

NEWSLETTER OF THE
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WAR

Charles Tilly, New School for Social Research

Like a flare at night on the open sea, the 1990-91 Persian Gulf war illuminated changes in war and the international system. All at once several realities of which many people had been half-aware came starkly into view: the great impact of Soviet military decline on the international opportunity structure; the extraordinary militarization that has occurred (with Soviet and American complicity) in the Middle East; the highly contingent relationship between winning a war and establishing a peace; the investment that all states (including those whose boundaries colonial powers laid down in blithe disregard of peoples and geography) now have in maintaining existing boundaries; the effectiveness of television in making distant adventures appear immediate; the striking ability of otherwise unpopular rulers to mobilize short-term support for dangerous wars; the increasingly tight interdependence of politics in Washington, Peoria, Vilnius, Tbilisi, Moscow, Paris, London, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Tehran, Cairo, Damascus, Riyadh, Beirut, Tripoli, and Amman. With civil war erupting in Iraq, we face the possibility that American intervention will have turned Iraq from a state resembling Syria into a state resembling either Lebanon or Iran -- a fabulous, evil social experiment. As seductive as the vision of a "peace dividend" appeared to Americans, furthermore, we learned once again that Venus in velvet is no match for Mars in mail. For my part, I railed against American policy from the war's beginning to its end, but soon recognized that we worshippers of Venus had quickly dwindled to a feeble minority, at least in the United States.

In addition to the problems it poses for sociologists as citizens, the Gulf war lays down a challenge and an opportunity to sociologists as analysts of political processes. Although with astute adjustment of models and parameters we can no doubt explain almost any political event after the fact, no rational-expectations account of warmaking easily yields ex ante predictions that Iraq would hold on to Kuwait for six months in the face of massive threats from great powers or that the United States would subdue a small, distant power by means of the largest bombardment the

world has ever seen. To conclude that the war was therefore "irrational", however, does nothing but restate the question: under what conditions might we expect such wars to occur? More generally, do the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the massive American response, the Soviet attempt to mediate, and the realignment of forces in the Middle East signal that another important transition in the international system -- therefore in the character and incidence of war -- has begun?

The ends of major wars typically incite the largest transformations in the nature of war. Many powerful forces concentrate at war's end: shifts in power balances caused by military action and wartime alliances, postwar demobilizations and conversions of state capacity, enormous costs of reconstruction and debt service, plus the widespread dissolution and reconstitution of sovereignties that occur in the course of peace settlements. For at least four centuries, the principal alterations in membership and structure of the Europe-centered state system have occurred in the intermediate aftermath of general wars, from the sixteenth-century treaties terminating French-Spanish struggles to the patchwork of settlements that closed World War II. In 1945 began forty years of relative peace among the great powers, bipolar confrontation between the Soviet and American blocs, occasional extension to tripolar conflict involving China, indirect wars among the two or three blocs in Korea, Vietnam, Angola, and elsewhere, and extensive decolonization that multiplied both the numbers of allies or clients and the sites of indirect military struggle among great powers. Thus World War II ushered in yet another shift in war and the international system.

If the end of World War II began a new era for worldwide war and peace, the 1960s brought the largest transition so far within that era. During the early 1960s, decolonization and entry of new states into the international system accelerated, civil wars greatly increased in destructiveness and in their share of all wars, military power consolidated in Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East, and military struggles for control of African states multiplied rapidly.

The Cuban missile crisis confirmed the rough strategic equality of the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as stabilizing their claims to mutually exclusive zones of influence around their own frontiers. Now, as we have entered a time of relaxation in the Soviet-American arms race, with portents of major realignments among great powers, including Japan and the incipient European Community. Since big wars have typically occurred in the process of realignment, we must worry as we cheer.

It is possible, in any case, that today's transition rivals that of the 1960s, or even that of the late 1940s. Some students of international relations regard the period since 1988 as the beginning of a postwar transition without an open, general, killing war. The reduction in Cold War hostilities, however definitive or transitory, has rent the Iron Curtain, facilitated the settlement of African civil wars, left Cuba vulnerable, given Iran room to maneuver, made Syria available for American patronage after offering Syria the opportunity for direct intervention in Lebanon, destined Afghanistan to fragment from two coalitions to many, and so on through a vast web of probable effects. Now, minor recalibrations of international relations occur all the time, most often within the limits of a larger system that remains unshaken. Perhaps we are now experiencing nothing but recalibration. Yet we should at least entertain -- and test -- the hypothesis that yet another reorganization of war and the state system is proceeding.

What an opportunity for sociologists! In principle, scholars who have analyzed the world system, the transformation of states, and the conduct of war should have much to say about today's putative transition. In fact, we have some reasons to doubt that they will seize the opportunity. A few years ago, a little cluster of scholars undertook the publication of a series of volumes pinpointing the contributions of the social sciences to the understanding and prevention of war. Their idea was to scan fields of knowledge outside of strategic security studies (analyses, for example, of decision-making

under uncertainty, or of negotiations) for first-rate work bearing on war-generating processes. Two volumes of the series have appeared (Tetlock et al.: 1989, 1991), and at least one more is in the offing. As one of the series' editors, I was disappointed how little viable vision we found in sociology. Our authors have come disproportionately from political science and psychology, with an occasional reach toward economics and history.

As we began our enterprise, military sociology seemed a promising source, but it turned out to deal chiefly with the organization of armies rather than the causes or correlates of war. The sociology of states and revolutions dealt more directly with war and peace, yet yielded few ideas concerning the conditions or consequences of alterations in the international system. The sociologies of conflict and collective action begin to touch on the dynamics of two-party struggles, while barely gesturing at more frequent multi-party interactions. Within sociology, the literature of world systems contains the largest body of systematic work on relations between warmaking and international position; except for drawing attention to the belligerence and intervention of states that are gaining or losing hegemony, however, that literature falls down precisely when it comes to explaining changes in the character of civil war, interstate war, alliance-formation, and economic dominance. For the moment, political scientists have made those knotty topics their domain.

Despite delighting to consort with political scientists and recognizing the utility of dividing intellectual labor, I regret the weakness of sociological work on war and the international system. For one thing, international-relations analysts themselves -- confounded or overjoyed by the increasing irrelevance of bipolar strategic models as the focus of security studies -- are turning with enthusiasm to historical comparison, an activity with which many sociologists have busied themselves for two decades or more. For another, the long experience of sociologists in the study of interpersonal and

interorganizational networks ought to lend itself handily to the treatment of interstate relations. Finally, the rich literatures of military sociology, states, revolutions, conflict, collective action, and world systems provide important theoretical and methodological resources for the tasks ahead. We have only to try.

REFERENCE

Tetlock, Philip, et al., eds. *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989 and 1991.

CALL FOR PAPERS

"The Rhetoric of Social History"
A Scholars' Workshop at the University of Iowa
June 21 - July 2 1992

Those selected as participants will be expected to be in residence for the entire 2-week workshop in order to comment on and discuss the papers by other participants. A number of the participants will be named Fellows and receive a stipend of \$2,000 to cover expenses and honorarium; others will be invited to participate with outside support or at their own expense.

The application should include an application form, CV, paper proposal of 2-3 pages, and a sample of the applicant's written work. The review of applications will begin in March, 1991. The Fellows and participants will be announced on May 1, 1991.

For application materials or further information, contact Jeffrey Cox, Linda Kerber or Shelton Stromquist at the University of Iowa History Department (tel. 319-335-2290).

COUNCIL ELECTIONS
STATEMENTS FROM THE NOMINEES

Andrew Abbott

Associate Professor of Sociology, Rutgers

(until 6/1991)

Professor of Sociology, University of Chicago

(from 7/1991)

This year I have served as chair of the section's Prize Committee. I am currently writing a book on the way time is used in social science theories and methodologies. I am also pursuing my work on formalizing models for sequential data like careers, life cycles, and collective movements. I am doing a comparative micro and macro study of eighteenth-century German musicians and nineteenth-century American psychiatrists.

I continue to believe that the section has devoted too much attention to "history" in the sense of different times and places and too little to history in the sense of process models and conceptions. I believe the section should work towards a theoretical elaboration of the latter with a view to radical historicization of sociology.

Mehrangiz Najafizadeh

Assistant Professor of Sociology, Mount Saint Mary's College

This past year, I served on the section committee to select the 1990 "Best Recent Article in Comparative/Historical Sociology". This task provided a unique reminder of both the high caliber and the diversity of intellectual and scholarly foci of our membership. This diversity is one important factor that makes our Section unique, and as a Council member, I would seek to maintain such diversity. Further, the Fall 1990 section Newsletter indicated that section membership has declined by 66 members. I would emphasize strategies, such as those successfully

employed by the Education section, to recruit new members. To help retain membership, I would encourage greater involvement of members in section decision-making, including the choice of themes for section sessions at the annual ASA meetings and membership on section committees.

My current research builds on my prior work on educational change in Nicaragua and Iran, for which I was a co-recipient of an Honorable Mention for the 1989 Best Recent Article in Comparative/Historical Sociology. This on-going research expands the analysis to three other politically and culturally diverse nations: Libya, Nigeria, and Tanzania. My research seeks to contribute to the discipline and also to explore relevant policy implications: for example, my co-authored article, "Educational Ideologies and Technical Development in the Third World", in M. Mtewa, ed., *International Science and Technology: Philosophy, Theory and Practice*. (St. Martin's Press, 1990).

Sonya Rose

Associate Professor of Sociology, Colby College

The section provides opportunities for its members to be engaged with a network of comparative historical sociologists and scholars in other fields as a resource for their research and teaching. My work is avowedly interdisciplinary. I maintain contacts with and draw on the work of European and American social and cultural historians. My continuing interest in feminist theory has led me to see the value of the writings of feminist political theorists and philosophers, and to explore the implications of scholarship in the expanding field of cultural studies for questions central to comparative historical sociology. I believe that by exploring the boundaries of our discipline, we as comparative historical sociolo-

gists can lead the way in reinvigorating sociology as a critical discipline.

As a sociology teacher in a liberal arts college I am always concerned with ways to incorporate the insights of comparative historical sociology into undergraduate sociology courses. I would like to be able to look to the section to provide a network of scholars who are concerned with incorporating comparative historical sociology into the undergraduate curriculum, and to provide a forum for a variety of approaches to comparative historical sociology as a teaching resource.

I have twice served on the Nominating Committee and on the Prize Committee and have been a section member since 1985. Currently I am working on an essay analyzing the arguments concerning nineteenth-century English factory legislation which will be included in a book of essays comparing the histories of protective labor legislation in several European countries and the U.S. I am editing a volume on gender and working-class history that includes essays on both western and non-western societies. Also, I am exploring the development of working-class consumerism and popular culture and how images of colonial subjects helped to constitute the meaning of respectable behavior in nineteenth- and twentieth-century England. My newest publication is *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century England*. (University of California Press, 1991) -- scheduled for release this fall.

Carole Turbin

Visiting Associate Professor, SUNY-Binghamton

I have been active in the section for several years, serving on the nominating committee for two years (chair, 1989-90), and as organizer of roundtable panels in 1990-91. My book, *Working Women of Collar City: Gender, Class, and Community in Troy, New York, 1886-1984*. (University of Illinois Press, forthcoming fall 1991), explores the conditions under which working class women engaged in collective action, and contributes to recent debates in feminist theory and historical sociology. As a council member, I would support the qualities that I think make the section a good place for dialogue among scholars with diverse interests and perspectives and a commitment to analyzing social phenomena across time and place. I would like to help the section to enhance its interdisciplinary approach, for example, by developing more connections with historians and with other sections. I would like to encourage our newsletter and ASA panels to explore the issue of incorporating gender more fully and systematically into comparative historical analyses. I would encourage the newsletter to continue our dialogue on the implications of methodology and theory, and the meaning of the term we use to describe ourselves, "comparative historical".

**Now Available:
Applied/Practice Directory**

The ASA and the Society for Applied Sociology have made available the 1991 directory of "Graduate Programs in Applied Sociology and Sociological Practice" (2nd ed). This 48-page directory lists the details of 118 graduate programs that offer applied or practice components. Copies are available for \$5.00 from: ASA Teaching Services Program, 1722 N Street NW, Washington DC 20036.

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