

[7] *MYTHS AND TECHNOLOGIES OF THE MODERN STATE*

THE next two chapters (7 and 8) consider at world level some of the institutions, ideologies, and economic changes which, according to contemporaries and many modern historians, reshaped the world of the nineteenth century. They consider the rise of the "modern state" and the ascent of liberalism and science. Chapters 9 and 11, by contrast, examine some features of life in the nineteenth century: namely, religion, powerful monarchies, and landed hierarchies, which many contemporaries considered to have been on the wane in the face of these supposedly irresistible forces for change. Paradoxically, what these latter two chapters stress is the manner in which religion, monarchy, and hierarchy were able dramatically to reinvent and modernize themselves in the 50 years before 1914.

The state, in the most general sense, is an important actor in this book. Well before industrialization or the emergence of the new city had become formative forces at world level, it was the triumphs and tribulations of the states of the eighteenth century, and their revolutionary and imperial successors, which determined much of social life and the pattern of globalization, as chapters 3 and 4 showed. In the process of operating at a global level and adapting to new ideas and technologies, European states and a few non-European states began to become more uniform and, at the same time, more competitive.

DIMENSIONS OF THE MODERN STATE

What, then, is meant by the "modern state," and how did it differ from the great eighteenth-century polities which were examined in the first chapter of the book? By the late nineteenth century, most regimes throughout the world were attempting to control closely defined territories by means of uniform administrative, legal, and educational structures. They wished to mark out with maps and surveys the extent of their resources and tax and utilize them in a coherent way. Earlier states had sometimes been intrusive and demanding,

but only in specific areas of life, and only at certain places and times. By contrast, the modern state aspired to a monopolistic claim on its subjects' loyalties. Modernizing states were jealous of trans-territorial affiliations, whether of religion, ethnic connection, or old dynastic connection, which had characterized the old order. They attempted to abolish the rights or, sometimes, the disabilities of special categories of subjects who claimed superior status, or alternatively were condemned to inferior status, under law or government. These changes involved a growing uniformity in that the state became more cohesive. The old distinction between the king's establishment and resources and the government tended to be abolished. The state became located in a particular place, rather than moving around wherever the king went. Court factions became political parties, attempting to seize the levers of government rather than the king's favor. Yet the state also became more functionally complex, with different departments and expertises separated off within it.

The need to organize citizens for large-scale war as conscripts, or to tax them in order to develop better military technology, was an important incentive to simplify and strengthen state structures. The contemporary sociologist Michael Mann has noted that most early bureaucracies were staffed by soldiers.¹ Yet, in addition to being a military and financial steamroller, the state was also an idea. It represented an aspiration for complete power and territorial sovereignty, whether in the name of "the people," or "the nation," or despite them. The state as a concept had a life of its own which cannot simply be reduced to class interests or military exigencies. From Victorian British empire-builders to the modernizing military leaders of Ecuador and Peru, the idea of "civilization" embodied ideas about ordered, technological society and the perfectibility of the human individual. These ideas appealed to conservatives, liberals, radicals, and socialists alike, though in very different ways.

Throughout the nineteenth-century world, much state building was top-down, the "project" of dominant elite groups. This was particularly true in the European colonial empires and also in societies such as Japan, China, and Ethiopia, where indigenous elites became convinced that the powerful state was the only thing which stood between them and the extinction of "their" civilizations. But there was another form of state building which should not be lost sight of. Governments were also teased into expansion by the explosion of local disputes which they alone could mediate, or by the demand for services which they alone could supply. A good example of this bottom-up state building is provided by the demand from small farmers and local businessmen in the United States from the early nineteenth century onward that the federal government intervene to provide reasonable pricing of, and access to, railroads and credit facilities. In the same way, commercial interests in continental Europe and even in the United States began, about the same time, to demand government intervention to create protectionist tariff barriers in order to foster local businesses and services. This is not to suggest that the state, as Marxist theorists of the 1960s used to argue, was no more than an organ for the interests of the bourgeoisie. Yet it does remind us that the state was a

resource, though one predominantly commanded by the relatively privileged, as well as a military and financial incubus pressing down on society "from above."

In general, then, this book is skeptical of the exaggerated claims that many recent historians have made for the overwhelming, steamroller-like nature of the domestic and colonial state in the nineteenth century. This leviathan was more characteristic of the twentieth century. All the same, the rise of the modern state during this period was a remarkable phenomenon. The Napoleonic and anti-Napoleonic state of the revolutionary years was almost a freak development. The ideologies, ambitions, and reach of rulers outgrew their strength, to be sharply deflated after 1815. The real turning point was the period 1850–70. Now, the modern state benefited from rapid industrialization, new armaments, and an aggressive edge honed by fear of revolution and the fire of nationalism. This was the period when Bismarck's Prussia, the Second French Empire, and the British colonial state in India moved into higher gear, fortified by a new scientific and professional culture.² That the triumph of this entity was long delayed in most parts of the world does not detract from its importance.

The chapter goes on to examine the geographical spread of the nineteenth-century state, the manner in which it related to its precursors, its tools and resources. Before doing so, it is important to consider the strengths and weaknesses of historians' (and anthropologists') approaches to the modern and colonial state, since it is now an explanatory factor that is often airily invoked by them to explain all and every change.

THE STATE AND THE HISTORIANS

Fifty years ago, historical writing on the English-speaking world and its empires had little to say about the state as such. The historical tradition founded by the nineteenth-century Whig historian T. B. Macaulay had much to say about representative government and the growth of freedoms, but much less about the development of the state's powers. His younger relative, G. M. Trevelyan, the most celebrated early-twentieth-century English historian, appeared to exclude politics as a whole from his social history of England. On both sides of the Atlantic, the liberal tradition in political thought, discussed in the next chapter, was suspicious of or hostile to the growth of the state. It was thought to be something slightly sinister, which "continental" Europeans had invented. Instead, Americans, Britons, and inhabitants of the old British dominions were said to possess constitutions, party politics, and governments which were managed by civil servants. This tended to limit the interest of modern historians. Even in the dependent territories of the British Empire, where historians acknowledged the existence of colonial government, the civil, military, and lawmaking dimensions of European power were kept separate in historical discussion, just as they had been formally separated in the ideology of British rule itself.

Continental Europeans, especially Russians and Germans, however, had been talking about the state for a long time, though many of them also believed that it was a dangerous phenomenon. Theorists and philosophers could hardly avoid it. As de Tocqueville noted, the eighteenth-century French monarchy had tried unsuccessfully to manage the state as a vast extension of the king's body, as an "estate" in the older, Renaissance sense of the term. The revolution had temporarily divorced the state from the will of any incumbent power-holder. After 1789, the state as a philosophical idea had developed a life of its own, as the embodiment of the general will. The Jacobins used that idea to override all individual rights in the course of the Terror. In Germany, the swelling of central and local bureaucracies in the nineteenth century caused the new professional philosophers, historians, and sociologists to pay much attention to the state, with Hegel himself in the vanguard. In the Prussian theory, the state was a rational institution standing above the selfish interests of society. The king, rather than being divinely empowered, was the state's supreme servant, and therefore the embodiment of reason.³ Hegel wrote weightily of the state as a philosophical idea, not a precious gift from God to rulers:

In contrast with the spheres of private rights and private welfare (the family and civil society), the state is from one point of view an external necessity and their higher authority; its nature is such that their laws and interests are subordinate to it and dependent on it. On the other hand, however, it is the end immanent within them, and its strength lies in the unity of its own universal end and aim with the particular end of individuals, in the fact that individuals have duties to the state in proportion as they have rights against it.⁴

Turning this on its head, Marxists argued that the state was the engine of the class power of the bourgeoisie. For Max Weber, the state was on the whole a benign, impersonal entity which guaranteed civil order and progress. Its rise signaled the decline of mystical obsessions and dangerous forms of political charisma. Even in Russia, where so much real authority lay with local estates, orders, and assemblies, political theorists in the German mold and administrators, many of whom were also Germans, speculated about the need to strengthen the tsars' autocracy and curb these local baronies. Meanwhile, French and German orientalist and historians also made great strides in analyzing the forms of the traditional state, particularly in China. The work of the American sociologist Talcott Parsons was influential in Chinese studies as they developed in the course of the twentieth century. The old centralizing bureaucracy of China seemed almost the opposite of the local and rights-based constitution of the United States.

It was not until after about 1960, however, that historians of the English-speaking world also began widely to emphasize the workings of the state in their own past. The rise of sociology, the visibility of the contemporary welfare state, and Marxist ruminations about the bourgeois order began to have an impact on the way history was written. In the 1980s, John Brewer summarized the trend in his book *The Sinews of Power*.⁵ There he argued that the state had been missed in British historical writing, not because it was weak but because

it was so strong and successful. The tax-gathering and war-making functions of the British state in the eighteenth century were streamlined and effective by comparison with the clumsy and venal continental states. It was for this reason that, though initially less wealthy and populous than France, Britain had been able to fight and win a more or less continuous global war between 1688 and 1820. Meanwhile, historians of labor also began to perceive the state as an organ of class domination. To the radical English historian E. P. Thompson and his collaborators and followers, this was reflected in the homicidal eighteenth-century criminal code fixated on the gallows and in the repressive policing of landed property, early industrial strikes, and political demonstrations.⁶

It was not only the academic left that changed its mind. In the 1960s, liberal and nationalist historians also discovered the history of the British state. It had long been obvious that in its colonial and foreign policy Britain had attempted to develop a more authoritative and centralized system than was apparent in its internal affairs. The Colonial Office had begun to try to legislate for the whole empire as early as 1809, while such efforts at rationalization had little effect on domestic governance until after Prime Minister Peel's reforms of the 1840s. In the 1960s, Oliver MacDonagh, considering the impact of English government on the Irish and, later, Australians, wrote about the growth of the state in nineteenth-century Britain. He was struck by the way in which British governments managed emigration to America, Australia, and New Zealand.⁷ Working on the other end of the nineteenth century, the next generation of social historians, such as Jose Harris, analyzed the beginnings of the counting and classifying of people through the British and Irish censuses and the significance of income tax and of basic social provision.⁸

After the 1960s and the experience of the Vietnam War, historians of the European colonial empires also began to summon up a powerful and intrusive entity, the "colonial state," to explain distortions which were introduced into the societies of Africa and Asia by European government. By the 1990s, several American historians and anthropologists had attributed quite general cognitive and operational principles to the colonial state. Bernard Cohn wrote of the colonial state and "its forms of knowledge."⁹ The trend was neatly summarized by James Scott in his *Seeing Like a State* (1999), which explained the psychology of the supposedly enlightened and improving projects pioneered by both European and colonial states. His examples of how administrators imbued the state with an urge to order and control, almost a mind of its own, ranged from forest conservancy in eighteenth-century Germany through to the eugenic project of producing perfect human beings at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the powerful influence of the French philosopher Michel Foucault began to be registered. He was less concerned with the organization of government itself than with the discourses and practices of a widely diffused state power, which he called "governmentality."

Even in American domestic history, where the story of the expansion of freedom through the action of courts and political parties continues to hold sway, economic and social historians have charted the buildup of state

regulation of burgeoning industry. This became clear toward the end of the nineteenth century, with the rise of the Progressive Movement, which attempted to harness federal state power for the benefit of citizens rather than big industrial combines. In 1982 Stephen Skowronek entitled a book *Building a New American State*. After the 1890s, he argued, the USA, like Britain, began to introduce state-distributed social benefits for its citizens, though some time after Bismarck's Germany and even Britain's dominions had ventured down this path. Small as the American colonial empire was, Skowronek believed, the problems that the occupying power faced in the Pacific, the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico required a more professional and centralized army. He noted that despite opposition from the locally organized national guard and state governors, an Army War College was established in 1901, and the strength of the professional standing army was increased.¹¹ Presidents Theodore Roosevelt (1901–9) and William Howard Taft (1909–13) both combined a desire for administrative reform with an interest in America's position in the outside world. Taft himself had been governor in the Philippines. By the 1990s, therefore, the state was very much part of the agenda of historians of the USA, though what, precisely, was meant by the state remained in doubt.

PROBLEMS IN DEFINING THE STATE

The pre-1960s British and American historical writing which focused on constitutions, the common law, party politics, and local government found it difficult to see the connections between these different entities, let alone the way in which they represented the interests of dominant elites. By contrast, the state has now become a critical area of study, and the present chapter agrees that the state did grow in ambition, if not always in effectiveness, in the course of the nineteenth century. There are, however, dangers in the prevailing view, particularly prominent in the work of James Scott and the new imperial history, that sees the modern state as a homogeneous and all-seeing entity. In methodological terms, the emphasis on the state often involves a problematic reliance on certain categories of sources. Historians generally work with state documents. The argument becomes circular. It is very easy to assume that states are therefore responsible for any and all social change.

Secondly, in making broad assertions about the growth of the state as an entity, historians can easily ignore periods which do not fit this pattern. For instance, in the case of the British state, the Anglo-French wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the national and imperial self-strengthening after 1885 brought about an appreciable expansion of central government activity. But in between these peaks was a long period when the expenditure of central government actually fell as a percentage of GDP.¹² Similarly, in Germany, the post-Napoleonic search for a romantic union between state and people encouraged statesmen, for a time at least, to devolve power to local corporate bodies. Even at the height of what has been seen as William II's autocracy after 1890, the imperial German government often

seemed to be a pitiful thing, not only tossed about at the mercy of princely and local jurisdictions, but frightened of German public opinion.¹³

In the United States the peaks of government activity were lower, and the troughs were deeper. For some time after independence, a substantial body of opinion (the so-called anti-federalists) opposed any regulation of local assemblies, let alone taxation managed by central government. Even that most famous of American political institutions, the presidency, might not have come into being. Some of the founding fathers distrusted the "monarchical principle" so much that they wished instead to have a kind of conciliar executive, perhaps like the French Directory of the 1790s, though shorn of most of that body's powers, too.¹⁴

In none of these cases can we assume, however, that governance and control did not exist at all. What they suggest is that the organs of the state in this wider sense were diffused across society. It is clear, though, that "statishness" could take a variety of forms in the nineteenth-century world. This is the reason why some historians and social theorists, following the lead of Michel Foucault, now speak of governmentality in preference to state regulation. Others, especially anthropologists, go further, arguing that for many people even in the contemporary world, the state is not so much a hard fact as an idea. The state is "out there," and its mythical power can be magicked into existence and appropriated by anyone from a gang boss to the leader of a charismatic religious movement.

These are useful theoretical developments. A whole range of authorities, increasingly speaking the language of the state, is what many of the world's populations experienced in the nineteenth century, rather than the pressure of the state as a monolithic incubus. For even where the state was not present, local magnates, commercial bodies, and political movements increasingly counted, catalogued, and kept records. Cecil Rhodes's mining and land companies in southern Africa were probably more state-like than many contemporary governments. They organized labor, surveyed resources, and produced maps. As Jean Comaroff has pointed out, the missionaries were the nearest thing to a colonial government that many southern Africans had experienced before 1914.¹⁵ Millenarian movements deployed the language of state power. The Taipings, for instance, represented themselves as the Heavenly Kingdom of the Eternal Peace, and American Mormons established state-like regulations for the righteous government of Utah.

Outside continental Europe and Japan, too, the rise of the state was far from being a linear process. In late-eighteenth-century Iran, the power of the Shia Muslim clerics actually increased, and that of the government diminished. This was because the prevailing tribal-based regimes, including the incoming Qajar rulers in Persia, were regarded as merely secular authorities and were believed to be devoid of the religious charisma which had inhered in the earlier Safavid emperors.¹⁶ In cases such as this, the state was more like a set of diverse and competing interests, and its stability waxed and waned over time. Even in the case of the European colonial state, which had more clearly defined claims and greater coherence, this did not always lead to greater effectiveness. In British India and French North Africa, it is easy to overstate the importance of colonial

authorities. Throughout the nineteenth century, the colonizing powers had cognizance of only a tiny proportion of judicial decisions in these societies, and had much less of a grip on their revenues than they liked to believe. Their head counting and ethnographic surveys often had little practical impact, being less a guide to government than a hobby of scholar-administrators. Whole areas of the European colonial world, albeit divided by international treaties and maps into neat provinces, remained in the grip of greedy European financial interests, popular revolt, resistance to central authority, and the power of local chieftains until the very beginnings of decolonization itself in the 1940s. The administrators of the colonial state in many parts of Africa in the mid-twentieth century could be easily accommodated in a single small hut.

The myths of today's historians about the power of the state often do no more than echo the aspirations of nineteenth-century rulers. They have replaced myths which were current in the 1960s and 1970s about the growth of working-class consciousness. This chapter tries to distinguish some broad patterns of change in the claims, resources, and symbols of the state at the international level. In many places and at some periods, the state did indeed expand its powers and authority mightily. Elsewhere, and particularly outside Europe, the tiger was paper, and the lion's corpse simply produced honey for ruthless entrepreneurs or local warlords. What was important, rather, was the charisma of the idea of the state.

Initially, then, we can distinguish a number of different forms of "statishness" outside the centralized state, best exemplified in early-nineteenth-century Europe by France and Prussia. First, there was the situation where state power was quite widely diffused amongst local ruling groups, as in nineteenth-century Britain or the United States. Secondly, there were cases where the formal organs of the state were confronted with a powerful "other," which replicated its functions within society. This was the case in many Muslim and some Buddhist societies, where Islamic law or the Buddhist monkhood continued to operate as a veritable counter-state. Sometimes these institutions cooperated with the secular authorities, and sometimes not. Thirdly, there were cases where almost the whole function of government had been absorbed by powerful corporate bodies such as the Hudson's Bay Company in the Canadian northwest or the European African companies. Fourthly, throughout much of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, power continued to lie in the hands of lineage heads or members of age-sets, and the chief or king remained an agent of their will. Fifthly, and finally, there were family-based mobile peoples for whom state power was little more than a dream of once-and-future kings.

THE MODERN STATE TAKES ROOT: GEOGRAPHICAL DIMENSIONS

The conventional view of the rise of the modern state, along with nationalism, discussed in the previous chapter, is that it took place in Europe. The new forms of administration and control were then exported to the rest of the

world by the agency of imperial rule, or through imitative borrowing, as in the case of Japan. This "diffusionist model" still has much force. But it presents only a partial picture. There were several different varieties of modern state in western Europe and North America, and they had by no means established their dominance even by the end of the nineteenth century.

As far as the world outside Europe was concerned, some early modern monarchies had already begun to adapt to changing economic and demographic conditions and become more interventionist before European power expanded in the later eighteenth century. The Tokugawa regime in Japan before 1868 and the Mughal Empire provide examples of this type of polity. The forms of government they established provided a basis onto which the newly imported European styles could be grafted. This does not mean that these polities evolved seamlessly into modern, Western-style states. What it does mean, though, is that there already existed groups of families who were used to working for a public authority beyond a particular dynasty. These could sometimes be recruited into colonial bureaucracies or states modeled by indigenous reformers on Napoleon's France or Bismarck's Germany. For instance, throughout East Asia there were systems of policing and watch and ward based on groups of households, villages, and town quarters. These continued to function even during the decades of decentralized government under the Tokugawa and Qing. Institutions of this sort were revamped and used as the local level of government by modernizing regimes after 1870. Similarly, the cash-based land revenue systems common over much of Muslim and Indo-Muslim Asia and North Africa in the early modern period provided a basis on which colonial or semi-colonized independent governments could build new forms of taxation and surveillance in the course of the nineteenth century.

It was not only archaic institutional structures, but also archaic ideologies, which could be annexed and transformed by the modern state. Most of the old empires had concepts of "the barbarous." In Vietnamese, for instance, the term for savage was "Moi," a word which was applied to tribal hill people who resisted ethnic Vietnamese domination long before the boundary between Moi and Vietnamese was closely defined by French colonialists.¹⁷ Just as the modern state was most effective where it built on some indigenous apparatuses of extraction or coercion, so it took up and transformed older notions of civilization and barbarism under the powerful impetus of European ideas of race and civility. Over large parts of the world, an important function of the state was to seize, conquer, and domesticate entitlements to land which had once belonged to native peoples. While Americans, for instance, viewed federal government with extreme suspicion on its internal frontiers, they were only too happy to see the US army garrison and federal marshals expand their external ones.

As the first chapter noted, Asante, in West Africa, has long been regarded as a particularly sophisticated form of precolonial African state. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Asante rulers had systematized their tribute system to such an extent that historians regularly describe it as a

“bureaucracy.” Even though some of the wealth of Asante was derived from the Atlantic slave trade, the state’s nobility also participated in the more archaic style of North African slaving system and exported gold and other local products to the market. This polity was resilient enough to survive the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807. Even if Asante disintegrated in the later nineteenth century, in response to internal conflict and further British pressure, it had a remarkable track record.¹⁸ The shifting lineage- and age-set-based societies found in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Southeast Asia, by contrast, were less amenable to centralized control by modernizing rulers. At the utmost extreme, Afghanistan and Abyssinia both had states, with rulers, foreign policies, and diplomatic relations by the end of the nineteenth century. But in both cases, most of what mattered to people in these societies was still carried out by local magnates, village elders, *mullahs*, or Christian priests.

A second point that must be made about the diffusionist model is that insofar as it works, diffusion worked in both directions. This again points to the value of a global perspective on social and political change. Much to the horror of liberal domestic statesmen,¹⁹ forms of state power and government, initially developed to meet the specific needs of the colonial power and sometimes adapted from the methods of indigenous governments, could be repatriated. For instance, the professional civil service was developed first in British India and the colonial territories, and then imported back into Britain. Anglo-Indian forms of famine management, or mismanagement, and forensic techniques, such as fingerprinting, were adapted for Ireland and Britain respectively. The Mughals did not use fingerprints, but they did have systems for describing individuals’ characteristics which were adapted by the British rulers and then imported back to Britain itself. Russian historians, for their part, have argued that experience on the fringes of empire swelled the state and its agencies of force to a huge size, squeezing out the empire’s sickly civil society in the Russian heartlands. Even in peacetime, the nearly three million cossacks on Russia’s imperial frontiers were supposed to provide 600,000 men and horses which might be used to secure compliance in the empire’s capital or western provinces.²⁰ Visionaries of the future of the French state and nation often looked to the colonizing population of North Africa to provide the necessary infusion of true grit and bureaucratic rationality into what they saw as an enfeebled and declining domestic population.²¹

THE CLASSIC TYPES OF EUROPEAN STATE

In the early and mid-nineteenth century, recognizably modern forms of state power were grouped in certain broad geographical sectors. This section deals with the geographical expansion of the European state. Its classic features were centralization, the taxation of incomes, and its association with the idea of an armed citizenry. In Europe, the development of military state forms in one country had a knock-on effect amongst its neighbors. Fortified with the Napoleonic Code, centralized administration, and the experience of raising

millions of men for a 20-year war, France was the point of origin in the European sector. But all the European regimes which had been touched by the Napoleonic wars were reconstituted to some degree. After 1815, the Austrians who ruled northern Italy retained much of the system of departments, districts, and communes which Napoleon’s acolytes had established in 1802.²² In Germany, military mobilization was the initial spur, but even after the war, many of the reconstituted German states of 1789 continued a process of rationalization and developed larger bureaucracies. The German pattern of state modernization retained its federal features, however, even after the creation of the German Empire in 1871. In Spain, politics during the mid-century was consumed by a long battle between parliamentary liberals and Carlist “reactionaries.” The politicians involved, whether they espoused the will of the sovereign national assembly or the cause of king and Church, all tended to expand the role of the central administration and swell the number of bureaucrats. The steel framework of the system rested on the control exercised by the minister of the interior over the various municipal governments around which so much of Spain’s national life revolved.²³ In Russia and Austria, centralized civil services expanded rapidly in the course of the nineteenth century, though often in conflict with regional and local powers representing cliques of nobles.

To this pattern, as was suggested, Britain, the British dominions, and the United States provide something of a contrast, though for rather different reasons. Formally, the power of central government was much less developed in these cases than in continental Europe. Even during the wars of the eighteenth century, traditional institutions of local governance coped with the new demands put on them without expanding very much.²⁴ Public debate was dominated until late in the century by liberal theorists who despised state intervention. This means, though, that the state was decentralized – that it worked through the manifold organizations of civil society and local representation – not that it did not exist at all. Though the size of its central bureaucracy did not expand greatly, nineteenth-century Britain managed to raise huge sums of money in taxation and to maintain large and efficient naval forces – a sure sign of the presence of “statishness” or “governmentality,” if not of a centralized state.²⁵ In the dominions, the state became quite active in organizing emigration and providing welfare after 1870, much more so than in Britain. But the work of government there was still done largely by local governments, while the union of Australia did not even occur until the twentieth century. In the United States, the federal government was not even able to enhance its tax-raising ability, except during the Civil War and in the years immediately before the First World War. The US armed forces remained highly decentralized throughout the century. All the same, particularly at state level, the attenuated organs of American government were “bulked out” by a whole range of legal and voluntary institutions which acquired the characteristics of “statishness” or “governmentality,” in the sense that they counted and categorized citizens and applied common principles of improvement and civilization.

Elsewhere on the American continent, political leaders attempted to emulate the continental European model, with only a limited degree of success. Where Spanish or Portuguese Crown rule had once been present and powerful, as in the Valley of Mexico, the Brazilian seaboard, or the coastal plains of Chile and Peru, military-dominated regimes emerged after independence. The Mexican revolutions of 1864–7 and 1911–15 created significant powers for national leaders, as did the European revolutions. In the hinterland, the politics of the Creole magnates and Amerindian village leaders constantly impeded the development of centralized power.

While Britons and Americans may have been ambivalent about the state at home, they generally sought to export it to their colonial possessions and spheres of influence abroad. In the Pacific, it suited traders, missionaries, and naval captains to have a strong central authority where previously rather loose notions of ritual dominance or “high kingship” had prevailed. Local rulers eagerly sought the stamp of legitimacy. In the 1830s and 1840s “King George” of Tonga proclaimed his dominance, cooked up a national flag which incorporated the British union flag, and began to levy taxation on people he now deemed to be his subjects.²⁶ Later in the century in the western Sudan, French officials seeking to create protectorates among indigenous kings effectively introduced the notions of territorial control and regular taxation for the first time.

HYBRID EURASIAN STATE FORMS

These last were cases where the Western state form was exported lock, stock, and barrel. Yet there were other areas, as the first section implied, where that form combined or contended in a variety of ways with indigenous state forms which were already quite strongly marked and in the process of autonomous development. The second sector in which more centralized state forms developed rapidly in the nineteenth century, therefore, was in South and East Asia. Two basic forms existed. Over much of East Asia, a Chinese-style mandarin administration with formally trained and selected bureaucrats already existed. The big Asian states had already responded to the need for taxation and to combat internal revolt and external pressure by creating a relatively dense set of state institutions at local level in at least some parts of their territories. Though formally more military in character, the Japanese “feudal” regime also retained a strong presence at village level and used literate instruments of government. Chinese and Japanese authorities sometimes attempted to control labor movement by insisting that villagers on the move carry written papers with them, for instance. In Persia and South Asia, Persianate, Indo-Islamic bureaucracies had also emerged. Because these were less homogeneous societies, the bureaucrats generally had less purchase in local society. Big landed magnates or tribal leaders with their own administrations fragmented the power of the royal centers. But even here, precolonial administrators counted the number of households, and sometimes different professions and castes, by means of censuses.

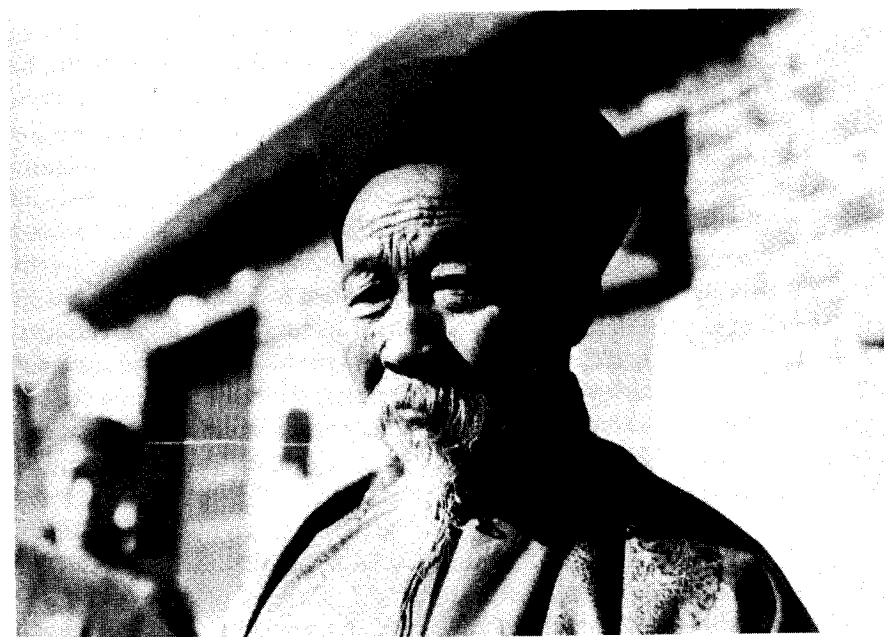


ILLUSTRATION 7.1 The state's lower rungs: A Chinese district headman, Wei Hai Wei, c.1909. Photo by A. H. Fisher.

It was, however, the expansion of the European empires which stimulated the rapid development of modern state forms in the whole arc between Persia and Japan. The new kingdoms that sprang up between 1780 and 1820 all attempted to combine indigenous forms of rural taxation, or farming out of revenue, with the war-making capability and capitalist avarice of contemporary Europe. The more successful of them recast the old relations between lord and peasant, or old bureaucracy and peasant, to create a land revenue fund for development. To one degree or another, Ranjit Singh's Punjab (1801–39),²⁷ the truncated kingdom of Burma after 1826,²⁸ Vietnam, and Thailand²⁹ all attempted to develop more formal bureaucracies, modern armies, regular censuses, and territorial surveys. In each case, they drew on and developed a pool of service families which had experience of serving European or Asian governments. To a large extent, too, they were all responding to the pressure put on them by the East India Company's own hybrid polity, which taxed and counted like a western European state, but allowed many social functions to be monopolized by groups of indigenous administrators and landlords.

Warfare, indeed, provided a crucible from which state forms emerged. Even before the end of the British attack on China in 1842, the Chinese were beginning to appropriate Western technology. Eighteenth-century Qing rulers had appreciated the gun-casting skills of the Jesuits. The urgency to create a state and an army to match the British and other powers was clearly understood by at least some at the court by the 1860s. Recent historians have begun to argue that the late Qing state did not make too bad a job of combining the

authority of the old mandarin state with new European military and fiscal methodologies and of expanding the purview of the mandarin state.³⁰ The British general, George Gordon, was employed by the Qing to fight the Taipings. The problem for the Qing, however, was that they lost direct control of the huge resources of agrarian China and were forced to fall back on the relatively limited resources of maritime customs income. With rather greater success, the last Tokugawa Shoguns sent emissaries to the United States and Europe in the 1850s to study the techniques developed by Western nations. Caught between the eastern borders of the expansive European state in the form of Russia and the western borders of the British Indian state, King Nasir al Din Shah of Persia (1848–96) created a small standing army and a Russian-officered cossack brigade, besides trying to establish an administrative college.³¹ Here the tsarist and British Indian empires were his models, but he also drew on earlier traditions of Persian statehood, attempting to secure a regular income from peasant and nomad.

THE MODERNIZED MUSLIM STATE AND ITS OFFSPRING

The final broad sector in which the aspiration to create modern states spread with bacillus-like speed in the early nineteenth century was the “central” Islamic world and northern and eastern Africa.³² Here again, a hybrid form developed. This was a composite of the kind of authoritative rulership embodied in the notion of the Byzantine-Islamic sultanate with Western ideas of despotic “improvement.” The types of reformed Ottoman administration which spread across this sector had somewhat different features from the East and South Asian states discussed earlier. First, religious institutions, whether the formal learned classes (*ulama*) or Sufi mystical lineages, were welded into the structure of the hybrid state in this sector, rather than remaining in uneasy cooperation and contention with it. The new bureaucracies retained a distinctly Islamic spirit. Secondly, rulers attempted to foster peasant ownership and production. This was not always the case further east. Thirdly, the state continued to rely heavily on direct control of merchant groups through systems of provisioning.

The central Ottoman provinces had always been quite closely governed, following the Roman or Byzantine model, though central power waned somewhat in the eighteenth century. By 1800, the Ottoman Empire was weary of defeat by a Russia itself only partially reformed. Its rulers decided to try to modernize their more distant Arab and Balkan provinces. First-hand experience of the new sea power of the French and British during the Napoleonic wars forced a small number of administrative reformers to consider rebuilding the whole apparatus of state and army to preserve the independence of the empire. The consequent reforms of Sultan Mahmud II (1808–39) abolished many of the old juridical, military, and administrative forms of the state. In particular, the reformers swept away the janissary corps and tried to make the office of the chief religious dignitary of the empire a bureaucratic post.³³ It

was, however, that nominal lieutenant of the sultan, Mehmet Ali, or Muhammad Ali, viceroy of Egypt, who pushed the process forward fastest. Muhammad Ali destroyed the old Mamluk corps of “slave-rulers” and seized their lands, which he transformed into a fund for military and political development. He built up military and administrative colleges, using French exemplars, and formed a new, European-style military corps. As far as he could, Muhammad Ali tried to incorporate Islamic jurisdiction into his own administrative courts. He and his successors tried to extend these new forms of the state to the Hejaz coast of Arabia, the Levant, and deep into the Sudan.³⁴ As noted earlier, his regime also tried to develop cotton as a state crop.

Egypt’s attempt to surge forward had a knock-on effect on its neighbors. Defeated by Egyptian armies in 1848, an Abyssinian provincial governor, Tewodros, succeeded in imitating Egyptian military techniques and fought his way to the throne in 1855. He then followed Muhammad Ali’s plan, seizing the lands of nobles and the Church and augmenting his tax base.³⁵ Over the next few decades, this advance of the state in northern Africa was significant, though easily reversible. To the west, in the North African Maghreb, the sub-Ottoman regional powers also began to imitate Muhammad Ali’s policy of state building. The exercise became one of survival when the French invaded Algeria in 1830. The Algerian leader, Abd al-Qadir, mobilized his followers among the Qadariyya Sufi sect to resist invasion. But he also built up a disciplined and well-armed modern fighting force of 5,000 men, with which he staged a long resistance to French power.³⁶ The rulers of Tripoli and Morocco took note and followed suit. In Tunisia, Khayr al-Din Pasha emulated the Tanzimat reforms and introduced a centralized state bureaucracy.³⁷ All these leaders resumed a pattern of state building that had already occurred in a piecemeal way in the eighteenth century. Yet now the model was clearer, and the need for self-protection much greater.

In Muslim West Africa, the state crept forward in alliance with elite literacy and the spread of purist Islam. This was illustrated in the career of Hajj Umar, teacher, reader, and state-builder, whose state later came into conflict with the French. The importance of books and literacy for this emerging Islamic society and government was very clear. A chronicler recorded:

On one occasion, the village of Jegunko burned and three rooms full of [religious] books were destroyed. While this was going on Umar grieved and wanted to die in the fire himself. He did not care about the property that was being burned, it was only the manuscripts that mattered . . . Umar entrusted himself to God. He sent his younger brother’s son to Timbuktu with a considerable amount of money and paper to have new ones made.³⁸

CLAIMS TO JUSTICE AND SYMBOLS OF POWER

The remainder of the chapter considers the claims of the modern state, its resources, and its administrative tools, in order to assess where and why it

developed most successfully. One area where the state grew in ambition was in its theoretical and legal claims on the world's populations and in the range of symbols it was able to deploy. To an extent unequalled even in the Eurasian military despotisms of the eighteenth century, the nineteenth-century public authorities claimed to be able to create and enforce statuses which were regarded as embodied or innate under the old regime. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was more often than not a declaration of the rights of the state, which then attempted to regulate and control in new ways. Starting from first principles, the right to life or death, and other severe punishments, is the most fundamental of human issues. After 1780, the state worked internationally to wrest the right of awarding life or death from petty principalities, local jurisdictions, and tribal groups. By making all the inhabitants of "its" territory subjects on a common footing, it attempted to erode the differences of status and honor which had been critical to the old regimes. In fact, control of justice and punishment had everywhere become an issue through which the state sought to define its own rights. Local and community forms of arbitration and vengeance were increasingly denounced as illegitimate and outside the pale of civil society by theorists of the state. So the feud, the duel, and the moral vengeance of the crowd, which had been normal features of the workings of most societies even as late as the previous century, were stigmatized and criminalized.

In the Muslim world, great license had traditionally been left to local headmen or clerical courts in the administration of justice according to Sharia. Kin groups could decide whether to demand death or not in cases of murder and other heinous crimes, and in the more remote areas there was little room for the ruler's judgment at all. Following the second great wave of Ottoman "reorganization" after 1839, referred to above, centralized judicial systems claimed much more control and began to eat away at the jurisdiction of local courts. The new civil code remained Islamic in spirit, but a European-style Ministry of Justice was given responsibility for its implementation. In Egypt, the khedival administration instituted courts of judicature along French lines.³⁹ As the century progressed, these courts, along with those established by European pressure to try their own citizens and dependants (in the so-called capitulations), gradually eroded the competence and the fees of the Islamic judiciary. This created a tension between secular and theocratic interpretations of the national state, which already split Middle Eastern nationalisms before the First World War.

The state's new claims were equally far-reaching in the Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist societies now directly ruled by Europeans. Here colonial administrators sought to assert their monopoly of the right to judgments of life and death and to significant punishment. Communities were gradually denied the right to decide whether they would pursue blood price in cases of murder, while lesser punishments such as flogging and amputation were disallowed in favor of hanging, transportation, or imprisonment, which were deemed more acceptable penalties for "civilized" people. The Islamic codes operated by European rulers in their territories widely eliminated the room for comprom-

ise and special adjudication which had been possible in the earlier systems. In British India, these changes also significantly affected the judicial status and self-image of the Hindu subjects of the former Mughal Empire. Rulers had often acted in the spirit of the ancient Hindu lawgivers, who had forbidden the passing of the death penalty on Brahmins. Hindu communities had often practiced female infanticide and, more rarely, the custom of widow burning on the funeral pyre of the husband. Both these were practices the British government sought to stamp out, declaring them abominations to a proper society.⁴⁰ In Japan, likewise, the Meiji regime of the 1870s stepped in to rationalize the punishments which had formerly been handed out by local judicial bodies in the domains of the great magnates.⁴¹

States also tried to intervene more frequently to bend to their will civil customs revolving around marriage and inheritance. Nineteenth-century administrators preferred clear lines of descent, ruling out of court adoptions of which they did not approve in noble families, and in the case of the British world insisting on the right to primogeniture. In some administrative systems, local customary law was apparently upheld, but even here it was codified and brought into more rigid conformity with the broader legal structures. In the East Indies, the Dutch evolved a complex system of *adat*, or customary law, which engaged the learned labors of the orientologists of Leiden University.⁴² But *adat* was neither traditional nor customary, because it removed much of



ILLUSTRATION 7.2 The "colonial state" in undress: The British governor of New Guinea on tour, 1876. Photo by J. W. Lindt.

the independent judgment which had been allowed to the old-style jurists and imposed strict rights and penalties on different groups.

In Europe, the states of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had already fought hard to crush the judicial rights of local groups and magnates, especially in matters of life and death. Even here, the nineteenth-century administrators and jurists set out a plan for rationalization and reform. The Napoleonic Code and its imitations throughout Europe sought to provide common rights and duties, pains and penalties, for all subjects.⁴³ The rights and disabilities of different groups were stripped away. The clergy widely lost their immunities, though this happened very slowly in Russia and southern Europe. Jews were made citizens, and the rules which consigned them to ghettos after dusk and forbade them to own land or vote were widely removed. In Britain and Ireland, legal reform after 1830 was accompanied by a rather slower concession of rights to hold office to Jews, Roman Catholics, and non-Anglican Protestants. As people became legally subject to identical claims and possessors of identical rights in regard to the state, they increasingly needed a large body of trained lawyers to service their disputes. The lawyers in turn became the double of the state, working within civil society to facilitate and legitimate its claims.

As Michel Foucault famously argued, systems of regulated imprisonment formally replaced more public and often more brutal punishments which had prevailed in the old regime.⁴⁴ Removal from society replaced savage punishment within it over much of the world. Increasingly, states enacted through decree or by pushing legislation through assemblies legal forms which stigmatized and punished certain types of behavior which were regarded as anti-social – among them, abortion, infanticide, homosexuality, the holding of arms without license, cruel sports, bigamy, and the excessive consumption of alcohol in the working week. In all these matters, administrators were expressing a general desire to civilize and manage their own and their subject populations. Yet, in these very legal and increasingly public pronouncements on law and morality, they were also asserting their own right to intervene in areas which had been seen as the purview of the local church community and parochial public opinion in earlier days.

This section must conclude with a further caution. Enactment and aspiration were not the same as enforcement. In many societies, the state simply did not have the strength or the single-mindedness to enforce its newly trumpeted claims to a monopoly over violence. Equally, local communities, magnates, and religious authorities continued to deny the legitimacy of the state to intervene. Despite the lofty imaginings of Hegel, the German Reich was never able to obtain equality for its Jewish citizens.⁴⁵ Across the world, justice was still dispensed outside the control of government officials. There were assassinations and boycotts of those deemed wicked landlords in Ireland, the murder of witches in many parts of the world, and the lynching of blacks who were accused of violating white honor in the southern states of the United States. In important areas, the rights of the state and its claims hardly expanded at all. In China as late as 1900, the imperial bureaucracy, branded by some as

distant, Manchu, or a pawn of the Western powers, had lost power to local gentry, regional commanders, and even to secret societies. Local elites handed out appropriate punishments where the populace demanded it; the Boxer rebels of 1900 killed priests and other Europeans. These foreigners were held to have violated the norms of proper society with impunity because of the recent weakness of the central regime. In the United States, a society which seemed to have prospered without a strong central regime, the states of the Union maintained very considerable rights to regulate their own lawmaking and lawgiving through to the present day. Justice remained local, despite occasional interventions by the Supreme Court. Here, state power, already fractured by the division between federal and state government, president, Congress, and the courts, was fiercely resisted in the name of community and liberty and sometimes put to good use by local bosses.⁴⁶ The idea of centralized government never lost the stench of corruption which had hung around it since the time of the colonial governors.

In former European colonial territories the state, though quickly forced into service by nationalist elites, still carried the taint of being a foreign, white imposition on local, self-governing communities. This is a cry that contemporary radicals and communitarians have taken up with renewed vigor. In the Islamic world, the old religious and judicial institutions of Sharia, divine law, were not, finally, replaced by the modern state, but survived alongside it. The claims of religion periodically submerged an only partly legitimate state. This situation has been seen in its most radical form in the case of Iran, where the Qajar and later Pahlavi (post-1927) dynasties failed to secure more than partial legitimacy in the eyes of their subjects. Over much of the rest of the world, including parts of southern and eastern Europe and Africa, the institutions of the state have continued to be tossed about on the surface of a sea of shifting lineage alliances and assertive local magnates. The paradox of the state was this: it always stood above classes, local powers, and factions, yet it could always be penetrated and appropriated by them.

THE STATE'S RESOURCES

Despite these illuminating and important exceptions, however, the state was potentially in a more powerful position in the world in 1914 than it had been in 1780. By the later date, it could widely deploy more men, more authority, more resources, and more destructive power against its own citizens and against other states than it had done earlier. It had, in many areas, though not all, gained a more effective control of reserves of manpower and money. It was able to deploy new symbols to enforce its authority, and it had created larger and more efficient bureaucracies, archives, and survey departments to aid it in these tasks. Above all, the state was now regarded as an embodiment of the nation, and the nation or race was assumed to be the key actor on the world stage. Ironically, of course, the argument was a circular one, for states

had as often created nations as vice versa, an issue alluded to in the last chapter.

It is important not to underestimate the power of the Eurasian states of the eighteenth century, as the first chapter noted. But the great international humiliations of proud states in the eighteenth century were as nothing to their almost daily embarrassments in governing their own territories. As King Louis XVI found at the cost of his head, the French monarch could not control his own capital city, from which abuse and ridicule of his regime had poured almost daily since 1783. Though finally safe from civil war, the British Hanoverian monarchy could still see its capital city ablaze and its parliamentarians under siege during the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots of 1780. Despite the modernization of Catherine the Great of Russia, peasant and cossack revolt stopped Russian rule dead for years over much of its vast land mass. Asian states, which had never been forced to create the same degree of internal surveillance or resource management as the Christian bigots and military plunderers of early modern Europe, were even worse placed. Insurgent Jat peasant leaders regularly looted the heart of the Mughal Empire within 20 miles of the imperial throne even under as great a ruler as Aurangzeb (1658–1707).

There had been a significant change by 1900. Most states in the Western world and most colonial regimes were able to tax, control, and exploit their own territories, most of the time. A change of government did not necessarily lead to a long-term and sustained collapse of order and security. The 1871 Commune and the 1917 Revolutions in Russia arose from exceptional and massive military conflicts, not from an endemic instability or lack of resources. Indeed, 1917 should be seen as a sudden rupture in a pattern of gradually increasing and effective governance, not as it once was, as the culmination of inexorable social conflicts. It quickly saw in the emergence of Bolshevik government the installation of an even more centralizing and resource-hungry state. Even in the case of China, where mid-twentieth-century historical writing saw a collapse of the state, most authorities would now see a strengthening of local elites. State power became more diffused. It did not disappear. The 1911 Revolution came relatively suddenly in the context of drought and panic about epidemics.

How and why had the state come to acquire new resources? We should not be squeamish about this. Much state building across the world remained, as it always had been, a massive act of plunder. Canny entrepreneurs and commission agents followed military invaders, and it was they who often helped root the state. Despite their grandiose claims to be advancing “civilization,” the French revolutionary authorities and the British colonial governments in early-nineteenth-century India were based on the appropriation of money and land rights. Their British, French, Italian, and Indian collaborators had an interest in obscuring this.

One answer to the question of why the state grew, therefore, must be that it was now better armed. Its military resources were greatly improved by the world wars of 1780–1820, and later scientific advance improved them further.

Earlier smaller-scale advances in military resources had benefited local magnates and rebels almost as much as centralized states. Matchlocks could be purchased by local war bands, popular levies, or peasant leaders. Barons and local rajas could construct fortresses to the designs of the French architect Vauban. After 1800, however, it was big states which monopolized military advances. Huge capital and organization were required to build and deploy ironclad battleships, heavy artillery, and chemical shells. Military reform provided a breach through which many different sorts of advocate of state power could swarm. The need to modernize armed forces set in chain changes in the form of the state. Ruling groups had to strengthen their bureaucracies and taxation systems. Reformers with agendas for civilian improvement pointed up the need for better-educated and healthier subjects.

The capacity of the state, initially of the European state alone, to deploy a wholly new level of military power was revealed fairly early in the nineteenth century. By 1820, the British had developed the iron steamship. It was quickly put into use in the British Empire, where steamboats patrolled the river Ganges, helping the development of the cotton export economy and later, during the 1857 rebellion, keeping Britain’s main artery of military supply open. A spectacular example of the use of steam power and new naval guns occurred during the Anglo–Chinese opium wars of 1839–42 and 1856–61.⁴⁷ Quite apart from the logistical advantage which this gave to the British, it was the complete helplessness of Chinese armies in the face of this projection of Western technological power which helped to undermine the authority of the Qing regime. Similar political effects were brought about in Japan, where the Americans and British both used naval guns to force open Tokugawa ports to their trade and diplomacy. For all the inaction of the late-nineteenth-century colonial state in India or French North Africa, we must not forget that a large-scale disarming of the local population did occur between 1840 and 1880. Huge numbers of “unlicensed weapons” were seized by the authorities in both regions.

“Internal pacification” of this sort occurred in the heart of European nations, and not just on the colonial peripheries. In Ireland in 1798, for instance, the British armies instituted a “white terror.” Their columns destroyed villages, killed livestock, and resorted to summary executions. In 1831, the relatively backward Russian armies completely destroyed the movement for Polish autonomy. Mass purges, confiscations of land, and quarterings of troops, reminiscent of Napoleon’s era, were used to suppress open dissent for another 17 years.⁴⁸ Extraordinary force was used by the French authorities against the workers of the Paris Commune of 1871, even by comparison with the violence of the 1790s and 1840s. The new, rapid-firing rifles could kill hundreds within minutes, and city streets were now built to give an adequate line of fire. Of course, the new military resources of the state did not always work in its interests in the short term. Bigger and better-equipped armies sometimes meant bigger and better-equipped mutinies. Alexander I of Russia, for instance, garnered much grief from the military colonies on which he settled the millions of men who had been mobilized during the Napoleonic

war. The veterans resented the tsar's attempts to micro-manage every detail in the colonies and took up arms against him on several occasions. Nevertheless, the balance of military might generally seems to have shifted in favor of the state and against its local opponents.

Critical changes in communication helped states to deploy this new military and political power. The electric telegraph helped defeat the Indian mutineers and the Zulu braves. In the war against the Sudanese Khalifa in 1898, the British general, Herbert Kitchener, would have suffered the fate of his headstrong predecessors, who rushed into the desert to defeat, if he had not built a railway to Khartoum and then dragged his fleet of transports along the Upper Nile with steamboats. The American Union clinched its victory over the South in the Civil War because its powerful advanced navy could blockade Houston and Galveston, the southern cotton ports. It is well known that the development of railway communications contributed to the speed of mobilization during the First World War. But the military benefits of rail transport were already in evidence in the mid-century European wars, when the Prussian victories against the Austrians and the French were owed in part to their rapid deployment of men and heavy artillery by rail. Railways also eroded the internal autonomy and difference of old regional groupings within large states.

The point is partly that the power of the state, still so unformed in the eighteenth century, was greatly enhanced by the development of new military resources and techniques. The converse is also true. It was, centrally, the exigencies of new forms of warfare that forced the state to intervene, husband its economic power, and generally trench more deeply into society. One military historian writes: "An adequate defence system in the new age required not only the military training of the entire male population but also expenditure on strategic railways; the accumulation of huge stocks of war supplies; and the maintenance of a high birth-rate and a high level of education."⁴⁹

In Britain an unexpectedly poor performance in the mid-century Crimean War against Russia had consequences for military organization and the working of government itself. Regiments were amalgamated, new forms of training were introduced, and a professional War Office was created where, previously, a seventeenth-century institution, the Horse Guards, had very often blocked all movement towards change. The loss of life from disease and on the battlefield resulted in the creation of a new nursing profession and gave a great impetus to medical research on civilian as well as military populations. But the ripples from this and other military humiliations spread outward into the working of the Treasury and the public accounts.

In the same way, the Prussian state was galvanized by the need to create a mass conscript army, and the French government became yet more centralized in the aftermath of the defeat of 1870-1. It was probably in the non-European world, however, that the forms of the state were most dramatically and rapidly changed by military exigency. As early as 1842, the Chinese rulers were found to be experimenting with the building of British-style steamboats and modern cannon. Following the devastation of their country by the Second



ILLUSTRATION 7.3 The state's resources of power. The site of the construction of the Aswan Dam, Egypt, 1902-6.

Opium War and the Taiping Rebellion, the Qing regime embarked on an attempt at instantaneous modernization during the so-called self-strengthening movement of the 1870s. Prince Kung created a new military board. Li Hongzhang, the Chinese governor in Canton, followed suit, attempting to build up his own arsenals and shipyards. The point is that this was a dynamic process. New resources had to be found so that the state could fund these innovations. Given its lack of fiscal purchase in the countryside, the regime sought resources from the revamped Maritime Customs service. This, the first completely modern bureaucratic institution in China, required for its functioning that the Chinese adopt a different attitude to international affairs, diplomacy, and the negotiation of foreign loans.⁵⁰

The same process of military-led state building can be seen in the case of Japan. Defeat and humiliation by the barbarians in the 1850s and 1860s required the building of new model armies and navies. Yet the finance to make this possible could only be found by revamping the whole system of internal taxation and the privileges inhering in it. The new rulers of Meiji Japan revoked the fiscal privileges of the samurai. The state pensioned them off on fixed stipends and assimilated their perquisites into the state's exchequer. The new government also measured and registered the land, instituting a national tax system.⁵¹ These moves ended the decentralized

patrimonial style of state structure which had held sway in Japan since the Middle Ages. Peasant, samurai, merchant, and daimyo all became Japanese subjects, even though the old statuses continued to have purchase in the negotiations of social life.

Late as it came, and patchy as were its results, industrial developments also signally aided the expansion of the state in complex ways. The problem for rulers across Eurasia in the eighteenth century had been their lack of resources. After 1850, though, the proceeds of industrial production, in the form of greatly increased moneys from taxes on income, licenses, and trade, gave the state a large new cache of resources. These were easier to tax than fractious landholders and peasantry who often resisted or ran away when tax collectors came in sight. Japan provides a case in point. In the 1970s and 1980s, free-market economists used to argue that state-led industrialization might actually have impeded the pace of Japanese industrialization. Be that as it may, the Japanese state's modernizing effort could never have maintained its spectacular pace without external security and external plunder. Rapid military modernization and the building of an industrial infrastructure allowed Japan to defeat and extract huge resources from its Chinese neighbor in 1895. Later, that same military spurt paved the way for success against Russia, the one enemy which might have derailed its whole dash to great power status.⁵²

Population expansion during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries helped many states, though this was less true of the Chinese Empire. Only the expansion of population, which followed the domestication of plague and better standards of nutrition, could have allowed Napoleon to field his huge armies. Britain could not have afforded both to deploy her own substantial forces and to man essential industries and food-producing agricultural production in the early nineteenth century without population growth.⁵³ In colonial territories, a burgeoning and impoverished peasantry provided recruits for imperial armies, while at the same time producing the rent with which the government maintained them and the seasonal labor which satisfied its commercial allies amongst plantation owners.

Rapid urbanization and growing international trade provided much easier pickings. Once cities were properly policed and controlled, tax-gatherers could go about their work with impunity. By the end of the nineteenth century, cities such as London, Paris, and Boston, which had sustained orgies of rioting a century before in the face of quite minor and indirect taxes on gin, absinthe, or tea, were quieter. They were even prepared to stomach direct income taxes, provided some small part of the proceeds was spent on crime control, health, and education. Resources from trade and industrial production were also much more transparent to the state than had been the resources of countrymen and local usurers in the old regime.

Of course, there was no steady growth of the state's resources in all fields of the world economy. For much of the century, the doctrine of free trade meant that governments, led or coerced by the dominant British, forswore heavy taxation and control of trade. The elaborate system of commercial and trade regulation of the eighteenth century was abolished by consent in northwestern

Europe. It was blown apart by British and French gunboats in China and the Ottoman Empire and North Africa. Partly as a result of the economic recession of the 1870s and 1880s, the division of the world into trading blocks only began again after about 1890. Yet the state's withdrawal in this one area was merely a tactic. Governments sought an increase in overall wealth, particularly their own, by means of the doctrine of free trade. The overall burden of indirect taxes continued to rise.

THE STATE'S OBLIGATIONS TO SOCIETY

The erratic, but distinct, growth of the claims and resources of the state in the course of the nineteenth century brought in its train comparable obligations. Particularly after the 1850s and 1860s, the state had to do more for its subjects in order to justify itself. Of course, one should not underestimate the extent to which older forms of state, both in the West and outside, had acknowledged obligations to their subjects. Though their writ was quite circumscribed in some areas, earlier Chinese, Islamic, and Indo-Islamic regimes had been expected to encourage the digging of wells, give relief and control supplies in times of famine, and consume the fine products of different regions. Flood control and fire control in old wooden cities were typically activities which in East Asia brought together subjects and rulers in societies of mutual cooperation. These decentralized forms of succoring continued in Europe, where governments were general overseers of a variety of forms of poor law or public charity, which persisted into the early years of the nineteenth century. In Prussia before the 1850s, the royal government indirectly supported its subjects by giving financial privileges and remissions of tax to Protestant organizations which supported orphanages, educational institutions, and food handouts to the poor.⁵⁴

There was, however, a distinct change in direction after about 1850. Experience of the mid-century wars, outlined in chapter 4, encouraged governments to draw out more resources from their territories. Yet they also had to intervene and placate their fractious citizens. At the very least, in order to guarantee the reproduction of resources and military strength, many governments were concerned that their citizens should be disease-free, reasonably educated, and properly fed. For their part, wealthy and powerful citizens who were subject to increasing direct and indirect taxation demanded something back in return. Social programs legitimated the flow of wealth from individuals to government. At the other end of society, the explosion of working-class militancy in new industrial cities or peasant rebellions in the overtaxed countryside demanded palliative measures. After the hungry 1840s, elites became uneasily aware that older patterns of seasonal misery had been replaced by "structural" poverty in town and country. This was poverty that persisted for generations or more. Much of Asia and Africa, too, seemed to have fallen into almost total impoverishment, relative to the rich white lands. People

permanently trapped at the bottom were fodder for indigenous rebels, socialists, or anarchists.

Some room has to be left, finally, for the independent activities of individual reformers, who roused a growing public to the belief that government ought to intervene to improve the moral tone of society or adjust its skewed distributions of wealth. This was the age when Lord Shaftesbury campaigned to end child labor in Britain and when American abolitionists campaigned unceasingly for government action to end slavery. And across the world, reformers sought to end the burning of Indian widows, ritual cannibalism in the Pacific, the binding of Chinese women's feet, and the discontinuance of customary practices of inheritance, which were regarded as contrary to God's law in Islam. These reformers inevitably looked to the newly empowered state to achieve these objectives and so strengthened its claims to be the dominant actor in society, over and above the mosque, the church, or the local magnate.

What were the areas in which the state intervened? Famine relief and public health were obviously central. In the first flush of power at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the new European and American states and the colonial regimes springing up in Africa and Asia were often fired by notions of *laissez-faire*. Society would organize itself better if the state refused to intervene, it was argued. During the famines in Scotland, Ireland, and India during the 1830s and 1840s, the officials of the British Empire were in fierce dispute about the extent to which the government should intervene to provide food or relief works to the starving. Some believed, in a parody of the ideas of Thomas Malthus, that famine was God's way of checking the growth of population and should not be interfered with.

Even in the early part of the century, though, there were some areas in which administrators just could not turn a blind eye. The cholera epidemics that ravaged all parts of the world in the 1820s and 1830s brought about the introduction of rules for quarantine and internal barriers to stop the spread of the disease. The threat posed to international shipping and the passage of labor from continent to continent by unscrupulous operators led to the regulation of emigration and conditions of work on ships. Governments intervened to prevent slavery, infanticide, ritual crime, and practices which were thought "abhorrent to mankind." Later epidemics of cholera and bubonic plague, which swept across the world after 1890, also redoubled the pressure on governments to quarantine, control, count, and vaccinate their populations.⁵⁵

Prussia, France, and the northeastern states of the United States led the way in government-sponsored systems of popular education. This was an outgrowth of the ideas of the Enlightenment about improvement. The need for an educated nation for military purposes combined in these cases with a philosophical commitment to popular enlightenment nourished by libertarian or Protestant Pietist ideas. By the mid-century, however, most European and many non-European states had invested in education. In addition to the military impetus, so clear in the case of Egypt or Japan, for instance, sectional rivalries also provided a rationale for expanding primary education.

The French Republic and the new Italian regime introduced state education to limit the power of the Catholic Church. In England, the Anglican Church lobbied for an extension of educational provision precisely because Dissenting and Roman Catholic interests had been so active in promoting schools.

By 1880, even in those areas where the state had receded, withdrawn, or faltered in the earlier decades, the notion that the government should provide for the welfare of its subjects was becoming widely accepted. During the 1880s, the German Reich under Bismarck introduced pensions, national medical provision, and the right to education.⁵⁶ State insurance for ill or disabled workers was coupled with stringent efforts to control Communist "conspiracy."⁵⁷ Prussia had long been in the vanguard of public education, but the chancellor's policy was clearly also a move in the long battle over the allegiance of urban working-class and small-farming groups, which Bismarck was fighting with his socialist and Catholic political rivals. The result was the famous system of social insurance which gave basic pension and health provision to citizens. The welfare state came much later in Britain. It happened only after the revival of urban conservatism in the 1880s and the rise of the Labour Party put pressure on Prime Minister Lloyd George's Liberals to distinguish themselves from their enemies.⁵⁸ In fact, in the British Empire, it was in the colonies of European settlement that the idea of "cradle to grave" state provision was first introduced. In the case of New Zealand and Australia, progressives sought change in order to make their societies more equal and distinguish them from what were seen as the class despotisms of the old European states.⁵⁹

State provision in the fields of health and education, let alone pensions, was hardly on the agenda at all in European colonies in Asia and Africa, where life expectation scarcely crept above 35 years of age. Here *laissez-faire* stinginess was reinforced by the notion that natives naturally died like flies. There were minor advances. By the end of the nineteenth century, British India had a famine code; India, French Algeria, Indochina, and the Dutch East Indies had made a halting beginning in the provision of primary education. The colonial government was attempting to establish its own system of education to supersede "native" educational institutions, which had been connected with religious authorities and survived on the charity of great magnates. To some degree this reflected the colonial state's need for skilled manpower; but the rise of colonial nationalism also made it an issue of legitimacy for even the most uncaring colonial regimes. A similar pattern emerged in Asia and Africa's semi-independent regimes. Stung by the taunts of Western-educated "progressives," the late-nineteenth-century rulers of China began to establish an imperial school system after 1900. In the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Japan,⁶⁰ ruling groups became critically aware of the power and resources of their European enemies. They began to establish their own academies, schools, and systems of health care, concerned that otherwise they might lose the allegiance of the restive young or the working class of their growing cities.

TOOLS OF THE STATE

In order to rule and organize resources, the state clearly had to know what it was ruling and who its neighbors were. From the later Middle Ages, European states had begun to map out their territories, partly because the boundaries between them were so complex and contentious. The Ottomans had followed suit. By 1600, the sultans even possessed maps of the Atlantic coast of North America based on European examples which their agents had collected. The Mughals, the Chinese, and the reformed royal despots of early-nineteenth-century Thailand and Vietnam⁶¹ also began to map their territories, often depicting the empire as a territory defined by roads which spiraled out from the imperial center. These were not as complete or as geographically accurate as the European maps. This was a sign not so much of Asiatic backwardness as of the relative unimportance of closely delimiting territory in Asian statecraft. For many of the great kings of Asia and North Africa had large, skilled bureaucracies. These were proficient in the creation and preservation of large bodies of data which could be passed on in written form or by officials who memorized them.

For Europeans, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were the high age of mapmaking. At this time, mapmakers began to try to project a more precise sense of space. Before this, two-dimensional measurement had been rough-and-ready. Now, after about 1750, there were practical reasons why new tools began to be available to governments. The great expansion of navigation during the century had encouraged naval captains to record coastlines and coastal peaks with much greater precision. The steady improvement of navigational instruments had made this possible. On land, the later stages of the military revolution had involved the development of much more sophisticated forms of artillery and fortresses built to direct accurate fire. Siting cannon required military officers to have a much more geometrical understanding of a landscape, so as to avoid dead ground and to estimate a clearer line of sight.

The links between warfare and mapping by the state were startlingly represented in the mapping efforts of the French and British states and empires. In France, Napoleon's *École Polytechnique* drew together a huge range of mathematical and cartographical skills for civil and military purposes. It built on material collected by the French *Académie Royale* and the topographical maps of the country which had been made after 1744. Standardized French place-names were often substituted for those in regional patois in the course of this exercise. This effort was later expanded to Corsica. During Napoleon's occupation of Egypt, the land was surveyed, and the results were published in the *Carte topographique de l'Égypte* (Paris, 1825).⁶² Britain's national mapping project was, and still is, called the Ordnance Survey, clearly indicating its origin in planning for artillery warfare. After the Catholic rebellion in the Highlands in 1745, Scotland was carefully mapped. In the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Ireland was also mapped. In many areas of the west of Ireland, this was the first time that representatives of the British state

had penetrated into the countryside at all. The high point of the whole enterprise was the great Trigonometrical Survey of India, which completed its work between 1818 and 1840 under the direction of Sir George Everest, after whom the Himalayan peak was named. The survey involved the use of a large Indian staff and took British officers into parts of the countryside where they had never been before.⁶³

While the origins of the idea of surveying may have been utilitarian, its consequences worldwide were both symbolic and practical. At a symbolic level, the progress of the survey through the countryside represented the triumph of Western science and technology and the final establishment of British dominion. Gaelic place-names were rendered into English, and Indian place-names were standardized and entered into gazetteers. At a slightly later date, the American authorities began a similar process of mapping and codifying the plains and mountains of the west. Again, indigenous names were often supplanted by Anglo-Saxon ones, marking the claims to ownership of their new masters.

In Asia, as in Europe, the newly energized states which emerged from the Napoleonic wars and contemporary world crisis demanded an exact delimitation of their territory. Indians came to understand this; some indigenous rulers tried to impede the surveying work, while mobs sometimes attacked and demolished the trigonometrical towers. At the same time, native voices were able to enlist and put to use maps as symbolic and practical resources. By the 1840s, books written by Indians were seeking to demonstrate the boundaries of India or of the Hindu sacred realm. Geography was an important part of the early nationalist ideology. Meanwhile, in the heavily taxed countryside, Indian plaintiffs and defendants in British courts made use of the large-scale maps which were generated out of the original survey. Much the same thing had happened in Ireland. Here the Gaelic literati associated with the survey published their own antiquarian and historical works, which praised old Irish civilization and language and helped imbue the diminished post-famine population with a sense of pride in their nation. In those parts of Asia and North Africa which remained independent or semi-independent, indigenous rulers also began to create maps which drew on local representations of the body politic, but also slowly brought European techniques of measurement to bear on them. By the 1820s or 1830s, the rulers of Burma and Thailand had had relatively accurate maps of their territory drawn. Li Hongzhang again encouraged the preparation of detailed maps of south China.

The states' efforts to map their territories were widely accompanied by attempts to enumerate, categorize, and assess their populations and resources. Most early modern kingdoms had resorted to periodic household censuses, whether this was to locate resources to be taxed or to count labor which kings might require. Descriptions of subdivisions had long existed, in which local literati praised their home province and wrote about its cities, men of religion, famous local dynasties, and products. What happened in the nineteenth century was that censuses, descriptive gazetteers, and formal archival procedures became more precise and also more widespread. China probably

possessed the oldest system of district gazetteers in the world. In the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries, these had been produced in order to help officials in their relations with local elites. In turn, the literati used the gazetteers to show how important were their home places and what contribution they had made to the empire. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, new gazetteers were produced, which bore the mark of the central state and its interests more obviously. Even as the Chinese government fragmented in the nineteenth century, so new editions were produced for the use of the provincial regimes and foreign entrepreneurs. In the Ottoman Empire and other parts of the Islamic world, the old form of *kaiyyfat*, or local description, was easily adapted to create gazetteers for modernizing officials.

Gazetteers, local handbooks, maps, and censuses were both symbolic statements and practical tools for the nineteenth-century state. What they represented was public and governmental knowledge. It was at this same period that the state asserted its control over the archives and collections of papers which ministers and other public officials amassed while in office. Previously, such officials had usually decamped with their papers at the end of their term of office. But just as states now insisted that officials were not to accept presents or bribes while in office, so they also insisted on the distinction between official and private information.

If the state was to have trust in its officials, it needed to train them itself. The development of a professional and trained civil service and an efficient police was another important theme of the nineteenth century. Of course, fine officials and administrators had existed in all the great kingdoms of the early modern era. Yet these men usually saw themselves as personal servants of the ruler; their terms of service were not fixed, their training was diverse, and their ideologies various. Perhaps only the Roman Catholic Church in the West and the Chinese Empire with its sinicizing vassals in the East possessed anything which could reasonably be called bureaucracies, unified by common principles and training, and serving the institution rather than the king.

The nineteenth century saw the expansion of bureaucracy as the state swelled and became more intrusive. In Germany, Austria, and France, the first half of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of a civilian state from under the shadow of military officialdom. Historians have come to see this as part of the broad pattern of "professionalization" which they discern in education, the sciences, and the medical world. Prussia introduced a codified career structure for civil servants in 1873, as a consequence of experience during the French war. "Modern" subjects of study became increasingly significant in the curriculum. Japan, which followed hard on the German precedents, introduced an examination system for promotion in 1882. At a lower level, the role and training of the police also underwent a considerable change. In Italy by the time of the First World War, the officer class among the police was expected to have a degree in law or forensic medicine. In France, by contrast, the inheritance of Napoleonic bureaucracy actually seems to have made it harder for politicians of the Third Republic to press through reform measures after 1870. This was true to an even greater extent in China, where

proponents of the scholar-gentry system, with its memorized tests in the Confucian classics, fought a rearguard action against change. The classical inheritance was finally defeated in 1905, when the 1200-year-old examination system was abolished, because it was "an enemy and hindrance to the school system."⁶⁴ This was a reference to private academies increasingly teaching modern subjects which had flourished under the patronage of the provincial intelligentsia since the 1870s. After the turn of the century, Japanese advisers were brought into China with greater frequency to establish academies and professional training schools. In this way French and German models were modified and transferred from one Asian society to another.

Britain and America were also somewhat late in the move to the creation of professional civil servants, because of aristocratic suspicion of state officials in the one and democratic suspicion of them in the other. America, however, came to realize it needed a merit-based system, not least because a large percentage of federal income came from customs revenues on the eastern seaboard, which needed expert and uncorrupt handling. The federal government civil payroll swelled from 53,000 in 1871 to 256,000 in 1901.⁶⁵ The Pendleton Civil Service Act of 1883 created a civil service commission which set academic standards for entrants. All the same, the older idea persisted that non-elected officials were dangerous, and civil service positions remained part of the electoral "spoils system." President Theodore Roosevelt, arch-proponent of an efficient state, tried to push for further reform in 1903-4, but even in 1914, the question of whether civil servants were agents of the state or agents of political parties remained unresolved. In Britain, likewise, the hold of aristocratic patronage had been loosened, and a meritocratic system of examination had been introduced. Yet the training of civil servants remained archaic, and they continued to be drawn from a narrow range of upper-middle-class families with access to Oxford and Cambridge universities.

As in several other respects, government was more modern in Britain's eastern colonial empire. Officials had needed to be trained to oversee the complex systems of taxation and judicial arbitration which had been inherited from the earlier Indo-Muslim governments. The East India Company set up a training school in languages and political economy at Haileybury in 1809, which was far in advance of anything in domestic government. After the civil service reforms of 1856, British recruits into the Indian Civil Service were taken from among graduates of Oxford, Cambridge, and Trinity College, Dublin, and were trained in languages and political economy before being sent to the subcontinent. This became the model for the British territories. The University of Leiden served the same function for Dutch government in the East and spawned a distinguished line of oriental scholars.

STATE, ECONOMY, AND NATION

The nineteenth century is commonly thought of as the age of *laissez-faire*, when the state acted as "night watchman" and only intermittently and

Table 7.1 Government servants**a. Civilian personnel at all levels (thousands)**

Date	Austria	Great Britain	France	Prussia-Germany	United States
1760	26	—	—	—	—
1850	140	67	300	55	—
1910	864	535	583	c.1000	1,034

Source: Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, vol. 2, pp. 804–10.

b. Civilian personnel at central state level (thousands)

Date	Austria	Great Britain	France	Prussia-Germany	United States	India
1760	10	16	—	—	—	—
1850	72	40	146	32+	26	—
1881	—	—	—	—	—	580
1900	297	130	430	—	239	—

Source: Mann, *Sources of Power*, vol. 2, pp. 804–10; *Census of India, 1881*.

c. Military personnel (thousands)

Date	Austria	Great Britain	France	Prussia-Germany	United States	India
1760	250	144	460	150	—	—
1850	318	197	390	173	21	230
1900	230	486	620	629	126	c. 500 ^a

^a Including princely armies.

Source: Mann, *Sources of Power*, vol. 2, pp. 804–10; *Census of India, 1881*.

reluctantly intervened in the economy. Only after about 1890 did protectionist pressures build up, so that even in Britain the cry for imperial preference was voiced. This view is based largely on a reading of British, British imperial, and American history, and even here it is rather partial. We have already noted that over much of the world the modern state was designed precisely to create an economy which could support a technologically efficient military power. Governments moved to improve agricultural production, hoping to raise more taxes and avert scarcity, the great enemy in war. This was true even of regimes which had not traditionally intervened in production very deeply. In Danubian Bulgaria, for instance, Midhat Pasha, one of the great Ottoman governors of the nineteenth century, encouraged agriculture and patronized the Christian peasantry.⁶⁶

In some ways the modernizing efforts of Peter the Great in early-eighteenth-century Russia anticipated rulers in the nineteenth century who turned to the regulation of customs and investment in industry. Russia, in fact, was the first of

the “developing countries.” Famously, the German customs union of the 1830s was intended to form an economic solidarity which would make political union more likely. Contemporary Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, Iran, China, and Japan all strove mightily to concentrate resources to invest in modern industrial and especially military-industrial factory production. Where these moves failed in the medium term, as they did in China, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran, it was partly because they were aborted by the intervention of the powers, especially Britain, which were averse to the industrialization of the peripheries, as chapter 8 shows. At the same time, the Ottoman and Chinese cases also indicate that indigenous regimes might restrict industrialization to preserve their own power. The Qing court clipped the wings of the provincial viceroys because it was worried about the buildup of their armies and navies. Where indigenous attempts at industrialization succeeded, as in Japan, new industrial enterprises were sold off to entrepreneurs, resulting in the role of state intervention being underplayed by historians.

Even in the case of Britain and America, state power was both overtly and covertly used to promote economic integration and industrial growth, well before the protectionist wave at the end of the nineteenth century. Throughout the British Empire, governments used their power to keep markets open and tariffs low; this was a perennial complaint of the first generation of nationalist politicians in India, Egypt, and even latterly in Ireland. But positive action was taken by the state in specific cases. The colonial governments in South and Southeast Asia, including French and Dutch ones, intervened throughout the later nineteenth century to create forest reserves and to limit the access of indigenous people to valuable resources of timber. The generally tight-fisted colonial governments inaugurated canal schemes and provided legal and financial backing for schemes of railway development. Above all, colonial governments and the great powers, operating through banks and financial treaties, worked to manipulate currencies and reserves of gold and silver in their own interest. British control of South Africa’s gold reserves represented a major aspect of her stake in the African continent, for instance. It also gave the Bank of England and the British Treasury a huge international economic advantage during periods of war, especially after 1914.⁶⁷ Even in the United States, where there was an even greater ideological distrust of state intervention in the economy, the federal government was quite active in providing subsidies to railroad companies and for the improvement of harbors and other infrastructure projects.

Apart from this, there were many ways in which the relatively lightly governed states and dominions of the English-speaking world intervened, or were increasingly compelled to intervene, in the management of economies. Governments provided legal infrastructures and promulgated private laws which paid particular attention to the organization of economic activity. They established institutions to promote the flexible operation of the free-market economy at home and abroad. The most notable of these were central banks of issue, whose purpose was to assure the stability of the national currency, guarantee the gold convertibility of paper money, and to organize

a secure system of short-term credit for the economy. Governments in these lightly ruled territories also guaranteed the viability of transport and telegraphs, and at the end of the century, the introduction of the electric telegraph. Finally, of course, the expansion of European empires and of the informal spheres of military and political influence of the great powers contributed to the growth of a global economy in which long-distance direct investment by entrepreneurs spread to Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Australasia. While nationalists and liberal historians have argued about where the benefits from such investment accrued, there is no doubt of the importance of these new international financial links, or of the key role which the state played in forging them, at least initially.

At this point, we can return to an issue broached in the previous chapter: the relationship between state and nation. In Hobsbawm's formulation, the state created the nation, rather than vice versa. Yet it did not do so in a vacuum, and in some cases the nation created the state. Living traditions of language, law, religion, political ethics, and deportment made it easier for the state or for aspirant state-builders among colonial nationalists to claim that they represented a nation or a would-be nation. This contention between state and community about the boundaries of the nation continued into the twentieth century. It is true that the new bureaucracies helped solidify this more potent sense of nation in many ways. They created geography textbooks which showed the boundaries and divisions of the state to the young, and promulgated novels and histories which standardized languages and created a long, and sometimes largely fictitious, lineage for states. Schools in Catholic Ireland began increasingly to teach the ancient Irish language and Celtic myths. American school textbooks emphasized the ideals of the War of Independence more vigorously after the Civil War. In India, more problematically, school textbooks sanctioned by British rulers began to inscribe a particular "Hindu" view of history from which Muslims were largely excluded as foreign invaders. Passbooks, military service, rituals of state and nation, public statues of nationalist heroes, and great commemorative buildings attempted to achieve the same standardized patriotism in more subtle ways.

Historians have often tried to have their cake and eat it. They like to argue that the peasant, the tribesman, the woman, or the working-class man have "autonomy." Yet, when it comes to emotions like patriotism or nationalism, of which they disapprove, that agency is denied to ordinary people who are deemed to be dupes of the elites or automata easily stamped with the mark of state power. In fact, nationalism and patriotism also drew on more profound desires and aspirations, outside the purview of the state, which had in earlier times often been attached to family, clan, or religious group. Wars started by states certainly reinforced and generalized these sentiments. So too did people's wider experience of the turbulence of modernity. Patriotism, jingoism, and inter-communal hatred often proceeded from the people and influenced otherwise cautious statesmen, rather than vice versa. This was true in England even in the eighteenth century, when the celebration of imperial victories was as often directed against the government as much as promul-

gated by it. It was demonstrated again in nineteenth-century Japan, where "Deep Ocean" and "Nanyang" (Southeast Asia) societies were founded by ordinary samurai to promote overseas expansion and imperial greatness, even when the Meiji leaders were extremely skeptical of the wisdom of such policies. Popular anti-Semitism similarly bent and buckled the policies of the growing state in Germany and Austria. The modern state and nationalism remained in fevered dialogue throughout the century to 1914. Nationalism was not simply a sentiment forced on hapless and naive peoples by wicked power-brokers or greedy capitalists.

A BALANCE SHEET: WHAT HAD THE STATE ACHIEVED?

Earlier sections argued that it was not in all societies and at all times that the claims and resources of the state grew steadily in the course of the nineteenth century. In the Anglo-Saxon world and in China, above all, central government



ILLUSTRATION 7.4 Internal exile: Russian prisoners on their way to Siberia. A lantern slide for teaching the horrors of despotism, late nineteenth century.

as such remained relatively small and constrained, and even contracted in some respects between 1815 and the end of the nineteenth century. This does not mean, however, that the growth of professional administration suffered to the same degree. In Britain, organs of local government and societies associated with the metropolitan elite continued to develop the apparatus of paid secretaries and administrators throughout the period. Local school boards and other decentralized institutions did the same in the United States. "Governmentality" expanded, even when the state as such did not.

In China, too, local officials developed their own staffs with expertise in irrigation, taxation, and transport, for instance. Here, where central administration suffered both a loss of legitimacy and a loss of revenue during the Taiping and Nien rebellions of 1850-70, the tax base increased later in the century, with healthy sums coming in from internal and external customs duties. As Hans van de Ven has recently argued, it would be wrong to think as some historians once did that the Chinese government was in a state of decline between the mid-century rebellions and the Communist revolution of the twentieth century.⁶⁸ The powerful regional viceroys of the post-Taiping era established their own links with the landed gentry clans which had provided the administrators of the Qing dynasty. There were even moves under Prince Kung in the 1870s, and again after China was defeated by Japan in 1895, to reform the central financial administration of the empire and give its officials a modern education rather than one in the Confucian classics. These Chinese self-strengtheners had noted that other societies as conservative as the Japanese, and even the British, were embarking on the same process, in order to face the common problems of international trade, diplomacy, and warfare.

It might be thought, too, that large areas of political life remained relatively untouched by the growth of the power and the claims of the state: international contacts, religion, and socialism, for instance. But even where this was so, the mark of the state was very much in evidence, as the close of chapter 6 suggested. The international telegraph treaties, the expansion of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, the arrangements for exploration and preservation of the Arctic and Antarctic continents, all of which came to pass between 1900 and 1914, indicate the global interests of elites. Yet all of these arrangements started from the assumption that nation-states were the key players. Scientific and scholarly interchange which in the 1780s had proceeded through informal and personal links between gentlemen-scholars were now created by alliances of national academies and scientific societies. The rise and self-organization of the great "world" religions, discussed in chapter 9, were not immune from these pressures. It is true that many people owed allegiance to a religious tradition which lay outside, and was sometimes even hostile to the claims of the state within whose boundary they lived. Yet the revived agencies of Roman Catholicism, pan-Islamism, and Confucian nationalism generally took care to acknowledge and work with the national organs of the confessional group within which they operated. Even socialist activity at a world level was constrained by the representation of interests of specific national socialist leagues. The total collapse of the illusion of inter-

national socialist brotherhood in 1914, when socialists too went to war with each other, made this very clear. The modern state drove forward the great simplification of the form of ruling groups, the notion of sovereignty, and the aims of governance which were noted at the beginning of the book.

Where the triumph of the modern state was less sure was on its inner frontiers. Parochial powers and cultures still retained their influence, particularly where train and telegraphic communications were poorly developed and literacy was low. It was not only Christ, in the words of the popular saying, but the Italian government, which stopped at Eboli, the southern Italian town legendary for its pagan lawlessness. Throughout much of the world, the state remained perched atop segmentary political systems, its magistrates and governors effective only insofar as they could find influential allies amongst clan heads and tribal elders. The revolts that occurred at the end of the First World War over the Middle East, central Asia, Afghanistan, and Africa are sometimes represented as periods of anarchy when the state "broke down." More often than not, however, they simply reflected the emergence into view of the vital play of local political accommodation and conflict which had been obscured in the historical record by a thin patina of state power. At the other end of the spectrum of social change, the vigorous entrepreneurial communities of the United States and of some industrial cities in Europe were already seeing a retreat of the state. Local associations, voluntary societies, and private initiatives were taking over the social functions which government had quite briefly acquired. That was to be the pattern of the later twentieth century, though the decades of war and depression between 1900 and 1950 were to slow the pace of change immeasurably.

What was certain, above all, was that during the nineteenth century the sound and fury, the *éclat* of the state, spread widely across the globe, whether its local forms were powerful or not. The paraphernalia of flags, drilling soldiers, uniforms, and rituals of rule were taken up by power-hungry people, even in societies remote from the new centers of global government, and even by religious or charismatic movements which claimed a higher purpose than mere worldly dominance. This universal mimicking of the power and charisma of centralized authority began to anger a few intellectuals. It turned some of them into anarcho-syndicalists, who lauded the virtue of the ungoverned community. It transformed others, such as John Ruskin, Leon Tolstoy, and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, into apostles of the life of the simple artisan or peasant.