldier and sovereign would be modified.²⁸

The French Revolution gave Europe its first modern mass army. This mass army depended on nationalism for its combat power. Those who subsequently imitated the mass army were also forced to imitate its nationalism.

THE BIRTH OF THE MASS ARMY

From 1792 to 1815, France was at war with much of Europe. Historians agree that the French Revolution marked a transformation in the conduct of war. The most important factor was the involvement of the French people. The armies became mainly French; they grew in size; and their ability to replace

26. Paret, *Yorck*, pp. 23–25; 28–30; 40–42. The cited pages only provide the outlines of these developments. Light forces and skirmishing are one of the main themes of the book.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

casualties through levies on the population at large made it possible to engage in frequent battles of great violence. The population took an interest in these wars, providing much direct material support in the early years of the revolution. Their commitment also undoubtedly enhanced the morale of the troops. Lengthy movements at greater speed became possible. The baggage trains could be slimmed substantially, since troops could be permitted to forage without too great a risk of the desertions that plagued the armies of the *ancien regime*. The democratic ideals of the army, and the departure of much of the aristocratic officer corps, reduced a good deal of the "life-style" baggage that had formerly slowed movements in the field.²⁹

Tactically, the French armies fought with a mix of line, column, and skirmishers. Conventional military histories of the revolution view deployment of skirmishers as the principal mode of combat in the Revolutionary armies (probably not true), and as a natural adaptation by politically motivated but poorly trained military novices (probably true). The widespread employment of skirmishers in "open order" seems to have spread fairly quickly after the revolution, and persisted to some degree in most European armies.³⁰ It was hard to fight the French without adopting their methods.

Reforms initiated before but not completed by the revolution were extended. These depended not on political revolution but on the departure of many aristocratic officers, and their replacement with ambitious non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and volunteers would have changed the organizational balance between traditionalists and innovators in favor of the latter. The stress of constant combat no doubt eased the way for reforms by testing and proving their utility. French artillery was vastly improved in terms of mobility and range. The "division," now a relatively standard army formation mixing artillery, infantry, and cavalry to permit effective independent combat operations, became a regular organizational form. It improved the overall mobility of the army by permitting movement along separate parallel routes,

29. For brief accounts see McNeill, *Pursuit of Power*, pp. 185–206; and Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), pp. 36–42.

30. The open order persisted, at least in the French Army. See Ardant Du Picq, *Battle Studies, Ancient and Modern Battle*, trans. Colonel John N. Greely and Major Robert C. Cotton (New York: Macmillan, 1921), p. 238. Writing on the eve of the Franco-Prussian War, he observed, "Since these wars, our armies have always fought as skirmishers." He also reports that the Prussians fought largely as skirmishers in 1866. Paret, *Yorck*, p. 37, "The decisive innovation in infantry fighting that was to occur at the end of the eighteenth century consisted in the acceptance of open-order tactics by the line infantry."

with a considerable diminution of the risk of defeat in detail. At the same time, divisions could be quickly recombined into larger forces.

While it is commonplace to attribute the size and energy of the French revolutionary armies to the political revolution itself, a closer look at these armies reveals that there was a sustained political campaign to educate and motivate the armies after they were formed, and to forge powerful emotional bonds between the army and the civilian population.³¹ The high-water mark of these efforts, and their success, seems to have occurred by roughly 1794.³²

The identification of the army with the nation was facilitated first by the greater representativeness achieved in the pattern of recruitment.³³ The combination of the first waves of volunteers and the first conscripts produced an army that was by 1794 representative of the society as a whole. This, coupled with a host of other measures, encouraged those within the army to believe that the whole country was behind them. Similarly, recruitment from many parts of the country put large numbers of previously sedentary people on the roads of France. They learned that there was a France, and those who witnessed their passing understood that a great collective experience was underway.³⁴ The frequent singing of patriotic songs, many of which were commissioned for the purpose, helped reinforce these feelings on a daily basis.³⁵

Political propaganda was disseminated in the army camps in the forms of pamphlets and journals, much of it regularly read aloud. Cowardice was punished and heroism rewarded in public ceremonies. Civic festivals brought together soldiers and civilians to celebrate the ideals of the revolution.³⁶ In contrast to the old regime, and to the practice in the rest of Europe, soldiers

31. On these issues, see the very fine work of Jean-Paul Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution: From Citizen Soldiers to Instrument of Power*, trans. R.R. Palmer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); and John A. Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791–94* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

32. Peter Paret seems to agree. "Rather than reflecting attitudes already widely held in 1793 or 1814—loyalty to a cause, hatred of the foreigner, patriotism—conscription helped create and diffuse these attitudes." Paret, *Understanding War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 73.

33. Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution*, p. 132.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 127.

35. A single sentence cannot do justice to the importance of song. See Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution*, pp. 137–141; Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic*, pp. 141–150. Tens if not hundreds of thousands of song books were distributed to the army in 1793 and 1794. The government subsidized patriotic-song writers. Even the act of singing together helped build a certain collective consciousness. Patriot festivals, marches, and even battles were occasions for singing. No one who has seen films of Nazi rallies from the 1930s can doubt their impact.

36. Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution*, pp. 205–210.

were portrayed as honored members of society.³⁷ Class-based barriers to promotion were largely eliminated. Within the constraints of military discipline, the social distance between officers and enlisted men was reduced.

A minor theme of the period was an increased emphasis on literacy within the army as a criterion for promotion.³⁸ In early 1794 an ability to read and write was made compulsory for commissioned and non-commissioned officers alike.³⁹ NCOs were required periodically to read *The Rights of Man* and the military laws aloud to their squads.⁴⁰ Starting in September 1792, the National Convention began to publish a daily journal especially for the army. These appear to have been read aloud regularly to squads of the Armée du Nord, one of the largest in the field.⁴¹ Four hundred thousand copies of the draft constitution of June 24, 1793, were distributed to the armies. The armies occasionally distributed printed propaganda in enemy territory as well.

In his remarkable study of the Armée du Nord, John Lynn concludes that these efforts were highly successful. Not only did they contribute to the well-known élan of these French troops, but they encouraged a “rise in self- and group-imposed standards of performance and sacrifice.” These standards facilitated the rapid training of these French troops, which he concludes was critical to their developing combat power. “Without strong normative compliance, large-scale reliance on open-order combat would have been out of the question.”⁴²

PRUSSIAN MILITARY REFORMS

Many foreign military observers understood the connection between French tactical innovations, particularly the widespread employment of skirmishers,

37. Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic*, pp. 177–182.

38. As early as 1787 the army had opened schools to teach non-commissioned officers how to read and write. Armies increasingly employed training manuals, personnel records, and written orders, and were doing so with a frequency that required literate corporals and sergeants. McNeill, *Pursuit of Power*, p. 187. This of course had the effect of making revolutionary propaganda accessible to the army.

39. Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution*, pp. 174, 189. At that time nearly 85 percent of the NCOs could read and write; more than half also knew some arithmetic. Given that the Army ascribed to promotion on the grounds of merit, it seems likely that the military literacy programs begun in 1787 survived into the revolution. France had quite a high literacy rate at the time of the Revolution. Simon Schama, *Citizens* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1989), p. 180–181.

40. Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution*, p. 199.

41. Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic*, pp. 122, 136. It is Lynn’s judgment that the primary purpose of this political propaganda was to instill obedience to legitimate political authorities; combat motivation was of secondary importance.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

and the political system that produced them.⁴³ The later Prussian reformers, especially Scharnhorst, were quick to point out the impact of the French *tirailleurs*, although others challenged their views.⁴⁴ Field Marshal von dem Knesebeck, a later opponent of Scharnhorst, nevertheless understood the French quite well: "It is here that the education of the individual is of such great benefit to the Republicans, because situations too often occur during the combat of light forces in which the officer's control ceases completely . . . in which each man acts on his own."⁴⁵ The Prussians worried about the large number of men the French could throw into the field, and some began to advocate expanded reliance on a militia to beef up their own forces.⁴⁶

The catastrophic defeats of Prussia at Jena and Auerstedt in 1806, and the humiliating peace terms imposed by Napoleon, gave new impetus to those who advocated military reform in Prussia.⁴⁷ Under the pressure of defeat, King Frederick William was open not only to military reform proposals, but to reforms of all kinds.⁴⁸ While Scharnhorst, as chair of the Military Reorganization Commission, spearheaded the military reformers, Heinrich von Stein guided the effort to reform the political administration of the country. Both civilians and soldiers were working from ideas developed prior to the defeat, but defeat was a major impetus to their efforts.⁴⁹ And for soldiers, such as Scharnhorst's collaborator August von Gneisenau, these political reforms had the purpose of releasing military energy.⁵⁰

43. Paret treats this debate extensively in *Yorck*, Chapter III, "The Last Years of the Old Monarchy," pp. 47–110. As early as 1796 Scharnhorst declared that, "we shall be victorious when one learns to appeal, like the Jacobins, to the spirit of the people"; quoted in Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon* (London: Batsford, 1977), p. 190.

44. Paret, *Yorck*, p. 77; Paret, *Clausewitz*, pp. 32–33.

45. Paret, *Yorck*, pp. 78–79.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 89–90.

47. William O. Shanahan, *Prussian Military Reforms 1786–1813* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), is still widely cited, but should be read in conjunction with Paret, *Yorck*.

48. Liah Greenfeld argues that German "national consciousness" barely existed prior to 1806, but was a "formidable presence" by 1815; Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p. 277. Elsewhere (p. 372) she comments that, "France gave Germany the Enemy, against whom all strata of the disunited German society could unite. . . . Hatred of France inspired the uncertain patriotism within the German breasts. . . . Without the decade of collective effervescence and common effort, the vital enthusiasm which was sustained by the persistence of the French menace, German nationalism would not have survived its birth." Her definition of nationalism is more complex than my own, but there is sufficient commonality to make her observation relevant.

49. On the political reforms and the impetus given to them by the defeat see Hans Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1660–1815* (Boston: Beacon, 1958), pp. 202–205.

50. Gerhard Ritter, *The Prussian Tradition, 1740–1890: Vol. I, The Sword and the Scepter, The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, trans. Heinz Norden (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press,

Although Frederick the Great had considered the possible improvements in his military power that public education could provide, and had issued a set of General School Regulations in 1763, his fears of the socially destabilizing potential of education diluted his support of his own rules.⁵¹ His successors were similarly immobilized. Little progress was made in developing public education until after the defeat at Jena. Efforts to improve the Prussian school system focused largely on the problem of training teachers in a common pedagogical method, which itself had to be arrived at through debate and experimentation. Officials appointed to improve existing schools seem to have agreed that their primary purpose was “to educate to nationhood ‘the entire undifferentiated mass’.”⁵² The Prussian military reformers showed a keen interest in the debate on public education. They considered adapting the then-popular Pestalozzi pedagogical methods to the training of recruits. A Prussian educational official delivered a lecture to seventy officers on the “Influence of the *Volksschule* [primary school] on Military Preparedness.”⁵³ In 1812 a prominent educational official advised that elementary schools should teach “the history of the Germans, not merely . . . that of the Prussians.”⁵⁴ In spite of the progress made in the education of teachers and the development of curriculum, the poverty born of war probably caused the number of elementary schools and pupils to diminish.⁵⁵ The end of the war with Napoleon freed resources to expand and improve the educational system, but was ultimately to produce very conservative policies regarding the structure and the curriculum.

Prussian military reforms initially focused on how better to organize the small (42,000 men) army permitted under the Convention of Paris. Officers most clearly associated with the defeat were purged. The ranks of the officer corps were formally opened to the middle class, although aristocrats continued to dominate. Corporal punishment was abolished, as was the recruitment of foreigners. A host of administrative reforms centralized and rationalized military administration, purging the last elements of “free enterprise”

1969), pp. 70–74. See also Paret, *Clausewitz*, pp. 137–146. Clausewitz was another member of the reform circle, and in a letter to Fichte in 1809 noted the connection of “political arrangements” and “education” to the “warlike spirit”; *ibid.*, p. 177.

51. Karl A. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society: The Politics of Education in Prussia and Bavaria, 1750–1900* (Oxford, U.K.: Berg, 1989), pp. 14–16, 45–49.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 74, quoted a report from 1809.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 68–69, 75.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 78, quoted a report from 1812.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

from the army. The system of officer education was improved and extended, and greater scope for promotion by ability rather than seniority was provided. A War Academy for senior officers was established in Berlin in 1810.⁵⁶

The French divisional system was imitated and formalized, albeit in smaller brigade-sized units. A small number of reservists were trained in the regular army and sent back to civilian society to give the army some personnel reserves to replace attrition if and when warfare resumed. A much higher proportion of the infantry was trained to fight as skirmishers.⁵⁷

But the reform of greatest long-term import for the peace of Europe was the introduction of a universal military obligation. Actual conscription was adopted only with great reluctance, and Prussia conscripted only a small percentage of its young men after the defeat of Napoleon. Nevertheless, the reforms after Jena, and the fact that mobilized Prussian citizen-soldiers had participated in the final defeat of France, created both the military infrastructure and the legitimating experience that set the stage for the victories of 1866 and 1870.

As early as 1808 the Military Reorganization Commission had proposed broadening the methods of recruitment to the Army, including combining conscripts and volunteers in the regular army, and the formation of volunteer militia. Even this proposal, which fell well short of genuine universal military obligation, was opposed by the king and a broad spectrum of aristocrats and the middle class. Undeterred, the Reorganization Commission in 1810 recommended universal conscription with no exemptions. Both domestic opposition, and the limitations on army size imposed by Napoleon, rendered the issue moot until the emperor's defeat in Russia created an opening for Prussian revolt.

In 1813, universal conscription was implemented. Volunteer units were organized for the wealthy and educated, who were obliged to provide their own equipment. The *Landwehr*, a local militia organization that enrolled all able-bodied males, was formed, and the *Landsturm*, a regional defense militia for all other males, was also organized. The latter saw little action, but the regulars, the volunteers, and the *Landwehr* all saw action against the French.⁵⁸

56. Paret, *Yorck*, pp. 170–171.

57. For short summaries see Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon*, pp. 190–194; Delbrück, *History of the Art of War*, Vol. IV: *The Modern Era*, pp. 449–455. For a lengthier treatment see Paret, *Yorck*, pp. 11–153.

58. Paret, *Yorck*, pp. 133–138. Paret reports that during the 1700s the Prussian army had drawn its recruits from foreigners, and from draft districts or military cantons within the country. But

The Army grew from 60,000 in December 1812 to 130,000 three months later, and to 270,000 by the fall.⁵⁹ These measures were not met with universal acclaim, and popular support for the rising against the French does not seem to have equalled the level of public support achieved by the French in 1793–94.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that the combination of technical reforms, broader recruitment, and the fact of political rebellion against external domination provided the Prussian Army of 1813–15 with motivation and combat power that was vastly increased over its predecessor of 1806.⁶¹

SUMMARY OF THE REFORM PERIOD

The security relationship between France and Prussia from the mid-seventeenth to the early eighteenth century illustrates every aspect of the argument developed at the outset of this essay. Military professionals faced with a host of battlefield constraints, many of them technological in nature, theorize about ways to solve their problems. The development of greater emotional commitment to the state is widely perceived to be essential to a solution. This is particularly clear in the identification of success at open-order tactics with political commitment. Education becomes interesting both in the narrow technical sense of the facilitation of military administration, and in the broader sense of creating political awareness and commitment. Innovations that produce vast increases in the combat power of the French Army, both of a narrow tactical nature and of a more diffuse political nature, are closely studied by Prussian professionals. Imitation is recommended, and to a considerable extent achieved, including political reforms. The extent of imitation is of course limited by internal political resistance in Prussia, and the degree of necessity; nevertheless it happens. This period of war, crisis, and political change is followed by a period of “reaction” after Napoleon’s defeat. Many of the military changes discussed above are suppressed to a considerable degree. Much survives, however, and a second cycle of mass mobilization and military innovation begins in the last third of the nineteenth century.

there was a strong bias in local recruitment that put the burden largely on the poorest of the rural population. Moreover, the percentage of foreigners varied during the 1700s; Frederick the Great strongly favored reliance on them, proposing a ratio of 2 foreigners to every native. For a lengthier treatment of this hybrid system, see Delbrück, *History of the Art of War*, Vol. IV: *The Modern Era*, pp. 247–252.

59. Paret, *Clausewitz*, pp. 234–237. See also Rothenberg, *Art of Warfare*, pp. 194–196.

60. Paret, *Clausewitz*, p. 236; Paret, *Yorck*, p. 218.

61. I believe this to be a fair summary of Paret’s judgment, in spite of his cautionary observations noted above. See for example Paret, *Yorck*, p. 219.

Reaction, 1815–1870

After Napoleon's defeat, the statesmen of Europe tried to restore the status quo both domestically and internationally. Since domestic political revolution in France was closely linked to more than two decades of French expansionism, the restoration of monarchical power in France was seen as a key to peace. Similarly, political reforms that had been made in the societies that opposed the French for the instrumental purpose of beating them were to a great extent reversed. With the lessons of two decades of painful war still fresh, Europe's statesmen strove for moderation in their external relations. The need for highly motivated mass armies was removed; and monarchs were happy to see an ebbing of the domestic political energies that war had released.

Nevertheless, in Prussia and in France several military innovations associated with the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars were preserved. In both countries, the principle of homogeneous national armies, without foreign units or foreign private soldiers, was retained.⁶² Both also retained the form, although not quite the fact, of a general military obligation of the citizenry to the state.

In France the Bourbons abolished conscription in 1814, but found it necessary to implement a highly unfair system of "selective service" in 1818. Each year roughly 20,000–30,000 men were chosen by lottery from the 300,000 eligible for a seven-year term of service.⁶³ Those drawing "bad" numbers could hire a substitute, or after 1855 simply pay a fee to the state, so military service was actually the obligation of the poor. Troops often re-enlisted in the army after their first lengthy term of service; now unsuited for the civilian world, they sold their services as substitutes to those rich enough to pay. More than half of the officer corps in this period was drawn from the ranks.⁶⁴ The 1818 Law continued the revolutionary tradition of conditioning promo-

62. Unlike the early Revolutionary armies, Napoleon did rely in his later campaigns on foreign units to a considerable degree, and recruits from border areas often had a different mother tongue.

63. This discussion relies on Richard Challener, *The French Theory of the Nation in Arms, 1866–1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp. 10–28; and David B. Ralston, *The Army of the Republic: The Place of the Military in the Political Evolution of France, 1871–1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967), pp. 9–25.

64. Richard Holmes, *The Road to Sedan: The French Army 1866–70* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1984), pp. 90–100.

tion to officer rank (non-commissioned and commissioned) on literacy.⁶⁵ A study of incoming conscripts in the late 1820s revealed that only about half could read, which helped prompt national reforms in primary education in 1833.⁶⁶ Regimental schools were also instituted to teach the necessary skills.⁶⁷ To the extent that regimental educational materials communicated any message, it seems to have stressed martial virtues and heroic episodes of French military history, but not explicit nationalism.⁶⁸ The army was keenly concerned with fitness, tactical training, and marksmanship.⁶⁹ An interest in athletics, especially gymnastics and fencing, developed in the regiments.

In sum, although the French Army was much less representative of society as a whole than it had been during Napoleon's reign—no longer the revolutionary "Nation in Arms"—it was more representative and homogeneous than it had been prior to the Revolution.

French officers developed a strong belief that long service produced *l'esprit militaire*, a powerful sense of discipline and military identity, which were presumed to contribute to superior battlefield performance.⁷⁰ The precise source of this belief, which persisted well into the twentieth century, is unclear. I speculate that it was in part a return to pre-revolutionary professional military attitudes. It is likely that many early nineteenth-century officers were veterans who had bitter memories of their experiences with hastily raised, ill-trained troops during the last years of Napoleon's rule.⁷¹ Constant warfare against great coalitions decimated the experienced cadre of the army,

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 189–192, notes that the quality of the education received in these schools was questioned even then.

66. Paddy Griffith, *Military Thought in the French Army, 1815–51* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 103.

67. Eugen Weber, *Peasants Into Frenchmen* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976), p. 298. The Army also taught French to the many provincial French recruits, such as Bretons, who still spoke their own native language; *ibid.*, p. 299. The state's general interest in literacy was growing. The 1833 law required every commune to organize at least one elementary school, and that the school be certified by the state. Every department was obliged to organize or help organize a "normal" (secondary) school for the training of teachers. Compliance was not always enthusiastic, but in at least one coastal province local political leaders strongly supported the school because local young men tended to serve in the army and the navy where literacy was necessary for advancement. *Ibid.*, pp. 307–308, 327. For a lengthy discussion of regimental education, see Griffith, *Military Thought*, pp. 101–113.

68. Griffith, *Military Thought*, p. 105.

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–130.

70. Holmes, *The Road to Sedan*, pp. 90–91.

71. See Griffith, *Military Thought*; pp. 8–9.

and populated the ranks with inexperienced, teen-aged recruits.⁷² Combat effectiveness deteriorated.⁷³

From 1815–60 the organization of the Prussian Army, including the recruitment, training, and organization of the rank and file, and the recruitment and education of the officer corps, was a central matter of domestic political dispute. The king and the Junker aristocracy mistrusted the *Landwehr* and aimed to destroy its autonomy; they hoped to preserve and expand aristocratic dominance of the officer corps. The purpose was to secure the army as a defense of monarchical power against the growing political power of the middle and working classes. At the same time, however, considerations of security were also accommodated. By 1866 Prussia had achieved a competently commanded, highly motivated mass army, which was at the same time politically reliable.

Concern about the political reliability of the Army during this period had its counterpart in the question of primary school curriculum. From the end of the Napoleonic Wars Prussia developed an increasingly effective system of compulsory education for males.⁷⁴ The proportion of children enrolled reportedly increased to nearly 80 percent by 1837. The organization of the schools was calculated to divide people into distinct social classes and to restrict upward mobility. Reading, writing, arithmetic, religion, and singing were the main primary school subjects. The purpose of the latter two was apparently to instill “discipline, order, and obedience to authority.”⁷⁵ The impetus was primarily to instill loyalty to the monarchy, not national identity.⁷⁶ Explicit German nationalism played a minor role, if any, in the curriculum prior to the victories of 1866 and 1870.⁷⁷ The fact that statistics were

72. David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), pp. 333–334.

73. Presumed political reliability was also an attraction of long-service troops, both in France and in Prussia.

74. Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 186–187.

75. Craig, *Germany*, pp. 188–189. The School Regulations of 1854 placed religion at the center of the curriculum for primary school, where it apparently influenced the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Very little time was given over to history or science. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society*, p. 153.

76. Craig, *Germany*, pp. 157–158. Religious instruction was apparently increased for the same reason in 1879.

77. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society*, pp. 97–98, 109. Teachers themselves, however, became somewhat politicized and were blamed for the revolution of 1848. One suspects that in spite of the formal curriculum, teachers must have found it difficult to avoid including some political content in their teaching. *Ibid.*, pp. 129–130.

collected on the literacy of recruits suggests that the original reform-era military interest in education was sustained.⁷⁸ In 1844 it was suggested that retired Army NCOs be recruited as primary school teachers to remedy a chronic shortage.⁷⁹

There was little change in Prussian military institutions from 1815 to 1860. The standing army was kept small, roughly 200,000, largely for budgetary reasons. Conscripts served three years with the colors and two with the reserve, then joined the *Landwehr*.⁸⁰ Those not called up joined the *Landwehr* directly. *Landwehr* officers were chosen from the local elite, and included many members of the middle class.⁸¹

In two major mobilizations to provide military muscle for international crises in 1831 and 1859, *Landwehr* troops made a poor showing. In combat against the Poles in 1831, and against the Danes in 1848, the Army on the whole did not perform well. In civil disturbances associated with the brief liberal revolution of 1848, both *Landwehr* and regular infantry troops had proven weak supports of the crown.⁸² Napoleon III's victory in Italy in 1859, and the incompetence of the concomitant Prussian mobilization, provided the final impetus for further reform.⁸³

The purpose of the reforms was to expand the regular army and establish its complete dominance of the *Landwehr*. The Army Bill of 1860 was ultimately to double the size of the standing army, and preserve the three-year term.⁸⁴ Conscripts would then serve four years with the reserves, and only after that pass into the *Landwehr*. The regular army was to become the only source of *Landwehr* recruits; the *Landwehr* would fall entirely under its administration. The army could now draw upon seven annual classes of trained men at mobilization. The Prussians were thus able to field 355,000 soldiers against the Austrians, and, with the allies of the North German Confederation, a million in 1870.⁸⁵

78. Schleunes, *ibid.*, p. 109, notes that by 1841 only one Prussian recruit in ten had never attended school. 40 percent of the recruits from the annexed Polish province of Posen had never attended school. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 122–123.

80. In practice, conscripts apparently served only two years with the colors. Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 20.

81. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–12.

82. Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism, Civilian and Military*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1959), p. 191.

83. Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War*, p. 20.

84. Vagts, *A History of Militarism*, pp. 192–193.

85. Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War*, p. 22; Gordon Craig, *The Battle of Koniggratz* (New York:

This commitment to the development of a rapidly mobilizable, well-trained, professionally-officered mass army was seen to depend in some measure on widespread basic literacy among the common soldiers.⁸⁶ Much progress had been made in Prussia, more than in any other country; by 1850 the adult literacy rate was reportedly 80 percent.⁸⁷ And the Prussian officer corps, even prior to 1806, considered itself to have a special “educational mission.”⁸⁸ In Gerhard Ritter’s words, “If the *Landwehr* of 1814 had meant a partial civilianization of the army, the royal mass army of 1860 already displayed a marked inclination toward militarization of the whole nation.”⁸⁹

In one of the formative domestic crises of modern Germany, the Prussian parliament declined to fund the reforms proposed in 1860. But the government implemented them in any case over the next eight years, and ultimately extended them to the North German Confederation.⁹⁰

Officer quality also improved. Warfare was perceived to be increasing in complexity as the products of the industrial revolution, particularly the railroad and telegraph, began to find military employment. Education was expected to have a greater impact on combat performance. Future officers were obliged to study in higher military schools or to have a university education. Candidates for the initial officer entrance examination were required to demonstrate competence in grammar and spelling, apparently a problem area for some of the Junker applicants. On the whole, officer quality did improve.⁹¹ The General Staff under Helmuth von Moltke’s leadership skimmed off the intellectual cream of the German War Academy and subjected it to additional exacting training in the problems of wartime command of the very large forces that would now become available.⁹²

The victory of the Prussians over the Austrians in 1866 impressed observers all over Europe, particularly Napoleon III, Emperor of the French. The fully

Lippincott, 1964), p. 17. It is likely that this figure, which is close to that used by most historians, refers to the field army; more troops were probably available in garrison, in fortresses, and along lines of communication.

86. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987), p. 184.

87. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society*, p. 109.

88. Vagts, *A History of Militarism*, p. 172. “Far from being alienated from the people, this army was to be a great national school in which the officer would be an educator in the grand style, a shaper of the people’s mind”; Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 118.

89. Ritter, *Sword and Scepter*, p. 119.

90. Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 18–22.

91. Vagts, *A History of Militarism*, pp. 194–195.

92. Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 24–25.

mobilized Prussian Army was expected to outnumber the French by 2 to 1 as of 1866, without even counting Prussia's allies.⁹³ Napoleon III could see the merits of short-service conscription backed by a large reserve organization. The French military attaché in Berlin pointed out that the Prussians had perfected the "nation in arms" that the French had invented, and enhanced its effectiveness with the addition of universal primary education.⁹⁴ Indeed, French educators were beginning to articulate a keen sense of inferiority *vis-à-vis* Prussia.⁹⁵ But the French officer corps for the most part remained wedded to its preference for long-service troops, and the French legislature, which had gained considerable power by this time, was unwilling to support truly large scale conscription. In January 1868 a compromise bill was passed. Active army service was reduced to five years, but it was to be followed by a four-year reserve obligation. More conscripts were to be called up each year, but a substantial number would serve only five months in the active forces, the remainder of their nine-year obligation in the reserves or in the anemic French counterpart to the old Prussian *Landwehr*, in the *Garde Nationale*.⁹⁶ Ultimately, these changes were expected to produce a mobilizable force of 800,000 men or more.

Other reform efforts included Napoleon's futile attempt to induce the Army to imitate the Prussian General Staff; modest progress in the development of an efficient railroad mobilization plan; and the re-equipment of the French Army with the Chassepot breech-loading rifle, then the finest in the world.⁹⁷

Several lessons emerge from this relatively quiet period in European politics. First, reactionary elites clearly understood the relationship between an expanded military and expanded political participation. Opposed to the second, they suppressed the first. Second, the military advantages of a relatively homogeneous national army were not forgotten, and the basic notion of the state's legitimate right to conscript citizens for the military was preserved. As quiet as European international politics were during these years, such a useful security asset was not thrown away, even given domestic incentives to do so. Third, as Prussian ambitions began to grow at mid-century, and again in the face of considerable aristocratic resistance, the state adopted a

93. Holmes, *The Road to Sedan*, p. 92.

94. Allan Mitchell, *Victors and Vanquished: The German Influence on Army and Church in France after 1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 4.

95. Mitchell, *Victors*, pp. 143–148.

96. Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 29–34.

97. *Ibid.*, pp. 35–38.

professionally controlled mass army. Conservatives began to believe that the army itself might prove a useful tool to socialize young men to their political image of Prussia. Fourth, although they feared its social consequences, the Prussian government expanded and improved compulsory education faster than any other country in Europe. Fifth, the French perceived themselves to be the most affected by Prussian reforms, and moved rather quickly after 1866 to develop a response in kind, albeit somewhat paler.

Finally, an observation on military technology is in order. Improvements in firepower were seen to necessitate even more battlefield dispersion than had evolved in the Napoleonic wars, and even more dependence on the individual commitment of the soldier.⁹⁸ The deployment of the muzzle-loading percussion military rifle, the later widespread adoption of the breech-loader after 1866, and analogous improvements in artillery posed new tactical problems for European soldiers. Increased range and rate of fire meant that when fighting occurred, soldiers tended to disperse automatically, regardless of the intentions of their officers. To preserve some semblance of battlefield order, officers in France and Prussia placed a greater weight on training and length of service as a source of combat motivation than on the political commitment of the preceding period.⁹⁹ At the same time, however, there is a good deal of scattered evidence that the leaders of the armies were concerned about the education level and political attitudes of the conscripts that came to them, and paid some attention to their “patriotic” education in the military. These somewhat muted concerns become much more explicit after the Franco-Prussian War.

98. Showalter, “Weapons and Ideas,” pp. 198–199. See also the influential essays by Colonel Ardant Du Picq, *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), pp. 100–101, 151–169.

99. Du Picq, *Battle Studies*, p. 96. Du Picq is often taken to advocate long service, although to the extent that he offers a figure, he seems to view three or four years as sufficient (p. 131). His main point, however, is that soldiers can be kept fighting under the conditions of modern firepower only with tremendous internalized self-discipline. This he believed came from long “mutual acquaintanceship” of men and officers. In this he anticipated the modern military emphasis on small-unit cohesion. Interestingly, however, he also stressed something else that individuals brought to the small unit: “French sociability creates cohesion in French troops more quickly than could be secured in troops in other nations. Organization and discipline have the same purpose. With a proud people like the French, a rational organization aided by French sociability can often secure desired results without it being necessary to use the coercion of discipline” (p. 225). One suspects that Prussian officers would substitute some perceived positive attribute of their own young soldiers, such as “respect for authority,” for French “sociability.” I would substitute “shared culture” more generally.

The Franco-Prussian War and Its Aftermath

The immediate cause of the Franco-Prussian War was the Spanish attempt to recruit a minor prince of the Hohenzollern family to assume the Spanish throne. The blow to French prestige and power precipitated their immediate opposition, which actually encouraged the prince to withdraw. But clumsy diplomacy by the French, and clever exploitation of their mistakes by Bismarck, ended in a clash of arms with France widely viewed in Europe as the guilty party.¹⁰⁰ The underlying cause of the war, however, was the growing power of Prussia, the declining position of France, and the inability of the two states to establish their relative diplomatic weight in Europe through any measures other than war.¹⁰¹

The magnitude of the initial French defeats would probably have sufficed to cause a new wave of military reform in postwar France. The French legislature ordered mobilization on July 14. By August 19, its best army, 155,000 strong, was bottled up in Metz by about 170,000 Germans. (It was to surrender on October 29.) On September 2, Napoleon III surrendered France's "reserve" army of 100,000 at Sedan. In roughly six weeks, the cream of the French long-service troops and their senior commanders had been eliminated. The French had succumbed to superior numbers, organization, tactics, commanders, and—in the case of artillery—even weaponry.¹⁰² By any criterion the Prussian victory was extraordinary.¹⁰³ The Prussian armies now marched on Paris.

In Paris, then a heavily fortified city full of mobilized troops, the remnants of Napoleon's government took steps to form a Government of National Defense, even as moderate and extreme left-wing political forces moved to

100. See Howard, *Franco-Prussian War*, pp. 48–57, for a lucid summary of this convoluted matter.

101. *Ibid.*, p. 40; In terms of population and wealth, Prussia and its German allies did not overmatch France. The Prussians won due to greatly superior military organization. Had the French military reforms progressed unhindered for another five years, a war with Prussia in 1875 might not have produced quite so lopsided an outcome. For a material assessment, see Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 149, 171, 187.

102. Here I include both tactics, the method of fighting at the level of small and medium-sized units, and "operational art," the method of orchestrating the movement of corps and armies moving independently to try to achieve a single military goal. In the latter, the Prussians vastly outclassed the French; in the former the superiority was less marked, and depended largely on the exploitation of technically superior artillery.

103. I rely for the preceding and subsequent analysis on the classic work by Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War*.

overthrow the old regime altogether. The moderate left took control and proceeded to establish its writ throughout unoccupied France. Since the new government's claim to legitimacy was based on national defense, it met little political resistance. Informal peace overtures foundered on Prussia's demands for Alsace and Lorraine.¹⁰⁴

The new government intended that Paris would be the decisive battle of the war. Two weeks of frenetic activity strengthened its fortifications and armaments, and assembled some 200,000 largely untrained soldiers. The Prussians opted for a siege, however. Then the scene of action shifted to the rest of France, much to the surprise of the Prussians.

The agent of this shift was 32-year-old Leon Gambetta, the Minister of the Interior, who had been smuggled out of Paris in a balloon. He organized resistance in the rest of the country, assisted by Charles de Freycinet, a professional engineer. Together they not only led the organization of new armies, they mobilized the whole apparatus of the state and relevant civilian professions. Theoretically, the Law of 1868 left a million men with some kind of military obligation for Gambetta to exploit (not counting the soldiers in Paris, surrounded in Metz, or surrendered to the Germans). With a superior navy intact, imports of weapons and equipment from abroad helped arm these soldiers. The industrial resources of unoccupied France were pressed into the business of manufacturing weapons. Time and the availability of both officers and NCOs were short, so for the most part the soldiers remained poorly trained and poorly led. But, in Michael Howard's words, the "amplitude" of this national mobilization "far surpassed anything on the German side," and "was not to be seen again until the First World War was far advanced on its course."¹⁰⁵ In a vain hope to relieve Paris, the armies thus organized fought a series of bloody and unsuccessful campaigns against the Prussians; the battles raged across northern France and drew the Prussians deeper and deeper into the country. By the end of January, however, Gambetta's improvised forces had all been defeated and driven from the field. This regular, if incompetent, resistance was accompanied by French partisan activity in the Prussian rear.¹⁰⁶ These actions usually elicited retaliation against the local population, and captured partisans were generally shot.¹⁰⁷

104. *Ibid.*, pp. 224–228.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

106. *Ibid.*, pp. 249–256.

107. *Ibid.*, pp. 378–381. In the words of one German officer, "The war is gradually acquiring a

On January 28, aware that the military situation was hopeless, the Government of National Defense signed an armistice with Prussia; following elections that returned a majority of peace advocates to the French National Assembly, German terms were accepted. This included the cession of Alsace and Lorraine and a 5-billion-franc indemnity to be paid over four years. On March 1 the National Assembly ratified the agreement.

The effects of the Franco-Prussian War on subsequent French military planning, indeed on military planning throughout Europe, were profound. Michael Howard wrote that, "any continental power which wished to escape annihilation as swift and overwhelming as that which overtook the Second Empire had to imitate the German pattern and create a Nation in Arms—a nation whose entire man-power was not only trained as soldiers, but could be mobilized, armed, and concentrated on the frontiers within a very few days."¹⁰⁸ France set out to rebuild its own military, and in many respects relied on the Prussian model. While they never matched Germany in terms of mobilizable troops, armament, and organization, they nevertheless achieved a major transformation in their army.¹⁰⁹

To this important military lesson was added the living symbol of two lost provinces; the experience of a large scale national mobilization; the fact that public support for the mobilization had been erratic, particularly in the interior, and the memory of a German occupation that had been anything but gentle. These were to provide the initial impetus for a wave of French military reforms, and later a set of larger social reforms.

The first pillar of French military regeneration was a commitment to obligatory military service for nearly the entire male population.¹¹⁰ The 1872 debates on new military legislation brought repeated allusions to the lesson offered by the Prussian reformist response to their defeat at Jena in 1807.¹¹¹ Along with a better ability to field a large and well-trained army, many

hideous character. Murder and burning is now the order of the day on both sides, and one cannot sufficiently beg Almighty God finally to make an end of it"; p. 379.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 455.

109. Mitchell, *Victors and Vanquished*, argues that the French consciously imitated much German military practice. Yet he judges them harshly for the measured pace and limited extent of their imitation and improvement, especially on the breadth of conscription of the adult male population, and the organization of men who had completed their term of service into reserve units. I am struck by what was done and thus I judge the evidence as supporting my theory.

110. The Army itself instituted a number of reforms, most prominently the institution of a General Staff and the permanent peacetime organization of all large military units, including Army Corps of several tens of thousands of men.

111. Challener, *The French Theory of the Nation in Arms*, pp. 33–36.

conservative delegates thought that conscription would instill discipline and solidarity in the youth of France.¹¹² The initial law, however, did include exemptions for teachers, priests, and those studying for certain professions, who committed themselves to ten years of service to the state. University students could volunteer for one year in the military, if they paid their own way and passed an exam to prove their military competence. Everyone else was theoretically vulnerable to the five-year term, although a lottery would divide them into two groups, one serving a year with the colors, the other serving five.¹¹³ Military conservatives had been able to preserve this lengthy term of service on the strength of the pre-1870 arguments, seen both in France and in Prussia, that long service imparted a special discipline and cohesion that would produce a high-quality soldier.

In actual practice, the distinction between the one-year and five-year active troops was gradually eroded. French military critics regularly argued for reducing the term of service to three years, and thus increasing the percentage of the annual class of eligible young men who would receive extensive military training. But until 1889, such arguments were rebuffed on the basis of the professional officer corps' preference for the longer term of service. In reality, however, most recruits to the infantry served at most forty months, which was codified in 1880.¹¹⁴ The nominally long term of service, carried out against overall active-service manpower ceilings, meant that perhaps 200,000 eligible young men did not receive military training in the 1870s.¹¹⁵ Legislation in 1889 and 1905 further equalized the burdens of military service.

The Army was increasingly considered "a school in which French youth acquired basic principles of citizenship."¹¹⁶ Those from provinces where French was not the mother tongue learned the language of their countrymen.¹¹⁷ Until roughly 1890, French troops did not serve close to home, so military service introduced vast numbers of rural and small town young men to the rest of the country as a whole.¹¹⁸ Many simply did not return to their

112. These hopes had their parallels in Prussia, prior to the war. Apparently, the effort to use the army to inculcate these "conservative" values evaporated by 1877–78. Ralston, *The Army of the Republic*, p. 48.

113. *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.

114. Mitchell, *Victors and Vanquished*, p. 79.

115. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

116. Challener, *The French Theory of the Nation in Arms*, p. 47.

117. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, p. 299.

118. Ralston says that after about 1890, for reasons of economy, the French Army did regularly station soldiers close to home; Ralston, *The Army of the Republic*, p. 284.

villages after their military service. Eugen Weber concludes, "the army turned out to be an agency for emigration, acculturation, and in the final analysis, civilization, an agency as potent in its way as the schools."¹¹⁹ Indeed, the Law of 1872 provided additional advantages to conscripts who could read and write, and threatened the illiterate with an additional year of service.¹²⁰

What of the schools? In the words of Peter Paret, there developed "the collaboration of the elementary schools and the conscript army to teach nationalism to the masses."¹²¹ Contemporary analyses of the Prussian success gave considerable credit to the Prussian system of primary education.¹²² A series of laws passed between 1880–82 made education compulsory and free for children aged six–thirteen, and defined the content of the curriculum.¹²³ This content was decidedly patriotic.¹²⁴ One academic remarked early in the Third Republic, "If the schoolboy does not become a citizen fully aware of his duties, and a soldier who loves his gun, the teacher will have wasted his time."¹²⁵ The late nineteenth century also saw the beginning of French interest in physical education in the schools, an interest first driven by the connection to fitness for military service.¹²⁶

As part of the Freycinet Plan (a huge public works program aimed at jump-starting the French economy), plenty of money went to the construction of schools. More went to the construction of roads and railroads, particularly

119. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, p. 302. See also Ralston, *The Army of the Republic*, p. 48.

120. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, p. 327.

121. Peter Paret, "Nationalism and the Sense of Military Obligation," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter 1970), p. 5. He asserts that the explicit teaching of nationalism in school and in the army was a direct imitation of the Prussians.

122. Holmes, *The Road to Sedan*, p. 192.

123. Carlton Hayes, *France: A Nation to Patriots* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), pp. 35–36. The main theme of this book is the manner in which French patriotism was systematically supported by the educational system, the army, and a host of cultural institutions in post-World War I France.

124. In addition to Weber, *Peasants into Frenchman*, see Hayes, *France*, pp. 38–40.

125. The quotation is from Ernest Lavisse, who in the 1880s wrote several widely used civics and history textbooks; see John Schwarzmantel, "Nationalism and the French Working Class Movement 1905–1914," pp. 65–80, in Eric Cahm and Vladimir Fisera, eds., *Socialism and Nationalism in Contemporary Europe 1848–1945* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1979), p. 68. Schwarzmantel's theme is that national feeling remained quite strong in the French working class.

126. James Albisetti, "The debate on secondary school reform in France and Germany," in Detlef K. Muller, Fritz Ringer, and Brian Simon, eds., *The Rise of the Modern Education System: Structural Change and Social Reproduction 1870–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 187; Mitchell, *Victors and Vanquished*, pp. 151–152, writes: "In addition to a popular mystique about the army becoming the school of the nation . . . , the inverse proposition consequently developed that the schools should prepare pupils for military service." He observes that by the late 1870s some progress in physical education had been made in the secondary schools, but little in the primary schools.

into rural areas. This plan was that of the Freycinet who had helped Gambetta organize the mobilization of French society against the Germans, and who had seen the representatives of rural France end the war in 1871 even though Gambetta wanted to continue the fight. Given Freycinet's personal experience, I am inclined to agree with those who have seen the Freycinet Plan as a deliberate effort to integrate the more backward parts of France into the larger society.¹²⁷ Freycinet's subsequent political career suggests his lifelong concern for the improvement of French mobilization capability. As Defense Minister for an unprecedented five years, beginning in April 1888, Freycinet led the successful battle for the three-year term-of-service law passed on July 15, 1889.¹²⁸

Eugen Weber declares that the main function of the new French schools was to teach a "new patriotism." Children were taught that their first duty was to defend the country and, returning to themes we saw in Revolutionary propaganda, schools reminded the students that the Army was now composed of people just like them. The teaching of history and geography was a vehicle for instilling patriotism. New teaching materials were made available to facilitate this task, including maps that showed the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine as part of France. In the words of one student of education, "The French elementary schools after 1870 became notorious breeding grounds of chauvinism."¹²⁹ The long-established connection between basic literacy and the effectiveness of subsequent military training also figured prominently.¹³⁰

The precise connections between all of this state-sponsored activity and the behavior of French troops in World War I are difficult to demonstrate. It would be surprising if *poilu* after *poilu* had left us diaries noting that they were sustained each day by some specific thing they had learned in school,

127. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, pp. 209–210, 309–310. Weber doubts that the plan had this purpose, stressing its stimulative economic aspects.

128. Mitchell, *Victors and Vanquished*, p. 106; "The measures passed under Freycinet cannot be understood simply as products of a self-generated reform movement. The accumulated evidence shows that both the motive and the measurement of reform derived from comparison with Germany" (p. 109). Germany's seven-year defense budget of 1888 had lengthened the obligation of its reservists to report for mobilization to age 45.

129. Albisetti, "The debate on secondary school reform," p. 195. Even textbooks produced by liberals "extolled military virtues, praised France's services to the world, and provided very little information about other countries." Queried on the purpose of studying history, 80% of the candidates for the baccalaureate (secondary school completion exam) are reported to have effectively replied "to exalt patriotism."

130. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, pp. 333–336.

or some bit of pre-war propaganda. Nevertheless, Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau concludes, from his insightful study of soldier-published trench newspapers during the war, that a profound sense of national feeling, "deeply rooted in the republican patriotism of pre-war days," and "moulded by their primary education" was the primary source of emotional sustenance.¹³¹ This national feeling abandoned the extremes of pre-war chauvinism and was not reanimated by wartime propaganda, particularly of the type directed at the home front. But as the war dragged on, the daily act of "defence of their soil" and remembrance of the comrades who died for it created new sources of resolve. He concludes that, "even in the war's worst moments, the impossibility [unthinkability] of causing the defeat of their own nation by collective weakness constituted a psychological barrier than nothing could overcome."

GERMANY

As the victor in the war of 1870, Prussia/Germany lacked the impetus to innovate that was experienced by the French. But with the ascension of Wilhelm II to the throne in 1888 there was a noticeable increase in the nationalist content of the primary and secondary school curriculum. The main explanation for this offered by most historians is a concern for loyalty to the regime, particularly in the domestic political fight with growing liberal and social-democratic forces. The view that concern about military effectiveness was an important motivating factor is less common, although there is evidence to support it. The content of the motivational efforts also suggests that combat motivation was an important concern.

Both the Prussian War Minister and the Education Minister had believed that the Prussian *Volksschule* teacher deserved much of the credit for the victory over the Austrians in 1866, and so informed the first Kaiser Wilhelm. Bismarck similarly credited them for their role in the victory over the French.¹³² During the 1870 war, many pupils in the primary school teacher-training seminars volunteered for military service, suggesting that nationalist sentiment was already deeply embedded in this important group.¹³³ All of this suggests that in spite of its official stress on religion rather than nation-

131. Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War, 1914–1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War* (Providence: Berg, 1992); see chap. 6, "National Sentiment," esp. pp. 176–177, 184.

132. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society*, pp. 160, 191.

133. *Ibid.*, pp. 172–173.

alism, the Prussian primary school curriculum of the 1850s and 1860s must have informally included at least some political component.

New efforts to reform Prussia's schools quickly followed the victory. The official administrative role of the church was eliminated in the Inspection Law of 1871. The role of religion in the curriculum was drastically reduced in new regulations in 1872. "History and the German language and its literature were to replace religion as the core of the curriculum," and the curriculum in the teacher training schools followed suit.¹³⁴ Textbooks were standardized with a particular emphasis on the enhancement of national consciousness. For example, a new history text from the mid-1870s explained the Franco-Prussian war this way: "The only cause was France's envy and jealousy of Prussia's growing greatness and Napoleon's desire to stabilize his quaking throne by a war of conquest."¹³⁵ Some of the educational reforms must be attributed to Prussian domestic political developments, but the timing of the reforms, the sudden emergence of high-level official respect for Prussia's schoolmasters, and the content of the new curriculum all suggest that military preparedness provided much of the impetus.¹³⁶

Wilhelm II's interest in the content of primary and secondary education was driven initially by the desire to instill regime loyalty; social democracy was to be explicitly addressed as the main enemy. This idea seems to have occurred to him in 1888 and was given impetus by a wave of strikes in 1889. But the new kaiser favored the addition of an even more distinctively nationalist content to the conservative religious approach that had maintained some hold on the curriculum in spite of the 1870 reforms.¹³⁷ He was particularly interested in fostering the study of Prussian history.¹³⁸ The goal of teaching history for the twin purposes of combatting social democracy and instilling patriotism was furthered by a Cabinet Order of May 1, 1889, and by the kaiser's personal participation in the school conference of 1890.¹³⁹

134. *Ibid.*, pp. 177–178.

135. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 190.

136. Schleunes, *ibid.*, suggests that it was at this juncture that the Prussian schools effectively became apostles of *German* nationalism as a means to legitimate the conquests of the preceding wars; pp. 160–161. It is also noteworthy that a debate emerged on the possibility of centralizing all the schools in Germany, but that was deemed too great a political fight.

137. Walter C. Langsam, "Nationalism and History in the Prussia Elementary Schools Under William II," in Edward M. Earle, ed., *Nationalism and Internationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. 241–261, is the most widely cited English language essay on this subject.

138. Craig, *Germany*, p. 189.

139. Albisetti, "The debate on secondary school reform," p. 194.

There was apparently wide consensus among educators that the study of history should replace religion as the source of social cohesion.¹⁴⁰ The Army welcomed the kaiser's initiative, although in subsequent years there were complaints by Army officers that the schools were not doing a good job.¹⁴¹ Close supervision was also exercised over Prussian teachers, who were viewed as state officials; particular efforts were made to exclude socialists.¹⁴² It was more difficult to control the curriculum and the personnel elsewhere in Germany due to the federal character of the Empire.

While many historians have stressed the domestic problems that the nationalist curriculum was meant to solve, a specifically military motivation for and content of the curriculum is evident. In 1890 Prussian district school inspectors were directed that the primary schools must train the children "as active members of German society, as self-denying subjects, and as men who will be glad to pay the supreme sacrifice for king and country."¹⁴³ Prussian pedagogues and writers frequently echoed these themes. The two most popular texts on historical method stressed the importance of military struggle and military power in the history of Prussia, and the special role of history teaching as a source of future willingness to risk all on the field of battle.¹⁴⁴ Prussian national history, particularly military history, dominated the curriculum. There was also a strong emphasis on current military affairs, in terms of both technique and strategic issues.¹⁴⁵ Textbook writers and school teachers may, indeed, have overfulfilled the expectations of the government in their emphasis on military matters.

The military itself was another vehicle for the development of national consciousness in post-unification Germany. Although German conscripts tended to serve close to home, service nevertheless produced an acquaintance with people from different parts of Germany, and often with different parts

140. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society*, pp. 226–228. "New texts and readers glorifying the Kaiser and the Fatherland had been introduced. The great deeds of the wars of liberation and unification, of Prussia's kings, of Bismarck, and of the Kaiser were being offered as the fundamental elements of a new national consciousness" (p. 228).

141. Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps 1890–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 175–176.

142. Paul Kosok, *Modern Germany: A Study of Conflicting Loyalties* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), p. 161. He notes that in Prussia there was very little instruction on the workings of government and society.

143. As quoted in Langsam, "Nationalism and History in the Prussian Elementary Schools," p. 243.

144. *Ibid.*, pp. 245–252.

145. *Ibid.*, pp. 252–258.

of the country itself.¹⁴⁶ Discipline was quite rigorous; indeed sometimes it deteriorated into outright abuse, which may have had the effect of alienating many conscripts.¹⁴⁷

The officer corps that managed the conscript army became somewhat more heterogeneous than it had been. Prior to 1870 it was populated by politically reliable aristocrats. In the expansion after 1870, it became necessary to bring more middle-class officers into the active and especially into the reserve forces. Propaganda addressed to these officers stressed their personal relationship to the crown, warned against the dangers of domestic subversion, and reminded them of the army's role in blocking such subversion. The political behavior of reserve officers was surveyed, and liberals found themselves deprived of their commissions.¹⁴⁸ But self-policing was the most powerful enforcement mechanism. The prestige of the military was so high in Wilhelmine Germany, and so much elite political energy was directed at keeping it high, that middle-class officers and reserve officers were pleased to have their commissions, and willing to take on the political coloration of their social "betters." The Army identified itself as a key player in the campaign against social democracy and directed considerable energy at the problem.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, up to the outbreak of World War I influential senior officers feared, and in some cases hoped, that they might have to suppress social democracy militarily.

Many measures also aimed at the inculcation of patriotism and nationalism. Religious instruction was stressed within the army, and sermons tended to have a high patriotic content. Like the schools, Army officers attempted to instruct soldiers in the glories of Prussian history. The military published and distributed newspapers and books with patriotic themes. Officers were enjoined to attack social democracy directly in teaching sessions with the troops. This apparently proved embarrassing, as officers unaccustomed to talking politics found themselves bested by enlisted men who were. After 1907, the political content shifted to simpler patriotic appeals.

Martin Kitchen doubts the effectiveness of any of this in combating social democracy, and it is certainly true that it did not stop the growth of the Social Democratic party in Germany. But as late as 1911 some 64 percent of

146. Kosok, *Modern Germany*, p. 136.

147. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

148. Craig, *Germany*, pp. 159–160.

149. The account that follows relies largely on Kitchen, *German Officer Corps*, pp. 168–186.

the recruits to the German army came from rural areas, and were unlikely to have had social-democratic sympathies.¹⁵⁰ They were probably quite receptive to army propaganda and it is likely that many returned to their homes well-indoctrinated. The conscripts from urban areas contained the greatest number of social-democratic sympathizers, and these likely remained unconverted. On the other hand, the propaganda may have had some diffuse effect on the patriotic sentiments of the soldiers. Interestingly, Social Democrats who did serve in the army were enjoined by their party to be exemplary soldiers.¹⁵¹ It is difficult for human beings to pursue seriously the purposes of an organization without coming to identify with it somewhat. "Even many of the older Social Democratic workers, sitting together around their glasses of beer, took pride in relating their military experiences."¹⁵² Social Democrats readily identified backward Russia as the enemy of Germany, and one prominent Social Democratic theorist shared the officer corps' preference for the offensive. And we must remember that in 1914, the socialists marched.¹⁵³

Both regime loyalty and combat effectiveness were motives for the growing nationalist content of German public education, officer education, and in-service indoctrination of conscripts through the outbreak of World War I. Students of the period stress the impact of regime loyalty. The appearance of both motives in Prussia weakens somewhat my argument that military capability was a primary impetus to the spread of nationalism, but the presence of the same nationalist education in France, where regime loyalty was of less immediate concern, preserves the viability of the hypothesis.¹⁵⁴

The Evolution of Military Technology, 1870–1914

By 1870, major advances in firepower had been achieved over the weapons of the Napoleonic wars. The importance of firepower, particularly in thwarting the old-fashioned bayonet assault, was already quite clear.

150. *Ibid.*, pp. 147–148. In 1907, the German socialist leader Bebel observed that about a third of the mobilized German troops would be Social Democratic Party members. Talmon, *The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 395.

151. Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps*, p. 167.

152. Kosok, *Modern Germany*, p. 136.

153. Talmon, *The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution*, pp. 109–110.

154. Albisetti, "The debate on secondary school reform," p. 195, notes that the secondary school curricula in the Second Reich and Third Republic were actually quite similar, with both stressing nationalist and anti-socialist themes. During this period, however, a much smaller percentage of both populations attended secondary school.

Developments after 1870 were to be even more profound.¹⁵⁵ Repeating rifles that fired small-calibre bullets impelled by smokeless powder were widely used by 1890. The accuracy, range, rate, and volume of infantry fire increased markedly. But a prone, entrenched, or camouflaged rifleman was now much harder to detect. Second, the true automatic machine gun made its appearance in the late 1880s. Third, “quick-firing” field guns appeared in the late 1890s. Recoil mechanisms made it unnecessary to re-aim the gun after each shot and permitted a firing rate of ten shrapnel shells per minute. A four-gun battery could mow down any cluster of exposed infantry out to five thousand meters.

Many professional military commentators recognized that these developments favored the tactical defender. They also understood more generally that for offensive or defensive action, troops would have to fight in small units, widely dispersed. Command would have to devolve to lower levels. No longer could a single junior platoon lieutenant hope to keep 80 men within sight and sound of his voice, and control their movements in battle. Any platoon so deployed could be annihilated. The Boer War and Russo-Japanese War at the turn of the century confirmed these lessons for many.

But other professional officers, who increasingly came to dominate the European militaries between 1880 and 1914, recoiled from these lessons.¹⁵⁶ While the improvements in firepower were recognized, their tactical implications were denied. Already in the 1880s, French and German military manuals proposed to counter improvements in firepower with a stress on morale and the positive moral effect of the attack. The notion was that the battle was a struggle for moral ascendancy, and that firepower technology could not compensate for the moral advantage that would redound to the side on the attack. Similarly, there was a strong disinclination to accept the utility of dispersal. Officers wanted to keep their men closer together in order to maintain command and order, which were perceived to be necessary to the ultimate establishment of moral ascendancy.

155. See Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), pp. 113–119, for these firepower developments.

156. For the following discussion see *ibid.*, pp. 115–117; Bruce I. Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics: Innovation in the German Army, 1914–1918* (New York: Praeger, 1989), pp. 1–25 on the debate in the German Army; T.H.E. Travers, “Technology, Tactics, and Morale: Jean de Bloch, the Boer War, and British Military Theory, 1900–1914,” *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 51 (June 1979), pp. 264–286, on analogous developments in the British Army; Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 63–67, 77–81, on the French Army.

This tactical cult of the offensive reflected the widespread notion among European soldiers that the battlefield was a place of psychological as well as physical struggle, and that the psychological aspects were dominant.¹⁵⁷ But the effort to win the psychological battle did not begin and end with the order to attack; this was merely its most visible and most idiotic manifestation. In France and Prussia (and in Britain as well), the preparation of the individual began earlier. French officers stressed the cohesion believed to arise from a lengthy term of service. French officers unsuccessfully opposed the government's plan to reduce the term of service from three years to two in 1905, and lobbied for restoration of the third year until they achieved success in 1913.¹⁵⁸ Prussia went over to a two-year term in 1893, although some Prussian officers had agreed with their French counterparts. But Prussia's three-year term was traded away for a major expansion in the size of the standing army, necessitated by the budding Franco-Russian alliance.¹⁵⁹

A direct connection between the increasing lethality of weaponry and state-sponsored nationalism between 1870 and 1914 is difficult to document.¹⁶⁰ Professional officers understood that firepower improvements presented significant new problems that demanded a better-motivated soldier. The long-service solution was gradually lost after 1870, even as firepower improved. The principal professional military proponent of the offensive and its connection to morale, Ferdinand Foch, was prone to characterize future war as "more and more national in its origin and aims, more and more powerful in

157. For a general discussion of these problems as they emerged throughout Europe, see Michael Howard, "Men Against Fire, Expectations of War in 1914," in Steven E. Miller, ed. *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War: An International Security Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 41–57.

158. Ralston, *The Army of the Republic*, pp. 301–302, 350–359. The fight to restore the three-year term, however, seems to have been motivated as much, if not more, by a desire to increase the size of the French standing army, as by its moral qualities. Gerd Krumreich argues that more troops were perceived as necessary to protect the forward concentration areas against a German spoiling attack that would wreck the Plan XVII offensive. To protect the plan's secrecy, more ambiguous arguments were made in public, including the long-service cohesion argument. Krumreich, *Armaments and Politics in France on the Eve of the First World War*, trans. Stephen Conn (Warwickshire: Berg, 1984), pp. 44–52, 107–108.

159. Craig, *Germany*, pp. 257–259;

160. This period saw a wholesale emergence of intense nationalism and social-darwinist ideas in public discourse, which scholars trace to diverse causes. See, for example, Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 262–270; Snyder, *Ideology of the Offensive*; and Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive," in Miller, *Military Strategy*, pp. 58–63. Travers, "Technology, Tactics, and Morale," suggests that British Army officers became exponents of these ideas in part because of their great concern with how they would deal with the new firepower technology without changing the nature of the soldiers recruited.

its means, more and more impassioned."¹⁶¹ German theorists at the time also argued the connection between combat performance and the morale and commitment of the troops, and stressed the value of patriotism.¹⁶²

Conclusions

Three basic conclusions emerge from this survey of nearly 150 years of military, political, and social developments in Prussia, Germany, and France. First, professional assessments of the potentialities of military technology, compulsory education for an ever-broadening segment of the military manpower pool, the development and promulgation of nationalist ideology, compulsory military service and the mass army, and actual experiences of wartime were closely connected in both countries.

Developments in military technology that favor dispersal on the battlefield prompt a constant concern for the motivation of soldiers. These same developments may make it difficult to rely on lengthy training and lengthy terms of service to create this motivation, since improved weaponry kills these "custom-made" soldiers too fast. Developments in military technology that increase the human costs of war increase the state's propensity to prepare people to pay those costs, and the sponsorship of nationalism is one solution to the problem.

Developments in military technology, organization, or tactics may also increase the military utility of literacy in conscripts; this causes the state to promote mass literacy for reasons of technical military efficiency. The spread of literacy makes it possible for states to train larger armies in peacetime and mobilize them in wartime with greater speed.

161. Stefan T. Possony and Etienne Mantoux, "Du Picq and Foch: The French School," in Edward M. Earle, ed. *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 222, quoting from Ferdinand Foch, *Principles of War*, trans. Hilaire Belloc (New York: 1920), p. 41. See Foch's original, *Des Principes de la Guerre*, 4th ed. (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1917), pp. 39–40. In a prior passage he connects effective tactical dispersal to nationalist feelings in the troops, and expresses doubts as to whether either long-service professional troops or multi-national armies could successfully practice such tactics; p. 39.

162. Travers, "Technology, Tactics, and Morale," p. 277. See also General Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War*, trans. Allen Powles (New York: Longmans, 1914), p. 242: "For while the demands which modern war makes have increased in every direction, the term of service has been shortened in order to make enlistment in very great numbers possible. Thus the full consummation of military training cannot be attained unless recruits enter the army well equipped physically and mentally and bringing with them patriotic sentiment worthy of the honourable profession of arms."

Mass literacy also makes soldiers more accessible to propaganda, both as children and as adults, which facilitates the spread of nationalist ideology. The fact of a shared written language and history promulgated in the schools makes nationalist ideology “self-confirming”: it becomes true that the members of the group share special traits.

Second, the internal power of these causes is vastly intensified by the pressure of international competition. Neither political elites nor professional officers “embrace” the mass army. To varying degrees, they are driven to it by the exigencies of international competition. The French revolutionaries were forced to innovate by the magnitude of the military challenges they faced. Others were forced to imitate the French success. As each combatant stumbled into ways to improve the mass army “military format,” each successive combat demonstrated to others the new tricks to imitate. Literacy of the officers, NCOs, and enlisted personnel was one such trick. Another was motivation through systematic indoctrination into nationalist ideologies, which stressed the uniqueness and inclusiveness of one’s own collectivity, relative to the one next door. And yet another was continuing expansion in the sheer size of the mobilized force. These fed on each other, both within boundaries and across them.

Even if one believes that any of these variables is itself dependent *largely* on other causes, they may nonetheless have the consequences I have described. For example, if literacy is promoted for economic reasons, it still has military effects. If the mass army is an historical accident in one country, and if it is effective, it should still promote imitation by others. If nationalism is a consequence of entire social transformations in one society, it nonetheless provides the motive power for the mass army, which others must imitate if they wish to survive. Imitation of the mass army requires literacy and a nationalist ideology, and therefore these elements will travel with the mass army, and thus nationalism will spread with it. More literacy probably increases the ability of armies to absorb new technology, and thus makes them more lethal, causing a greater necessity for tactical dispersal, and the potential for higher casualties, which will need to be replaced. A more literate population also makes the training and organization of very large forces easier, facilitating mass mobilization.

Third, the argument sheds some light on two persistent mysteries about nationalism and conflict. Nationalism is often posited as a cause of great wars. But the closer we look at the great wars they are often said to have caused, the more complicated the relationship appears. This is because na-

nationalism is as often a consequence of conflict as it is a cause. Leaders use nationalism to mobilize public support for military preparation and sacrifices. When war seems imminent, for any reason, the intensity of propaganda increases. The same is true when wars last for any length of time. Thus it will often be difficult to show that nationalism caused any conflict, because it will generally be accompanied and accentuated by other causes of the conflict. (It may also intensify these other causes.)

The speed and intensity with which nationalism can emerge from apparent dormancy is another mystery. My theory suggests that it is a rational response, not only by elites but also by followers, whenever the geostrategic conditions outlined above seem to hold. States or stateless groups, drifting into competition for whatever reason, will quickly turn to the reinforcement of national identity because of its potency as a military resource. And since states cannot wait for trouble to prepare their citizens for war, much of the preparation is "hidden away" in the schools or in the military experience of conscripts. It is hidden away in the home in long repressed multi-ethnic societies such as Yugoslavia. This material is there for leaders to tap with more open and ubiquitous means of communications in times of threat and crisis.

TASKS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The preceding discussion suggests that a number of critical issues remain. The first task is a more extensive examination of the plausibility of the theory. The remaining military competitors in Europe during this period should be subjected to a similar analysis.

A structural realist would argue that the propensity of states to engage in these activities should vary with the threats that they face. States protected by high mountains or deep moats should be less inclined to opt for mass armies, and less dependent on nationalism. States without powerful neighbors depend less on mass armies, and hence depend less on nationalism. States defended by nuclear weapons should be less nationalistic.

In contrast, nationalism should be more intense in continental states with topographically gentle borders, which therefore need their ground forces more. States with powerful neighbors depend more on their armies, and should be more inclined towards nationalism. Where enhanced firepower makes for high casualties, the incentives to purvey nationalism also go up.

It may be that the theory as posited thus far is too limited. Perhaps it applies more generally to any security competition that involves "mass mo-

bilization," that is, requires of society a large-scale financial, organizational, and industrial effort to produce a great military force of any kind, on sea or even in the air as well as on land.

Another line of inquiry would take the theory out of Europe to hold cultural influences constant and thus to improve the focus on the causal influence of the instrumental factors that I have highlighted.

But since many of the non-European conflicts that one could study have occurred among nation-states where socio-economic developments roughly parallel those of late nineteenth-century Europe, this still would not permit an assessment of the independent power of security variables relative to socio-economic ones. Thus a careful search must be mounted for those modern nation-states that find themselves in difficult non-nuclear security competitions. Are they driven to "create" nationalism? There are few such cases. Israel suggests itself. A systematic comparison of the military organizations of the non-nuclear European Cold-War neutrals, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland, might prove useful. Ukraine may prove an illuminating case if it relinquishes its nuclear weapons and a rivalry with Russia emerges.

Although I have advanced a theory of nationalism based largely on international military competition, clearly domestic factors also affect the development of nationalism. An important if perhaps intractable task is to weigh domestic social, political, and economic influences relative to strategic influences. It is clear, for example, that imitation of the mass army lends itself to the reduction of social inequality, perhaps even to democratization.¹⁶³ Where elites do not wish to democratize, powerful tensions arise between the dictates of external and internal survival. Generally, I believe elites will have strong incentives to adopt mass armies and purvey literacy and nationalist ideology when external events warrant. How the tensions between external and internal constraints are resolved may influence the specific content of the nationalist ideology that is purveyed by an elite. And sometimes those tensions cannot be resolved; inferior mass armies will take the field and suffer defeat. These defeats can have major social consequences.

Finally, of course, an examination of the question I have largely begged is essential. How might nationalism cause war? My preliminary hypothesis is that nationalism is a cause of intense widespread public concern for national security, and a public predisposition to accept the judgments of civilian or

163. Andreski, *Military Organization and Society*, pp. 73–74.

military "threat inflators" of military dangers from abroad. Since the professional military, in particular, is likely to favor solutions to perceived threats that stress the utility of offensive doctrines and plans, a pressure is created for the adoption of national military policies that will cause or exacerbate conflicts with neighbors. The defensive impulses of nationalism may thus help cause international "spirals" of insecurity.¹⁶⁴

I would go further and speculate that the mobilization of nationalism for offensive war is dependent to some degree on the intensity of the "security dilemma," the frequent condition in international politics where states cannot make themselves secure without making others insecure. Thus aggressive nationalism is to be most often found in nation-states that have difficulty ensuring their national security through largely defensive military means.

It is thus reasonable to examine the course of state-sponsored nationalism in formerly nationalistic nation-states that have left conventional "mass mobilization" military competitions behind them. It is noteworthy that many Western European states have systematically endeavored to purge national stereotypes from their educational systems.¹⁶⁵ The theory I have outlined suggests that the U.S. nuclear umbrella and the devaluation of non-nuclear forces in the East-West struggle in Europe was a critical permissive condition for the decline of nationalist history. If so, and if one also believes that nationalism is an independent cause of conflict, then nuclear disarmament may not be an unalloyed good, and nuclear proliferation may not always be bad, since it is conventional competitions that depend on the greatest reserves of human courage and commitment.

164. A brief if florid version of this argument is found in Carleton Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), pp. 187-195.

165. See, e.g., Paul Kennedy, "The Decline of Nationalistic History in the West, 1900-1970," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (January 1973), pp. 77-100.