Strife Journal, Issue 3 Trinity Term 2014 (May 2014)

Editors:
Alister Wedderburn
aliwedderburn@gmail.com

Nikolai Gourof
Nikolaos.gourof@kcl.ac.uk

Editorial Assistant
Tally de Orellana

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ISSN 2052 3882 (03)

Alister Wedderburn and Nikolai Gourof
Department of War Studies
King’s College London
Strand, London, WC2R 2LS

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This publication has been edited with Open-source software OpenOffice and Gimp. We have used Garamond for our main-body text and titles and LHF New Trajan for the logo.

Cover page: Cavalry Battle (1600s) by Jan Martszen de Jonge, privately held.
Foreword

As will become apparent, there have been some adjustments made to the Strife Journal since Issue Two. We hope the most discreet will prove to be the change in editorship: our thanks are due to Pablo de Orellana, who has stepped down after two issues’ toil at the helm, and we hope we can continue his excellent work.

Other modifications are more cosmetic, and hence perhaps more obvious. The font and formatting is slightly different, and we also have a new logo, aligning us with the blog (at www.strifeblog.org) and illustrating more clearly than ever how unified the Strife project is across blog and journal. As in the last issue, we have reprinted an extract from our online counterpart: the excellent five-part series on drone warfare entitled ‘The Good, The Bad, The Drones’, which was posted online over the course of April.

The other major change has been the revamping and expansion of the reviews section, thanks for which must go to my co-editor Nikolai Gourof. We have four reviews this issue, on texts ranging from early modern history to (post)modern political theory. Issue four will see this section expand further.

Of course, the skeleton of Strife Journal has been and remains its extended pieces, and there are four in this issue. Nikolai Gourof writes about Sergei Eisenstein’s Ivan The Terrible, and draws parallels between it and Stalin’s contemporary regime. Alexander Langer, meanwhile, draws attention to Church resistance against state oppression in Latin America. Langer speculates as to why the state responses to broadly similar resistance movements in Nicaragua and El Salvador took such different forms. Alexandra Gallowicova’s piece is another Strife first: it is split into two instalments, the first of which is printed here, the second of which will be published in Issue Four. In her first part, Gallowicova explores the idea of the ‘image’ in IR theory, and lays firm groundwork for the case study that will form her piece’s second instalment: French and British perceptions of Germany in the wake of its abstention from the UN Security Council vote on establishing a no-fly zone in Libya during the 2011 Libyan Civil War. Finally, Thomas Colley looks at propaganda in the Yugoslav conflict of the 1990s. Colley asks whether any of the lessons learnt then can be applied to the current crisis in Ukraine.

As always, many thanks are due to the department of War Studies at King’s College London, which has provided unceasing support. Special thanks are due to Dr Christine Cheng, Prof. Vivienne Jabri, Dr Oisin Tansey, Prof. Mats Berdal and Dr Kieran Mitton. Thanks are of course also owed to all the contributors to this issue, who have handled our editorial demands with grace and rapidity. We have continued with the peer-review model established in Issue 2, and we thank all our reviewers.

We are always on the lookout for interesting perspectives on conflict for both the journal and the blog; anyone interested in contributing is encouraged to pitch an idea or simply declare interest via email.

Alister Wedderburn
Nikolai Gourof

Editors, Strife Journal
editors.strife@gmail.com
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Have you ever wondered why Wallenstein has the dubious fame of being both the best and, despite his success, the last major individual military contractor? That contradiction was at the heart of the traditional story about mercenary armies reaching their peak and collapsing during the Thirty Year’s War. However, the war continued for almost 14 years after Wallenstein’s death, providing more work for mercenary soldiers and their commanders-contractors. *The Business of War* is written in sharp defiance of old biases against ‘soldiers of Fortune’ and treats mercenaries not as a temporary lesser evil but as the most natural and efficient way of European warfare for many centuries from hallowed antiquity to the end of the Ancien Régime in the fires of the French Revolution.

The theme is far from being worn out. Military contractors and mercenaries were inevitably touched upon by every work that examined warfare in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but there were few focused studies since Fritz Redlich’s *The German Military Enterpriser and His Work Force*. For more than half a century this was the prime source for details of the costs, mechanisms and hazards of hiring ‘dogs of war’ in early modern Europe. Now it is evident that *The Business of War* will become our new reference point. However, this book is something more than a summary of recent research on the subject. This is the first major study that is free from old prejudices and examines facts at their face value.

Greater attention is given to the golden age of military contracting in 1500-1648. The subtitle ‘Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe’ is deceptively narrow. The book’s focus is not on military enterprising *per se* but on the complex relationship between mercenary networks and the power of the state. Enterprise itself is understood here in a wider sense than just procurement of soldiers: it expands to delegation of responsibility for supply of food and clothes as well as for manufacturing munitions and weapons.

Many historians previously tended to treat mercenaries as an unreliable and incapable force, a deviation from the norms of warfare; eventually their greed had to make way for permanent state armies, centralised recruitment, and authority of the now evolved modern state. What part of that paradigm was based on facts? It was obviously brewed on a moral view which despised fighting for profit as well as on state propaganda of massed recruitment, without any solid evidence to speak of. The general disapproval of mercenaries was an axiom, not a proven theory. As Parrott correctly notes, ‘no amount of contrary evidence about the fighting commitment and effectiveness of mercenaries in particular military circumstances will change what seems, from one perspective, a set of logical assumptions about their limitations as military operators’. This is perhaps no surprise: we all remember the frank words of Max Planck that ‘a new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it’.

Parrott argues here that not only were mercenaries and contractors highly efficient in waging war, but also that private and public forms of warfare were not zero sum antagonists. The growth of state power didn’t bring about the death of private military enterprise. Maintenance of state-recruited and state-administered military force is seen here as

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an anomalous development over the broader course of European history, a temporary drive towards mass-conscripted armies that started roughly in the 1760s and ended in the 1960s. In contrast, from the Greek city-state through to the Ancien Régime of the eighteenth century private-public partnership flourished. That fact is relevant once again in our times with the rise of private ‘security companies’ like the infamous Blackwater (now renamed as Academi) and their more discreet colleagues.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted to the emergence and the evolution of military enterprise until the end of the Thirty Years’ War. The author describes different forms of military enterprise, their evolution and adaptability as well as the reasons for the failure of alternatives to it. The most important conclusion here is that ‘there was no single model for army organisation in that period; still less was there any inexorable process towards a state-run, state-controlled army’ (p. 135).

The second part looks into the bowels of military enterprise. It shows how efficient privatised warfare could be, how close it came to ordinary business, with known risks and returns of investments. In contrast to the usual tactical analysis of battles or a strategic one of whole wars, Parrott has focused on the day-to-day operational planning and decision making that occurred on campaigns. This is the strongest part of the book because it uncovers details of the inner cogs of mercenary networks.

There is a meaningful analysis of the grand game played by generals equally proficient. It was played for so long not because their armies were ineffective but on the contrary because they were very capable at destroying the enemy while very expensive and fragile themselves - and the enemy was the same. The armies of military enterprisers prevailed over the predominantly state-controlled armies of the period not only because they performed well on the battlefield. More important was the efficiency of complex private systems for attracting veteran soldiers and accumulating money, food, weapons and other resources.

‘Far from being a marginal and transient phenomenon in the history of European warfare, it was a lasting and successful set of mechanisms which, in various relations with rulers and their authority, lay at the heart of war-waging for centuries’ (p. 208).

The evidence backing the author’s arguments is rich and compelling. However, the main strength of this book is not in the wealth of the primary sources used, but in their interpretation. The book is very stimulating because many facts get here a proper explanation. It is very refreshing to see a book about early modern mercenaries without negative bias and one cannot help but remember Michael Mallett’s famous book, Mercenaries and their Masters, which accorded the same justice to the Italian condottieri. After all, wars are instruments of privatising profits and nationalising losses, so to deny the common soldier’s right to fight for profit after allowing for the same motivation for elites and states might seem hypocritical.

The issue, however, is far from settled. Now the arguments of this book need to pass the test of subsequent scholarship. The true discussion is just beginning, as the theories challenged by The Business of War were actually superficial suppositions, not to say myths. From a purely logical point of view, it is very easy to prove the errors of simplistic theories by presenting evidence of complexity. If previous authors described a linear evolution of military forces from unruly landsknechts to disciplined Dutch and Swedish national armies, then to standing armies, then to mass conscripted armies, it is enough to show that mercenaries were no less committed to victory than patriotic recruits, that a mercenary army could exist in different forms, that Dutch and Swedish armies employed 50-90% of foreign mercenaries and so on. If previous authors conjured the image of a fiscal-military state and spoke of the inevitable growth of the state’s monopoly on violence and coercion, it is enough to show that different states developed via different paths and that without compromise with local powers early modern

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3. Michael E. Mallett, Mercenaries and their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy, Pen and Sword, 2009
states ‘failed to achieve more than a fraction of their declared objectives’ (p. 311).

The place of The Business of War in the Military Revolution debate is not easy to describe. On the one hand, it is arguing against the patterns of state and army growth laid down as fundamental by Michael Roberts. On the other hand, the book exists in a parallel world where Military Revolution gets only a minor reference, because the author's focus on facts leaves no room for theories that lack equally solid evidence. As Parrott admits, Roberts was far more measured in his assessments than his successors, but overall the argument for transformation of the battlefield through tactical and organisational innovations had always owed more to a priori claims of reformers than to empirical validation through events on the battlefield. There was nothing especially distinctive, let alone revolutionary, in most changes that were praised under the fashionable name of the ‘Military Revolution’ (p. 145). However, what can we put in the place of the Military Revolution? Until now no one has managed to forge new evidence into a clear and convincing general concept of what had actually happened in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This work is no exception.

The book shines especially bright through the argument presented from a fresh perspective, that is less through attacking previous assumptions, but more through the examination of military enterprise in the context of credits to the sovereigns. In recent years several works have appeared which analyse credit systems at the top level, that is direct borrowing by rulers from banking networks. Here we find out about the middle level of credit. Throughout Europe in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries different incentives, be they social prestige, allocation of taxes or the potential for plunder, were used in order to lessen or to postpone royal expenses for the creation and supply of armies. That credit is more important for understanding the nature of the early modern state, than the state’s borrowing from bankers, because it demonstrates once again that historians previously overestimated the growth of state power. The successful waging of wars required a great deal of agreement over mutual benefits. Both coercion and financial resources were much more limited than was previously supposed, so rulers had to present clear rewards for wide social groups in order to obtain the required size of armed forces.

If there is a minor point of critique, it lies in the area of format, not content. There is so much that is new and interesting here that it sometimes gets squeezed into sentences spanning over half a page or into paragraphs two pages long. The style is far from clear and readable. It is too dry to be a pleasure to read and one should expect painful work ahead as one attempts to untangle these condensed treasures, content that could fill not one but three books. The structure of the book leaves something to be desired. A thematic structure based on primary arguments would be more intuitive. As it is, there is no evident designing principle for the chosen division, which is partly chronological, partly thematic. There is no obvious finite idea for chapters and their titles are vague. The same arguments are repeated and reinforced in different places. Some weeks after finishing the book a reader can have trouble finding a particular fact. One would, for example, expect to find the etymology of the word ‘soldier’ in the initial overview and discussion of terms. It is, however, located in the second part ‘Operations and Structures’, in the chapter ‘The Military Contractor at War’ and its section ‘Operational Effectiveness’. The index is very helpful, but it would be better to see in each section only interconnected facts that prove its main idea. But the reader who will overcome such obstacles will be most richly rewarded.

Anton Tomsinov

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