On the Sociology of World War*

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Introduction by Hans Joas

The First World War was a disaster in many respects. For the emerging professional social sciences it could have been an occasion to demonstrate their analytical power and intellectual open-mindedness. But a closer look at the writings of the social scientists of the time unfortunately reveals that the opposite was the case. Most scholars must be characterized – on the basis of their wartime writings – as being "remote from reality, incapable of analyzing the social reality of the war, and unwilling to show any restraint in putting their scientific reputation at the disposal of war propaganda and the construction of enemy stereotypes" [1].

There are only very few exceptions from this generalization. The most important was Emil Lederer. His article on the sociology of the world war, originally published in 1915 [2], stands out as a rare example of an attempt to sociologically understand the main features of the war that had come as a surprise not only to sociologists, but also to military experts. He kept away from all the pompous interpretations of the higher "meaning" of the war, but reflected on the conditions that made the specific features of the war a real possibility. While the majority of his colleagues simply evoked or eulogized the communal experience in their own nation, Lederer attempted to explain it as the product of a war conducted with universal conscription – and this in all the nations involved. He analyzed the process in which the machinery of war made itself more and more autonomous, a process that made the nations at war more and more similar – while the ideologists of war claimed radical differences between them. He defended the rights of the individuals and of society vis-à-vis the state even in times of war and speculated about the conditions for the formation of a tightly-knit system of states that would be able to overcome the Hobbesian "order".

Since his article has never been translated, it has not become one of the classic texts of the sociology of war – a status that it would clearly deserve. Although the author was well known and highly respected in his lifetime, he has more or less been forgotten, at least outside Germany. A few words on his biography are therefore appropriate here [3].

Emil Lederer was born in Pilsen (Bohemia) in 1882. He studied law and economics at

1 Joas Hans, 2003. *War and Modernity* (Cambridge, Polity Press, p. 78).

2 The article translated here was first published in 1915. *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 39, pp. 357-384. It was reprinted in Lederer Emil, 1979. *Kapitalismus, Klassenstruktur und Probleme der Demokratie in Deutschland 1910-1940* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, pp. 119-144).

3 The best biographical study on Lederer is: Krohn Claus-Dieter, 1995. "Wien-Heidelberg-Berlin-New York. Zur intellektuellen Biographie Emil Lederers", in Lederer, Emil, *Der Massenstaat. Gefahren der klassenlosen Gesellschaft* (Graz-Wien, Nausner & Nausner, pp. 9-40). Lederer's work has influenced German social history thanks to the writings of Jürgen Kocka.

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the University of Vienna from 1901 on and took his doctoral degree in law in 1905. As a student he was deeply influenced by the Austrian school of economics. After several years of working for a business association he returned to the university and achieved his "Habilitation" at the University of Heidelberg in 1911. From 1910 on he served as secretary for the editorial board of the leading social-scientific journal in Germany, the "Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik", edited by Max Weber and others. After Weber's death he became one of the editors himself. After two years of teaching in Japan he became (in 1922) a professor at the University of Heidelberg and (in 1931) at the University of Berlin [4]. The career of Lederer who was Jewish and a democratic socialist had not been easy before; when the Nazis came into power, he had to emigrate to the United States where he found his new home at the New School for Social Research in New York. He served as Dean of its Graduate Faculty there until he died prematurely in 1939.
Lederer's publications are mostly in the area of economic sociology. The most influential of them dealt with the analyses of the new middle classes, particularly the so-called "Angestellten", and their political behavior. Lederer was also interested in the consequences of rapid technological change on the labor market. During the war he analyzed (in many contributions to the "Archiv") how economic structures and the behavior of interest groups were transformed under the impact of the war. His analysis of the main features of the war (published here) was also the point of departure for his later analysis of "the state of the masses"; one of the most important analyses of the Nazi state published at the time [5]. From Carl Schmitt on the right via Ernst Fraenkel to Franz Neumann on the left, leading authors took up Lederer's analysis of the role of "community" in the war and in the Nazi regime [6]. The time for a renewal of interest in this great social scientist and his work on war has come.

The following attempt at a sociological analysis of the problem of war can be published at present only with an emphatic caveat. Set down in January [1915], these reflections aim to raise in cool objectivity a few questions that have so far remained unaddressed – unaddressed, it would seem, because in all countries of Europe this most destructive event of modern history has succeeded in reducing to nothing the small pile of those individuals who are supposed by profession to be "nonpartisan". Written in the midst of this war, the present essay expressly seeks to take up a standpoint outside of the war, and to make every effort to gain a position of objectivity in relation to the action of the war-making states. The reader should expect no judgment from this author on the subjective guilt or innocence of the parties concerned, for the causes of this war lie too deep for any talk of "guilt" to be possible at this moment. In any case, a discussion of the immediate causes of the war lies beyond my concern and is most likely incapable of proper conduct for the time being. The attempt made here is instead to throw light on the more deep-seated

4 More information on his Heidelberg years when he became a crucial figure of the German social sciences in Blomert, Reinhard 1999. *Intellektuelle im Aufbruch* (München, Carl Hanser).

5 Lederer Emil, 1940. *State of the Masses. The Threat of the Classless Society* (New York, W. W. Norton & company).

6 Schmitt, Carl, 1976 [1932]. *The Concept of the Political* (New Brunswick, N. J, Rutgers UP, p. 45, n. 19; English translation of the text published in 1932, and introduction by George Schwab); Fraenkel Ernst, 1941. *The Dual State. A contribution to the theory of dictatorship* (New York, Oxford University Press); Neumann Franz, 1942. *Behemoth. The structure and practice of National Socialism* (New York, Oxford University Press).

nexus of causes that led to the war, and to refute some of the notions about it that have been vouchsafed to us over these last months. The sole object of our attention shall be this causal nexus, though we shall not exclude from consideration what are also likely to be some far-reaching consequences of this war. Certainly the importance of historical change can be observed generally only from its effects, which is why it must be stressed that these reflections do not claim to relate a historical narrative but instead to analyse the existing causal nexus in which the European states have found themselves driven to war – or have driven themselves to war.

Scientific honesty nevertheless enjoins us to state in advance that these reflections are not free of every value judgment. Presupposed without further discussion is a principle that only phenomena with an economic meaning or cultural content of some kind are "constitutive" of reality. All other kinds of claims about causality in this war are treated here with scepticism. A demonstration that no place can be given to attempts to subsume the war causally under a single value-laden notion, such as a principle of a higher race or civilization or a single principle of socio-economic development, may help foster a more objective attitude among the fighting countries. All efforts to join valuations and interpretations of the war with predictions of its consequences are to be rejected here, for there is no way in which such predictions can be undertaken "meaningfully" and no scientific obligation on us to attempt them. Some readers (even this author, to an extent) may feel disturbed by this withdrawal of any deeper justification from historical life, for it may seem precipitate, even disrespectful, to deny our human earthly urge to seek an ultimate sense in the process of world history. Nevertheless, all historical investigation – even philosophy of history – must limit itself in this way, for only thus are we permitted to examine things of the contemporary world from the aspect of their intrinsic motives and directions of development and to take positions on these matters from the standpoint of our temporally conditioned values. Any other kind of attitude looking for a definitive meaning in history cannot be accepted, be this a stance of affirmative conviction or one of despairing quietism.

War technology, army organization, and social structure

If we want a succinct expression for the social transformation brought about by this war – particularly in its first weeks – we may borrow initially from the basic sociological terminology of Ferdinand Tönnies. On the day of mobilization, the existing state of "society" (*Gesellschaft*) became a "community" (*Gemeinschaft*). This transformation occurred not only in Germany but also, in exactly the same way, in France and Austria-Hungary, and apparently even in Russia, and also in some neutral states, and finally in England (although there not with anything like the same intensity). This process consists in a suspending and directing of all group-forming influences, all interests, will and action, toward something communal. In the state of *Gesellschaft*, men typically live peacefully with one another, but generally in a state of separation rather than union with one another. In *Gesellschaft*, men remain separate from one another despite being all together with one another, whereas in the *Gemeinschaft* men feel themselves all together with one another despite being all separate from another. In *Gesellschaft*, writes Tönnies, "no activity takes place that could be derived from an existing apriori unity; no activity proceeding from the

action of individuals at the same time expresses the spirit and will of unity… ; rather, every man is alone for himself and in a state of tension with all others." In the *Gemeinschaft*, a sense of togetherness surrounds and precedes the individual as a carrier of unity founded in "familial understandings", not based on legalized, strictly normed and sanctioned relations, or contracts.

That today's belligerent nations have assumed this character of *Gemeinschaft* more than ever before rests on the way in which modern armies reliant on universal conscription establish a unique complex that suspends all existing particular social ties. For those sucked into the war, existing social relations are temporarily "sublated" (*aufgehoben*) into another condition, though without thereby being destroyed. In this complex, every man now lives only for the whole and only as a part of the whole. This totality, however, is a thoroughly coerced one, not only existing independently of the will of individuals but crushing them wherever they stand in its way. Not only in war but also already in peacetime, the military complex (*Heerwesen*) affects the people in such a way that everyone touched by it at first only momentarily gets drawn more and more into its functioning. The military complex is revealed to be an independent social form, a universal social form, existing alongside the *Gesellschaft*. Yet in its power to mobilize the people, it imitates the form of *Gemeinschaft*, for when everyone's existence appears threatened, it can summon and assign every social force to the cause of national defence, and thereby make every social group's incorporation into a unitary army appear to individuals not as an act of coercion by the state – indeed not even as the consequence of state action of any kind – but as a transcendental fate. *Gesellschaft* turns over into *Gemeinschaft* in a way that expresses no social solidarity but that still affirms the most intense interdependence, where all existing social groups, previously felt as basic, dwindle before the infinite unity of the people, which rises up in grandiose sublimity in defence of the native soil. Moreover, we should not think that such total unanimity might look any different beyond Germany's borders. Everywhere the situation is the same: among each of Europe's peoples, the national *Gemeinschaft* becomes a community of fate, not a community of actions [7].

An unprejudiced analysis of the war after these first few months is all the more necessary now as daily interests, bulletins from the front, and propaganda take us hostage and become our everyday milieu. The first days of August were filled with a sense of historical suspense, with a feeling of our standing at a turning point in history. Today, by contrast, it is almost as if we are live once again ahistorically, or only for the daily situation. For some authors, life has become trans-historical, the world war disclosing only utterly general philosophical principles of history. These authors' effusions – in publications not of any great weight or calibre but certainly grandiosely philosophical in tone – are legion today, and only make it all the more imperative that an attempt is made to grasp the phenomenon of this war from at least a corner of its reality.

Every significant period in military history reveals distinct forms that are conditioned by prevailing social relations, even if not directly caused by them. The Hoplite phalanx, the

7 As will be clear, primarily the continental states are considered here. England is excepted from further consideration by her lack of universal conscription, a fact that also helps explain England's relatively independent intelligentsia and continued social heterogeneity. England's difference rests on her insular situation and possession of navy rather than army as prime instrument of the state's power, allowing greater independence of society.

three battles of Frederick the Great, the zealous swarms of the French revolution, and the trenches of the second half of the nineteenth century are all signatures for militarily significant times. That of the present cannot yet clearly be descried. But let us seek to discern it at least at first in outline.

One thing certainly is clear: not even military experts foresaw the character of this war. The significance of the offensives was overestimated, while the tactical value of the second and third formation lines – the rearguards and reinforcements – was underestimated. The first big battles and the decisions made in them were not decisive for subsequent fighting, unlike previous wars. Even France, whose military literature vested supreme importance in offensives (in accordance with its national traditions, and in a way that explains its reintroduction of the three-year service time) showed itself capable of putting up a sustained, stubborn and months-long resistance after first suffering an extremely severe defeat. At most, then, offensives turned out to be important in determining the place of the theatre of battle. Trench tactics were neither desired by strategists nor anticipated as a future form of battle. Plans for troop actions pointed to morale and élan of attack, and all the German theoreticians in particular were convinced that trenches would play no significant role [8].

The reality was, and is, that devastating firepower of modern weapons with heightened dispersal effect and penetrative force drives troops everywhere into the ground. Attackers and defenders cancel each other out, as much in their means of attack as in their means of defence. Superior in defence, the defender's firepower turns him into an attacker, while the attacker is forced constantly into defence. Encirclement therefore becomes the favored form for a strike, but encirclements have now so thoroughly permeated strategy in this war that the front lines continually grow longer – and all of this against the will of the participants, who are now the objects of a technology of war.

With this has come the use of tremendous magnitudes of men and machines, creating battle sites out of vast spaces. On the western front we have seen a war of movements for positions rubbing up constantly against one another, within a still tightly delimited space. On the eastern front there has been a constant sliding back and forth, where the use of such magnitudes, particularly on the Russian side, seems to possess such an obduracy and regenerative capability that even the most brilliant strategic performances falls flat – "like a strike in quicksand," as Leuthner said [9].

Breadth of dispersal and penetrative force of modern munitions in conjunction with mass of manpower are likely to be the most distinctive military features of this war. But as a third element, we must mention the modern army's advanced level of organization. Such organization is uniform in aspect if not in degree across all Europe, and is essential for the use of massed forces. War here takes on a new character, inasmuch as the strength or weakness of one part of an army is not decisive for the experience of the army as a whole. An army is not given as a single psychological unity capable of feeling itself hit in all its entirety by an opposing side. Troops are incorporated into the organized mass of the army, and the military complex's technological level of development makes it possible to

8 "Trenches become all too easily the grave of the plan of attack."

9 [German editor's note] The reference is to Karl Leuthner, author of 1915. *Russische Volksimperialimus* (Berlin), among other works.

deploy every last part of the available troops. Unlike previous wars, no strike can here be so decisive anywhere as to make continuation of the war for another part of the same army seem impossible or unnecessary. The only real compulsion to conclude peace is given when the entire human reservoir is exhausted. Modern warfare thus returns to the form of wars of annihilation and extermination. Despite centuries of development in the martial art, war today culminates – through its immanent necessity – in total international war (*Volkskrieg*), where only the complete exhaustion of one side can bring a war to an end, and where diplomatic methods offer only limited possibilities of intervention. Universal conscription turns war back into wars of peoples (*Volkskriegen*), in the oldest and most horrendous meaning of this word. All that distinguishes international war today from previous forms is its employment of organized, well-articulated masses of human fighting power within a highly advanced machinery of combat. In every respect, this total mechanization creates the possibility of employing human beings as material for any medium, however alien. War's machinery brings about the most historic mass homogenization of people given originally as members of differentiated social strata.

The combination of advanced war technology, expanded man power and intensified massification of forces stems from the nature of the military apparatus. Every military apparatus has as its aim the defeat of an enemy in war; there is, and can be, no military complex that does not have this aim. But as soon as this aim is fixed and held constant, the technology employed in the service of this end acquires an immanent necessity of its own. A search for increased destructive capability and quantitative superiority is intrinsic to military life. Relative to this end, the military complex becomes a dynamic formation with its own immanent logic [10]. Its capabilities never need to be absolutely but only relatively more effective than the enemy's, and therefore there arises here – long before the advanced capitalist economy – an early form of competition [11]. Every advance in military technology requires ever greater masses of men, both for the managing of the apparatus of attack and for repulsion of the increased violence of the enemy. Machine power and manpower here interact with one another reciprocally, because increased manpower also in turn demands more and more perfection in destructive technology [12].

From the standpoint of "military necessity" alone, human and non-human means of destruction continually expand. But general technological development also plays a part in the military apparatus's continual extension. Technologies of transportation have always been especially crucial. In all earlier big wars, even when large masses of deployable men

10 Note that this immanence of technological development arising out of the nature of the military apparatus differs from the way in which uses of production technologies in economic systems essentially depend on economic goals (craftsmanship technology in traditional economies, modern industrial technology in advanced capitalist economies). In the economic domain, "technological progress" is nothing more than an instrument of economic development. (See the excellent account of von Gottl-Ottilienfeld F., 1914. "Wirtschaft und Technik", in *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* (section 2, Tübingen, pp. 199-381).

11 Sombart was even able to connect the military complex's dynamic so closely with capitalist purposes at a certain stage in their development as to see capitalism as having its origin in war.

12 One might think that advances in machine technology imply decreasing need for human maintenance and human labour power. However, this has not happened and is unlikely for the foreseeable future without a coordinated process across different types of weapons, and certainly not without abolition of the rifle. But were this to occur, war's destructive effects would increasingly fall on material and economic assets.

were already at hand, the ability to move them around presented great difficulties – let us think, for example, of the Napoleonic wars. By contrast, today's war is a war of the railway lines. For without the steam-powered locomotive, deployment and development of massive weapons and huge masses of organized men would not be possible. Without the railway lines, there could be no mass transport of munitions and men and resources for their deployment and maintenance.

In all the participant states today, military action has acquired a uniform character. This is of the highest sociological importance. Armies have come to resemble one another more and more closely, not only in their structures and strategies but also in their capabilities of destruction. In contrast, when the crowds of the French republic clashed with the German armies [**when?**], it was as if two different epochs fought with one another. Or let us think of the Germanic tribal invasions of the Roman empire, or of Europe's Ottoman wars: in both these great historical confrontations and many others, we see a clash not only of military apparatuses but also of opposing kinds of zeitgeist and volksgeist – even if differences between the sides were blunted by mercenary involvement and by the personalities of the commanders [13]. Although such cultural differences may still play a role today, we do not yet know how decisive they will be. All we can see is that despite great differences of social structure, of cultural character and of prevailing ideologies, an identical military machinery has taken shape among all the belligerent states, capable almost everywhere of producing equally matched specialized personnel in the form of officers, commanders and technical trained troops. Everywhere, technological advances seem to have untied the army from its undergrowth, from its organic connection to the people, creating an autonomously functioning mechanism. This proposition is not to be understood in a psychological sense. Armies have certainly never before been so closely bound up psychologically with the people: with the sole exception of England's, modern armies today have the deepest roots in the national people, and no segregation of the army from the people obtains any longer. But viewed purely as instruments of war, armies are now composed everywhere of the same types of energies and powers, even if not in equal degrees. National differences of social and economic structure have become irrelevant – rather as a cotton spinning factory, whether in America or Russia, produces everywhere the same kind of yarn on the same kinds machines. Just as industry's "technological progress" has its own dynamic and has "no history" as such, only a mechanical quantitative increase, so the military complex shares this distinctive capitalistic industrial feature of constant quantitative increase, uninfluenced in its scope and direction by any factors of cultural development. While all military capability depends on the participation of a people, it transcends national peculiarities as an abstract ubiquitous energy, because universal conscription turns war into an affair for everyone and makes all people interested in its outcome in exactly the same way. Though an army's

13 Military organization as a distinctive form of the modern state has its origins in the use of peasant militias. Where fighting previously amounted to a sum of individual battles, the Swiss mercenaries signify a new principle, though not so much thanks to firearms as to their tactical cohesion, affording superiority over leading individual knights. Social-psychological elements such as an *esprit de corps* must have been decisive here only insofar as they operated through a context of organization (Hintze O., 1906. "Staatsverfassung und Heeresfassung" [= *Neue Zeit und Streitfragen*, edited by the Gehe Foundation, vol. 4, Dresden p. 24]). Once organization became establishable through influences other than purely moral ones, other elements could take the place of pure reliance on morale.

"spirit" or governing ideology continues to be effective as an organizational energy, it is not alone decisive. This, among other things, has been shown by the unexpectedly impressive performance of the English army, which has been more influenced by mercenary soldier attitudes and lacks a dominant defensive ideology. Particularly since the outbreak of this war, the English have not felt, or not yet felt, themselves threatened. Yet by common recognition, they have been able to put up a very high quality of military action, due to their advanced level of organization and excellent armamentation.

Society and state

The military complex's abstract nature ultimately embodies the power of the state in its external relations. This proposition requires some elaboration.

It is commonplace to distinguish the modern state from the feudal state, and even from the absolutist state, by its omnipotence. However, until around the turn of the last century, this sovereign power (*Allmacht*) of the state was not really felt strongly and rather tended to recede from public consciousness. What, after all, did the state's power to exact taxes or the state's ownership of the railways and the postal service mean to the individual? None of this was really felt decisive. Until recently, the strongest perception of the state has rested on a consciousness of citizenship, of one's being the bearer of rights at once bestowed by the state and at the same time inviolable by it. In consequence, general public feeling has not experienced the state's sovereign power as its most essential attribute. In the conceptions that have prevailed so far, the "state of law" (*Rechtsstaat*), the "cultural state" (*Kulturstaat*) and the national state have all been seen as serving, and realizing, a superordinate end of some kind, where the idea of the individual as a citizen figures frequently in the very description of these ultimate ends of the state. The individual is not here seen as confronted with limitless power.

Another view sees the state as a function of the class structure, and the government as a committee of the ruling class. The state is here determined by society, and society in turn by laws of economic development; and the more one emphasizes this latter element, the more reduced is one's conception of the state's distinctive scope. On this socialist worldview, all development leads necessarily to a desired ultimate goal, where the state is the bearer of capitalist interest, driving the present order's contradictions ever closer to a day of final reckoning.

While all these conceptions view the state as something unitary, today's war has revealed this unitary nature of the state much more clearly than before, and has exposed the operation of state institutions in ways not previously seen sufficiently sharply. In the respect that a modern army is a universal social organization, continuous with the societal order, it is not only one of the state's organs; more precisely, it is a very *form of manifestation* of the state. Here the state, it can be argued, has a dual nature. On the one hand, conditioned in its inward relations by the class structure, its domestic action is directly linked causally to socio-economic circumstances, which also vary with levels of civilizational development in different contexts of "historical-political individuality", across the East and the West. But on the other hand, in its outward relations, the modern state is a transmitter of power, a sovereign centre of violence, with limitless command and disposal over an entire people

and land. Whether and to what extent the state also stands here in its outward life in any kind of relationship to concrete social and economic structures is today an open and particularly pertinent question. On this, perhaps the following reflections may shed light.

Under the absolute monarchies, the state had a concept or idea of itself as a sovereign power, but its real power by modern standards was limited and narrower. Though it availed itself of the feudal lords and broke down all of their independent force – the French absolute state being the clearest example of this – its power of intervening extensively in economic life was blocked by a rising bourgeois class. It defeated feudalism as an independent social form, but civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) now asserted itself as a new revolutionary principle against absolutism.

The bourgeoisie's aim was, and is, clear: liberation of market forces through removal of state sovereignty over the economy. An economic interest in freedom of trade and industry implies a demand for reduction of the state's power as the real economic content of an ideology of natural right. Freedom of trade is claimed as the right of individuals against the state, where individuals are represented as the ultimate element, and the state as thus a contract among them.

The bourgeoisie's picture of man differs from that of absolutism. First, the individual has an economic existence, as an entrepreneur or a worker, which determines his social position, although this is seen as given naturally. Second, the individual is seen as possessing a quality of citizenship, a citizen of a state and therefore a bearer of rights. This is then experienced as a revolutionary ideology, implying a negation of the absolute state. But although this abstract quality of citizenship reflects a higher approbation of the individual and a repudiating stance to the absolute state, it in fact becomes the basis only of *another type of state*, one regarded as the bearer of the citizens' free will. In historical reality, this revolutionary movement does *not* lead to a reduction of the state to purely negative tasks. Economic liberalism wanted to see a disembedding of the state from its social undergrowth, a minimizing of its functions, and a free unfolding of the economic possibilities of society. In reality, what has happened is that the state has not receded but has essentially only altered in nature. If the absolutist state was relatively unbroken in its unity, the modern state takes on a more differentiated character, displaying the aspect of an antinomy. In its *inward* relations, it becomes more and more the expression of socio-economic power relations, such that no specifically social nature of the state exists and nothing exists outside of the domain of *Gesellschaft* – all ideas of the state as an "intrinsic social form" (in Jellinek's phrase) turn out to be little more than conceptual hypostasis. Yet, in its *outward* relations, it becomes more and more of an independent reality with its own intensity and its own goal-directedness, cut free of all concrete underpinnings.

In the age of absolute monarchy the state did not yet reach to the depths of the demographic reservoir. Full enlistment of the people arrived only with the French Revolution. Although conscriptions at this time still faced difficulties – think of the desertions in Napoleon's Russian campaign – it was from this time onward that it became possible to recruit the entire force of a population, which subsequently became key to all European states' foreign policies. A principle of universal military service gradually established itself, at first in the exemplary case of Prussia, where the mass of the army was composed of the *Landwehr*, while the standing army functioned merely as a nursery for special military qualities. The state's

limitless power was now realized. Now the state gained incomparably greater disposability over the population than that of the absolute monarch. Although the latter could look upon the land and its dominions as his possession and the people as his subjects, the apparently contrasting modern idea of "citizens" now revealed a contradiction: in a state recognizing no limits to wieldable power over its territory, the idea of citizens as bearers of intrinsic rights looks more and more like a fabrication of natural law without connection to reality. Today the modern state exerts power beyond all limits, and remains abstractly the same across all socio-economic differences of populations. Whatever political and economic differences states may display in their inward relations, a state's total existence in its *outward* relations remains everywhere essentially the same, whether in democratic France or autocratic Russia, or in parliamentarized Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Only with a modern military complex is the state's real achievement of omnipotence possible. Interacting with the state in the closest of ways, the military complex becomes the instrument and substance of the state's power, and cannot be thought of independently it. For only as the modern state's instrument and very essence can the military complex can become such a cohesive system of machinery. Napoleon marks the great turning point in this respect, for while Napoleon led the army, and was therefore Caesar, and therefore represented the state, he was also the last Caesar. Today, by contrast, the thought of a military general arrogating civil authority to himself seems absurd, since today the military complex is a bureaucracy not only in its body but also in its head. Today, leadership of the military is bureaucratized.

When the military complex here functions as a bearer of the state's sovereign power, a new strengthening of military action becomes apparent in the immanent dynamic of its development. State and army interact with one another in such a way that with increasing state power comes a growing army, and with a growing army comes increasing state power, and so on. A self-reinforcing development cuts free from all social embedding: only a well-organized modern state gives the military the constancy and inner stability it requires and once lacked, and only a modern military complex completes this ascent of the state to all-encompassing power, enabling it to draw the people entirely into its own orbit as material for the constant increase of its outward advance of power.

The state's dual character appears all the more clearly in the action of its organs. The state expresses the class structure in its domestic arena, but viewed from its outside relations it develops independently of the class structure. The Prussian state is a partner in the Prussian coal industry and the railways, and in this respect it reflects the outlook of industrialists. The French state, on the other hand (or the Italian or the English state), reflects more of the outlook of the proletarian class movement in its provision of schools, railways and postal service. In both cases, the state here expresses the social structure, and differences of class structure alter the character of the state in this respect. But in its foreign relations, these differences vanish entirely. The most dramatic expression of this is that once war has broken out, no parliament anywhere gains influence over a state's foreign policies and instead becomes purely an organ and instrument of the state in its direct external action.

Thus there is a very close reciprocal link between the development of military technology and the quantitative expansion of armies, as well as between the whole of the military complex and the advance of the state. For the military complex increases the state's power

not only in force and physical capability but also in its capacity to incorporate all citizens more and more profoundly into its military organ. In its foreign relations, the all-powerful state thus stands forth as the universal organization of the entire social substance, of its entire territory and population, finding in the army a universal social form that cancels all possibility of opposition between the state and society. In its foreign relations, the state takes on a second existence, wholly independent of its domestic arena, which is suspended and reduced. In war, nothing exists beyond the state, and nothing exists outside of the condition of war. This, today, is the situation in which Europe finds herself.

Social and economic conditions of modern war

The dynamic of the military complex cannot fully unfold under a system of relatively restrained capitalism, such as prevailed in the early modern period. Monarchies' desperate need for money revealed the state's relative impotence in the face of a society of estates, as well as the age's general comparative poverty in material means of power. At this time, not even colonial capitalism, despite its accumulation of gigantic fortunes, furnished the state with any wealth utilizable for power ends. Only industrialization, with concomitant population growth and technological breakthroughs in commodity production, within the limits of available raw materials, made the modern power state possible. Industrialization did not produce the modern state, and cannot be said to be its cause; but it made it possible. The process of the transformation of technology into a special capitalistic capacity (in Gottl's phrase) was decisive in the interrelation of the state and economy, even though this process played only a peripheral part in the rise of a distinctively capitalist economic outlook and spirit. A capitalism based purely on merchant capital, or a trading capitalism based purely on the putting-out system, would have been insufficient for the power state's total unfolding, which depends on the industrial system and gains its unique character from the possibility of steadily increasing, technologically advancing, industrial production.
This interrelation of the state, industrialization and the military is of a mainly contingent character: it should be noted that the state could not have permitted the industrial system to develop in a form dangerous to its power interests. Legislation for protection of workers oriented to industrial solidarity against tendencies to disarray can here be seen as important not only for domestic stability but also for the state's position in its foreign arena. Its most important policies are thus Janus-faced, like itself, at once reflections of social relations of power and intensifiers of its own abstract organizational power: policies pursued only to the extent that they enable it to increase its power, or do not inhibit it from so doing. Under industrialization, the state's economic legislation comes more and more under the influence of military interests. A war ministry's increasing involvement in affairs of even only the remotest military significance must here be seen not merely in terms of departmental aggrandizement but in terms of the entire life of the state represented in a second guise,

reflected in the existence of a military cabinet alongside that of the war ministry [14]. The military complex thus confronts the domestically oriented state as an independent facet of its own life, and is always the stronger face in any conflict of interest. Answering always to the highest executive directory (to the monarch or president), it moves independently of other ministerial divisions and influences all particulars of state administration and state finances, especially in war when all things and all men come to exist only in military form.
An economic system arising out of industrial productivity thus furnishes the state with hitherto unthinkable resources and opportunities. Increased demographic capacity is acquired not only through massively enhanced commodity production but also through transformations in agriculture, bound up with large concentrations of population in the cities. Up until the age of Frederick the Great, universal conscription would have been impossible without the sacrifice of many essential skilled workers and craftsmen trained at great social expense. In a war before this time, any new industrial machinery would have been too vulnerable to damage, and a state would have had no real ability to enforce universal conscription. In a war of long duration, universal conscription would have been impossible without chaos and barbarism breaking out. We see here, then, that army size or extent of conscription is by no means inconsequential for a state's ability to dominate over its citizens as subjects of its power, in contrast to a mercenary army that expresses real citizens' freedom, where the societal realm is not suspended in the state's foreign actions and the state has its citizens at its disposal only through a contract.
Industrialization is therefore essential for universal conscription in both expanding the demographic reservoir and increasing productivity. Greater provision of the necessities of life for all social strata means that a labour force can increasingly be employed in non-essential product manufacture, unlike a purely agrarian state's dependence on all the labour power of its inhabitants for sustenance, faced with emergency in the event of war. (Such states no longer exist today, however, having become more productive through the use of imported agricultural machines and artificial fertilizers, creating surpluses for export.) Industrial states with industrialized agriculture systems, particularly those oriented to export trade, possess tremendous masses of labour power that remain uninvolved in the production of life necessities, and a great multitude of these in any case suddenly become surplus to requirement at the moment of the upsetting of all existing ways of

14 The uniqueness of the army's position was understood early on by von Stein Lorenz, in 1872. *Die Lehre vom Heerwesen als Theil der Staatswissenschaft* (Stuttgart). According to von Stein, while the army answers to constitutional law, it nevertheless "harbours something that always has been, and always will be, beyond reach of the constitution. The constitution cannot command the army". "The military [*Heerwesen*] answers to the law, the army [*Armee*] to the commando". "Yet at all times and in all states", he continues, "the unity of these is the head of state as warlord". Our view here differs from von Stein's, however, in stressing *subordination* of the constitution under the "head of state as warlord" in all cases of conflict, rather than "unity" in the sense of unification of law and command. Indicative of this is the complete abdication of the organs of domestic state administration in war, where a formally lawful proclamation of the state of emergency entails handover of the entire state *imperium* to military authorities, with no ear for any domestic claim. All a domestic office can do here is petition for consideration of its view. (Cf. the interesting speech of Minister Delbrück in the Reichstag on 10 March 1915, printed in 1916. *Verhandlungen des Reichstags, Stenographische Berichte*, vol. 306, Berlin, pp. 48-50.) No starker sign of such total usurpation is the fact that for the military censor, the Chancellor of the Reich counts merely a private person and is entitled to make known his views in this capacity alone. No "civil authorities" exist over against the army. The military *is* the state.

life at the outbreak of war [15]. Perhaps paradoxically here, it is not the medieval agrarian state but the developed fine-tuned economies of the modern industrial states that can most easily sustain a military deployment of the entire working population in war. Those unfit for fighting – women, the young and the elderly – suffice as producers of everyday necessities, though production of any goods beyond these would face great difficulties. If we imagined the modern industrial state being organized on a communistic principle, we would see immediately that it can deploy a whole mass of "luxury workers" in the army, with the difference that now their labour take on the form of a "necessity" to produce the "luxury" of arms.

Universal conscription in war has decisive economic consequences in its evenly spread enlistment of forces from all labour spheres, necessitating arduous re-orientation of firms and intensified demands on workers, with the consequence of many bankruptcies and losses of private capital. The "economic sensitivity" we heard talked about before the start of this war was as nothing compared to the contraction of production and distribution to a much narrower circle after its outbreak. Nevertheless, compared with the immense strains placed on the agrarian state, this experience is more easily bearable for the modern industrial state. A more developed and more "affluent" economy is able more easily to bear war's strains. (Compare, for instance, the impact of the 1870-71 war between France and Germany with the war between Japan and Russia.) Such strains today consist more in the enemy's "repulsion" than destruction. Although it is true that "repulsion" may here mean something more devastating today, depending on the nature of the enemy and the object of the war, capitalist development based on mass organization guided by the state enables an economy to adjust much more effectively to the exigencies of war and to put up resistance to an enemy.

Advanced capitalism is also essential for universal conscription and military leadership in its unique capacity to supply a modern army with all needed articles and to replenish supplies in sufficient quantities during a war's progress. In a war of many month's duration, technical and organizational capacities must reach unprecedented levels; and wherever these requirements are not met, other states will intervene. At present, France's and Russia's campaigns already only seem to be holding up thanks to American industrial organization. Unimaginable at the start of this war, advanced industrial capitalism now seems capable of compensating even for a country's complete international isolation. In the emergency situation, a country can sustain a plentiful supply of consumer objects and all kinds of means of production from previous years' productivity [16].

Likenesses between army and factory organization are here universally familiar, and help explain the ease of the inserting of industrial workers into armies. Particularly striking is a

15 This too explains the high unemployment experienced after the war's outbreak and the desires of many (other than the masses of volunteers) to enlist to escape unemployment. Men also "took" "military service" in earlier times, but for other reasons, linked mostly to irregular economic activity of some kind.

16 Copper, cotton and wool can be retracted from ready-made products, while even in agriculture there are possibilities of drawing on previous years' productivity, notably in the necessarily intensified use of cattle farming in an industrial state, where large beef reserves can compensate for shortages of cereals. Though such uses come at a price of sacrifices for the future, they reflect mobilizable wealth, obtainable without foreign territory annexation. Wealth today lies in a "tremendous collection of commodities", as Marx put it – not, as in the Orient, in gold and silver, of small use to a besieged industrial state in the midst of war.

modern army's need for skilled metal workers among the rapidly swelling ranks of machine technicians. Where peasants were previously the best adapted population sector for armies composed of marching, starving and freezing foot-soldiers and cavalry, today a soldier's life in the army reflects more and more closely the psychological habitus of the skilled or unskilled factory worker [17]. Though one cannot here speak of any kind of pre-established harmony, industrial capitalism's technological dynamic must shape the working masses in ways required by the dynamic of the military complex. Symbolically speaking, one might say that where the cavalry was the finest blossom of the agrarian economy, today the fighting airplane seems to stand as the highest achievement of industrial development. Whether for a life in industry or the army, the essence and direction of a man's training and re-training is the same. Capitalism as the most universal current of our time encompasses the military complex's formation as a phase in its own development [18].

At this point can be seen a resolution of the antinomy mentioned earlier in the way the state forfeits its domestic power in becoming increasingly a reflection of concrete class stratification or a committee of the ruling class, while in its foreign environment becoming more and more a pure bearer of power. Whether to capital or to labour, the state's class dedication always means a higher organizational form of economic life, whether driven by a business orientation toward profit and strict factory discipline or by a labour orientation toward better life conditions for the broad masses and rational factory organization. In either case, economic development rapidly increases in tempo and the conditions are set for the power state's full emergence. Class domination of the machinery of government and reduced state power in the domestic arena is here entirely compatible with externally growing state power. The state's only object of fear is economic stagnation, but within limits it can be indifferent as to whether the economy moves in the direction of a trust of capital interests or in the direction of social democracy. So long as its essential organs are not threatened, it can be indifferent to the distribution of class power relations, to the point that even full social democracy can come about without any change in a state's foreign power relations.

But there is also a further respect in which the power state can be relatively indifferent to domestic class power relations. Modern capitalism is essentially antagonistic in its class structure, in contrast to the relatively harmonious and organic character of the pre-capitalist society of estates. Feudal society and the medieval guild system rested on a stratification system experienced as fixed and stable, where conflicts of interests were not fundamental in nature and never threatened the essence of social hierarchy. By contrast, under capitalism, capital and labour confront one another fundamentally, irrespective of any internal class differentiations or re-shapings of elements from the earlier structure. Yet over and above this antagonism, a consciousness begins to arise among all social classes of the superiority of the state, and the state's rise to abstract sovereignty comes to be felt

17 Lorenz von Stein (*ibid.*, pp. 15-16) comments that "the propertyless class (in the cities) represents the largest magnitude but the smallest value", composed of less physically developed men and "many malcontents" who "fill up the war-time hospitals". The rule must therefore be "never to allow them to assemble in large masses". The army's true core, he contends, lies among the yeomen of the land.

18 This is especially true of the munitions industry, which is undoubtedly filled with a strong expansionary drive as a capitalist industry, even though what we see before us is not actually of capitalist origin but rather a process whereby the military's abstract expansion must necessarily take on the form and character of capitalist enterprise insofar as it is dependent on commodity production and shares many of the latter's technological features, however different in "spirit".

as an integral part of social development. This process unfolds to such an extent that the state comes to be experienced as synonymous with the societal domain, so that society continues to feel itself a subject of action even as it has become an object for the state. The army as the state's organ of power over its external environment, most fully activated in war, now appears as the expression of the people. The people now feel themselves active even as they are drawn suddenly into the guise of the army. A society accustomed to seeing the state acting in countless actions as sometimes the party of one class and sometimes the party of another now becomes conscious of itself as united in the state's action. Such consciousness of united activity can be described here as *ideology*. In a capitalist society the only form in which this ideology can arise is an idea of unity over against danger, and so, in war, the state's attitude becomes one of total self-defence: each state presents itself as the one attacked, as the only way in which to maintain an otherwise empty notion of class unity in the *Gemeinschaft*. All states officially claim a war of defence, allowing war to be waged in the name of society, and societal forces to be mobilized successfully, in ways impossible if a war were perceived as purely an affair of the state or of particular interests. Compared to earlier times when social estates saw themselves clearly distant and distinct from the state, societal forces are now able to effect little individually against the state's will, even though the state relies on them and cannot ignore them, least of all in moments of great strain [19].

The state's ghostly abstractness of operation and the fatalistic sense everywhere of states clashing with one another can be seen even more clearly in the state's command over domestic intellectual forces. Beyond all official propaganda, states have seen a complete bending and so-to-speak drilling of public argumentation in favour of war. In this sense, the modern state has really become a "cultural state" (*Kulturstaat*), exploiting all kinds of intellectual and cultural forces. Its tremendous suggestive powers enable it to channel cultural life in its own direction, without need even for coercion over men's minds [20]. It can shape civil law to its own needs and in precisely this action define itself as the "state of law" (*Rechtsstaat*) [21]. Even the faintest echo of individual natural rights, once considered

19 Particularly indicative of this point at present is Italy, where the effects of the war's violence have not yet started to be felt and differentiated social class structures still remain active. Yet in war, there too the unity of a "people" will likely be invoked, despite Italy's long history of agitations against national unification. An Italian government too will likely succeed in mobilizing not only against "hypocritical egoism" but more especially for national self-defence in a future war.

20 On this point, see the book by Wolfendorf K., 1914. *Der Gedanke des Volksheeres im deutschen Staatsrecht* (Tübingen), a work all the more interesting for being set down before the outbreak of the war.

21 The state's means of subjection are more subtle and more penetrating than before in their hold people's minds. Earlier times, it is true, saw demands for subservience through deeds or suffering. One could sell off one's subjects, as with the Hessian *Landeskinder* to America; but what when land is now ceded to another state? What is then demanded is more than just tolerance of the new state's rule: the inhabitants must come to feel a belonging to the state in free conviction, and be able to convert feelings of coercion into their opposite. When a state cedes territory, it certainly demands economic sacrifices of the inhabitants, but not only this: at the moment of the handover, the inhabitants must be already internally divided. From the point of view of the acquiring state, what was previously high treason is now presented as patriotic duty, to an "old" fatherland rather than to a new one. The modern state in general has to ensure that necessities are recognized by people under conditions of free will; but here this paradox reaches an extreme, where all citizens are made to hold convictions of their own, whose content is nevertheless determined by the state. At this point, we have the classic doctoral student's question: exactly when are the new convictions and state loyalties originally generated and no longer derivable from the previous state order? All this hypothetical thinking shows once again that the kinds of convictions in question here are just forms of ideology.

the basis of the constitution, is forgotten. No constitution in fact exists for the modern power state; or any remaining trace of a constitution is suspended in war. Fichte's today so often misquoted essay, "Vom wahrhaften Krieg", recognized the moral priority of personal liberty and every rational being's right and duty to criticism and examination of ideas before all other laws: orientation to the idea of freedom was made an unswerving duty. Today, by contrast, the modern state subordinates the individual to its purposes, and any independent sphere of inviolable individual right is obliterated.

Just how much the omnipotent state dresses itself merely in the form of the "state of law" is shown by the following juridical contradiction. By dint of the law of mobilization and the war declaration, the sovereign has real command over society and represents a "state" for itself; yet it typically continues to solicit loans from parliaments, even when a parliament's consent is no longer required. If a parliament could really refuse in this situation, it would be immediately clear that two different universal "states" here collide with one another.

Another sign of the strength of the state's manipulative power in war is the pusillanimity of intelligentsias and a vanishing in all countries of any instinct for reality. Posterity will scarcely comprehend the spinelessness, indeed servility, with which intellectuals of all shades lost themselves in the outbreak of this war and believed themselves reborn in it. Not one intellectual and cultural movement in Germany or abroad has not been prepared to serve this war as its ideology: each has sought to exploit it for its purposes. Outlooks worshipping the actions of heroes, as much as outlooks dreaming of an awakening "people" [22], grand philosophies of the march of the national state or other philosophies of "world harmony", all want the war as their vehicle of consummation. Grotesque are these endeavours when they emanate from the churches of our time, seeing in the war "a holy struggle for God, for the coming of God's Kingdom on earth". What is one to say to this Catholic voice when the assumption that Christianity ought to identify with world peace is rejected on the grounds that peace is "hedonistic"? Or to the claim that rejection of war stems from nothing more than a biological or sociological urge of some kind, merely aiming to alleviate suffering, while Christianity seeks man's seeks true moral fortitude in the face of temptation?

The mentality that holds that "men need war's opportunity to sacrifice their lives to a cause with firmness and sincerity" grates all the more when it comes from a treatise addressed ostensibly to the religious problem in war, suddenly thinking it can look away from the fact that war means not only self-sacrifice but also, necessarily, immeasurable suffering for others, with the ultimate goal of extermination of the enemy [23]. Such views curiously contradict the Pope's view of war as stemming from human envy for worldly goods – here interestingly applying a kind of materialistic interpretation of history, though loaded with moral valuations. Highly isolated, indeed, are any voices calling the war un-Christian. Fairly exceptional is F.W. Förster's indictment of the un-Christian talk of leading Christian

22 As reminder of how much such ideologies of national awakening have changed over time, let us recall that even Fichte could still characterize the German Reich from the starting point of "personal individual liberty". This is the highest form of state in his view, in contrast to the French which is characterized by "its striving toward the fusion of all in unity and conformity to the general opinion as the real truth, for whose knowledge nothing more is necessary". Fichte therefore rejects the notion of the community feeling as something given originally and absolutely. (Fichte J. G., 1912. "Über den Begriff des wahrhaften Krieges", in *Ausgewählte Werke*, Hamburg, vol. 6, pp. 451-78.)

23 Rade M., 1915. "Dieser Krieg und das Christentum", in *Politische Flugschriften* (Stuttgart, ed. E. Jäckh, vol. 29).

representatives in recent months and of the betrayal of God's truth to temporal interests and excitations. "Every war", Förster tells us, "is a breaking with Christ, even if we cannot state exactly each person's quantum of guilt". The state, he says, must bow to the moral law at home and abroad. Politics at present has become nothing but a tool, a dependant or an appendage of the military.

Not even the state's bond with a national idea, its ability to draw meaning and force from its function as a bearer of national unity, is as effective today as it once was. The unity of the *Staatsnation*, or the unity of a people under one state but not as one nation, has never been more palpable than today when different segments of one and the same nation everywhere are at loggerheads with one another. We no longer need Otto Bauer's illumination of the link between nationalism and economic interests to feel with our own hands how much the nation has become an ideology now particularly of the state, and not only a general capitalist ideology. Even those such as Meinecke who endorse the idea of the state as the national state seem to concede this. Meinecke emphasizes very heavily that state association (*Staatsverband*) passes above people association (*Volksverband*) (i.e. the nation), and that in future state life will require a moderation of nationalist passions in all of central Europe [24]. The state is here conceived as superordinate. Yet precisely this circumstance ought to lead us to revise the idea of the state as something primarily national; for here the very thought of the national state has itself become an ideology. In *Die deutsche Erhebung von 1914*, which he began writing before the war's outbreak, Meinecke himself demonstrates very sharply how nationalism today no longer expresses the particularities of individual nations but instead degenerates everywhere into a uniform political current, where "national ideas" come to look the same in different states and everywhere employ the same means in the same vacuous way. In Meinecke's words "Nationalism uses only a schematized and conventional national culture, not a free, multifarious and differentiated one. It creates a cultural thick skin, good for passing acts of aggression but destructive of all finer sensibilities and activities". Under nationalism's sway, all peoples look more and more the same in proportion as national ideas become ideologies of the state. All differences get blurred, so that, in Meinecke's phrase, only the "melded-on bronze face of the jockey on the horse" remains as a sign of distinction – just the kind of face worn by the chauvinist who rails about a characterless mishmash of international culture. National ideas in all states become an ideology of the state and thereby forfeit all distinctive content. The logical impossibility of the *Staatsnation* is here the surest sign that the nation, originally an intellectual idea, then an ideology of capitalism, has become nothing but an ideology of the power state.

Historical materialism also misconceives this war when it sees the state merely as the servant of ruling class interests. In this respect, it too becomes "ideology" in the face of the war's reality, as does the theory of imperialism as some kind of ex post justification of the war. Whatever economic consequences this war may have, its economic side operates independently of concrete class stratification and independently of economic intention. Any economic effects experienced in this war originate from something quite distinct from the structure of the national economy. Even if some countries' capitalist classes emerge

24 Meineke F., 1914. "Staatsgedanke und Nationalismus", in Meineke, F., *Die deutsche Erhebung von 1914* (Stuttgart, pp. 74-83).

stronger from this war than others – in any case an unlikely prospect, at most open to the neutral states – the war will still not cease to display its essential aspect of a clash of abstract power states. Different states' capitalist economies have not stood behind the war as active potencies and then simply become confounded in their expectations. Rather, all along, these economies have had nothing to do with the war. It has been something alien to them. The war asserts itself over them, and they must serve it.

Clearly, capitalism's relationship to international politics has changed through history. Originally, colonial wars were certainly capitalist wars: before industrialization, merchant capital needed, and was able, to find outlets for itself through the arm of a state's foreign policy. Today's economies, by contrast, however, based on industry and finance capital, orient themselves to growth more and more by purely "economic" means, with the effect that the faster and more universal the spread of capitalist development, the less useful a state's foreign policy becomes as an expansionary tool [25]. As Marx put it, "cheap prices are the heavy armour of modern industry". Wherever colonial wars are still being fought today and are still possible (in the sense of a home-based capitalist class's ability to exploit a desired territory elsewhere), they function in the interests only of fairly small capitalist elites. Socialism here reads the modern state's ideological notion of itself too much at face value when it sees the war as triggering an "uprising of the productive forces that created capitalism against exploitation by the nation-state" [26]. For capitalism finds its means of greatest quantitative growth today either through free competition or through the formation of cooperative national cartels. In this respect, the most important element of the socialist theory is its emphasis on exploitation of the home-based European and American industrial labour forces – not on acquisition of colonial land. Here it is also significant that with ever greater capitalist penetration into different spheres of production, those countries that cannot be touched by a colonial state's foreign policies become more and more important as suppliers of raw materials – above all, America as a supplier of copper and cotton. It is a well-known fact that trade among Europe's old industrial states still remains more important for national economies than colonial trade or the financing of "spheres of influence". Power states use finance capital as a means in their pursuit of foreign policy goals; but for the capitalist class in general, little advantage accrues from colonially accelerated financing of less developed states. (Did the English free trade school not have the right instinct when it spurned colonial politics, advocating long-term sale of commodities over export of capital goods, whose products meant competition for the motherland?) Certainly economic interests condition political expansion; but it is a mistake to neglect the ever more important role of the domestic market in all economies of the European industrial states and to glimpse growth and activity exclusively in imperialist policy. Nor has due consideration been paid to factors of intense international interdependence among holders of European capital, where even within its putatively "imperialist" spheres of investment real reciprocal interests in solidarity arise across the different national capitalist economies [27].

25 This point is admitted even by some authors who seek to explain the war in terms of imperialism as an economic tendency. See Adler M., 1915. "Zur Ideologie des Weltkrieges", in *Der Kampf*, vol. 8, p. 128.

26 Trotzky N., *Der Krieg und die Internationale*; see also the summary in 1915 *Die Neue Zeit*, vol. 12/II, p. 60. This view is also developed by Hilferding in *idem*, *Finanzkapital*, esp. p. 375 ff.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 411ff.

We can therefore say that contemporary capitalism is both too old and too young for the current conduct of international affairs. On the one hand, it is possible that massive shifts in locations of production will lead to some selected countries gaining a monopoly position – most likely America and China after exhaustion of Europe's most important coal reserves, and America as the monopoly cotton producer. On the other hand, it is possible that frictions among capitalist classes will impel whole regions of the world into political conflict, unless production develops and differentiates in such a way that a real global economy comes to be created, which then prevents against war. At present, however, the constellation resembles none of these scenarios. Those who see in it a struggle over sources of raw materials or sites of accumulation ignore the fact that none of this war's possible strategic objectives can mean much for national capitalist classes and can offer them no significant opportunities for capital accumulation [28]. In addition, such views forget that the really important markets of the future – above all China's – are not even targets of this war; and all of China's competitors – Russia, Japan, and England – have anyway formed alliances with one another other. At most bisected here and there by influences from the national economy, the political developments that led to this war have followed an essentially autonomous course.

Conclusion

As a political movement, socialism obviously opposes imperialism; but socialism's position becomes unclear when it simultaneously calls for capitalism's fullest unfolding, viewing imperialism and war as its final stage. All imperialist elements seen as repressive of the labour force suddenly turn out to be innocuous when imperialism is now seen as the real and decisive force in the war [29]. The account presented here has sought to resolve such inconsistencies of thinking.

This account also, incidentally, proffers a solution to the puzzle over war loans. War loans have played no real part in parliamentary deliberation; for a right to approve credit becomes fairly meaningless when a parliament lacks the right to declare war and to conclude peace. Parliamentary resistance to funds for the army must here be understood as part of society's battle with the state; but this refusal becomes ineffectual when society is suspended in the state in time of war. When leadership of the army becomes synonymous with the highest command of state in war, all societal institutions are excluded from intervention and stripped back to a minimal existence, rendered incapable of action, either positive or negative. When every representation of "society" through parliament can simply be rejected, votes over war loans are therefore merely decorative, without decisive power.

Our position in this essay is that war today is economically conditioned but not economically caused, and is already latent in the nature of the modern state. Modern abstract power states with the military complex as their instrument are always already geared to war. They

28 German writers see this particularly clearly in the case of England. See the essay by Eckstein G., 1914-15. "Englands Siegepreis", in *Die Neue Zeit*, vol. 33/I, pp. 705-10; also Landesberger J., 1914. *Der Krieg und die Volkswirtschaft* (Vienna), reviewed in *Die Neue Zeit*, 1914-15, vol. 33/I, p. 768.

29 Renner K., 1915. "Sozialitischer Imperialismus oder Internationaler Sozialismus?", in *Der Kampf*, vol. 8, pp. 104-115.

denote war with the same abstractness as their own existence. War today need have no concrete content or goal – not even a cause, only an "occasion" [30](30). It need only arise out of "tensions" that become "unbearable". Today the only concrete elements of war are the levels of military organization that operate indifferently in the societal, economic, and cultural arenas. The abstract power state is thus the most advanced form of organized power, and the only measurable dimensions of this war are different states' levels of organization. No distinct quality of a people or a culture enters in any longer into this abstract phenomenon of organization. Under the condition of organization, everything becomes quantitative. Abstract organization here achieves a unique importance in world history.

It should be reiterated that these sober considerations can and should suggest nothing about the subjective experience of the combatants in this war. The modern state in its distinctive way has enabled the combatants in this war to be filled with all kinds of subjective ideas which at the critical moment of the war's outbreak take on the form of bellicose ideologies. Here the distinctive feature of our situation seems to be that all aspects of life must be "treated" for the purpose of war, or that all living persons, each with the their own individual goals, must experience the war as lying in the flow of their own ultimate ends. To be sure, we can expect none of these sundry ideologies possibly to cohere with one another. A symptom of this in Germany is the call to unity across political parties, which has nevertheless been incapable of silencing a veritable cacophony of divergent idealizing judgements about the war.

Our position is thus that most current opinions about the "essence of war" are ideologies. We do not here mean to belittle individual sacrifices, or indeed whole people's sacrifices. Undoubtedly the war has elicited extraordinary feats of human courage and solidarity. No dispassionate meditation can overlook this fact or look away from the immeasurable personal sacrifices of all men at the front, so little appreciable for people back at home. Nevertheless, even the most respectful and humble recognition of such dedication cannot alter the truth about this war. Its causes do not thereby change in nature.

We stand today perhaps before a paradoxical moment in history. Organized life as it has arisen in all states now measures itself in this war. Yet perhaps it is the case that for all its terrible squandering and devastation of men and riches, one day the war will mean nothing to us. In its assimilating of all of life's forces to machines, the war spells a gigantic intensification and transmuting of problems much discussed in these last years as dangers of objectification, depersonalization, and mechanization. But perhaps at its end, the war will summon all who believe in living in a society to make a renewed stand against abstract organization. Perhaps once people behold the essence of war, its ideologies will unveil themselves to us.

To return to our considerations at the outset: our world today is not a real community, only an abstract magnitude of organization dissembling itself to us as a community. Only someone who rejoices in unbounded strife or who thinks of this clash of power states as a realization of the reason of world history will be able to affirm this suspending of the social substance in the state. (Such, essentially, is the worldview taken by Max Scheler

30 All considerations of "war guilt" should therefore be seen as including the role of "occasion" or pretext.

in *Der Genius des Krieges und der deutsche Krieg*.) Those, however, who repudiate this will view the time as ripe for a resumption of the struggle for individual rights and for rights of society against the state, and will disown any notion of the state as some kind of reality *sui generis*. War, we have argued, reveals the reality of the modern power state as universal military organization, oblivious to the idea of men as individuals and as members of social classes. In its outward life, the state enters into contradiction with the essence of its internal world, becoming entirely a machine, at odds with the picture the soldiers create for themselves of their family, their home, and their people. Let us hope that after the war's end, all oppositional voices will reassert themselves on an international platform – though we can expect that all such currents will be bound to meet with great difficulties, since class organization and class barriers will become ever tauter and more abstract.

In its entirety, today's artificially constructed state rests on an economic system that is not only capitalist in content but also, above all, organized in form. A socialist system more oriented to the collective interest will be unlikely to change much in this regard. Only a very different outlook oriented to greater justice in the economy, but not necessarily to greater wealth or to greater plenty of resources, represents a utopian alternative. For the mechanism of the economy is organization, and it is this organized system that today carries the entire hierarchical edifice, together with the power state, including the socialist state. Only a completely changed attitude to economic life might here begin to loosen this organized condition of existence and truly attack the power state's imperialist ideology.

The only other alternative is that states around the world ally with one another in such a way that dynamic conflictual tendencies are denied freedom of movement. A system of organization spread out across the world that deterred states from attacking each other would at least be neutralized in active effect. Were this to occur, perhaps this most destructive of all wars in world history might eventually dwindle to insignificance. Said with a daredevil hyperbole, and from standpoint of utopia, if history's court could judge things of this world solely by their ideal meaning and not by the span of their effects in the material lives of men, perhaps one day historians will write of this war in a little footnote, as something of no intrinsic historical consequence, like the sinking of the Titanic or the earthquake at Messina.

Translated from German by
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