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# “All the People Are Now Guerillas”

## *The Warfare of Sherman, Sheridan, and Lincoln, and the Brutality of the Twentieth Century*

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T. HUNT TOOLEY

Most observers would agree that the War Between the States went a long way in laying the groundwork for twentieth-century “total” warfare (see Royster 1993). Some emphasize technical aspects (trenches, railroads, infantry firepower, and the like) as the precursors of modern warfare. Some liken the length of the war to the drawn-out wars of attrition that we associate with the world wars. Studies of all these categories yield useful insights into the history of the modern world.

This article flows from a different set of questions. Having been engaged in long-term study of ethnic cleansing in twentieth-century Europe and the large recent literature on the nature of twentieth-century violence, I have conceptualized these phenomena in terms of the enormous growth of the state in modern times. In my approach to these issues, the corresponding lessening of individual autonomy lies behind the whole issue of twentieth-century brutality: ethnic cleansing and, much more, extermination are nothing if not the exercise of interventionary power. In the

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H. Hunt Tooley is a professor of history at Austin College.

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context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these terrible measures also represent an extreme stage of the intensification of brutality. From this vantage point, I am asking questions about the mechanisms of both this loss of individual liberty and about the forms with which the Leviathan state chose to institute its regime. War is very close to the core of many of these questions.<sup>1</sup>

We all can point to numerous causes and sources for the horrific brutality of twentieth-century warfare, for its cruelties against civilians, and for nonwar state violence against civilians, for that matter. I am not suggesting here that the brutalities of warfare against civilians, deportations, shooting of hostages, destruction of civilians' lives and property, and the like had their sole origin in the terrible nineteenth-century American conflict. Any student of history knows that violence of every kind against civilians has been a potential feature of war since ancient times. One has but to think of ancient Mesopotamia or the Thirty Years War to remember that slaughter, rape, torture, forced migration, and expropriation are not twentieth-century inventions. Yet by the eighteenth century, in spite of widespread warfare, Europeans and some other groups across the globe seemed to be in the process of limiting the scope and cruelty of wars.<sup>2</sup> These trends may be documented by looking at declining numbers of civilian deaths in war, by examining the records of the army of Frederick the Great or of Napoleon, for example, or by reading the growing body of memoir literature from the eighteenth century onward. Slaughters of war prisoners became less frequent. Commanders often enforced limitations on soldiers' behavior. Reliance on well-organized supply systems cut down on the expropriative cruelties of the armies living on whatever land they were crossing or occupying. Civilians, in particular women and children, became more protected. If rape, murder, torture, stealing, and other violence still occurred in early-nineteenth-century Western armies, perpetrators of such crimes might well find themselves facing a firing squad or a noose courtesy of their own army. Cities were indeed bombarded, but usually with warning and often only after the evacuation of noncombatants. War remained a violent and terrible activity, the more so since the emergence of the nation-state in this same period made it possible to unleash violence on a more massive scale, both in numbers and in firepower. But a sense of restraint in terms of the brutality of warfare seems to have become the norm rather than the exception.

Yet by the time of the First World War, all historians would agree, the tide turned. By 1918, war was accompanied by massive civilian death, ethnic cleansing, slaughter of prisoners, violence against and expropriation of civilians, bombing of

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1. For an excellent bibliography conceptualized along the same lines as this article, see Stromberg 2001.

2. An overview of the quantitative literature on levels of violence in war is in van der Dennen 1980. The violence of warfare rose both from the standpoint of expanding the pools of potential targets (see, for example, Hawkins 2000, 72–73) and from the standpoint of the enormous rise of civilian casualties from the nineteenth century to the twentieth. See also Rummel 1994, especially chapters 1 and 2.; Levene 2000; and Horowitz 2002.

civilian centers, and so on. We may look for precursors to rising brutality in many areas. The present study is an attempt to assess a particular strain of brutality up to the period of the First World War. I intend to show that the increasing willingness to do violence to civilians during the Civil War provided one source of origin—a very significant one—for twentieth-century brutality.

### Abraham Lincoln and John Pope

Historians generally associate Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan with the emergence of the most significant elements of total war, and they tend to date the creation of early total-war thinking roughly to 1864 and 1865, at the time of the famous March to the Sea. Recent research, however, draws our attention to still earlier stages of the War Between the States (DiLorenzo 2002, 171–99). Brutality, for example, was the coin of the realm from the very beginning of the war in the West, in Missouri in particular. In the eastern theater, the first targeting of civilians really came about in 1862, not in 1864, and is associated with Abraham Lincoln himself. Its actual practitioner was John Pope.<sup>3</sup> An acquaintance of Lincoln, Pope was brought from military success in the West to stop the chaos in the Union’s invading army after its disastrous defeat in the battles of the Seven Days during the summer of 1862. The Federal army was beaten and chaotic. Yet from the moment of his arrival in Virginia in July 1862, the self-confidant Pope sent directives to his army that in effect announced that the Union would be taking off the gloves.

The general also proclaimed that his army, occupying northern Virginia, would now “subsist upon the country.” Hence, provisions were to be confiscated and “vouchers” given to the owners—but only to “loyal” citizens, not to supporters of the “rebellion.” If guerilla or partisan activity should occur, Pope declared, the blame would be borne by the entire local population. In case of sabotage to bridges or roads, the local populace would be turned out for a radius of five miles to repair and pay for the damages (in money or property). Perpetrators, if caught, were to be shot outright, as would civilians caught firing on Union troops. In the latter case, the perpetrator’s home was liable to being burned to the ground.

Having introduced a distinction between “loyal” and “disloyal” civilians in the occupied areas, Pope’s Order No. 11 elaborated on the significance of the distinction. All persons refusing to swear an oath of allegiance to the United States would be divested of their property and driven from their homes into the Confederate lines. Hence, the Union strategy in the war for minds and hearts was simple: forcibly remove those not in agreement with the armies of the invading North.

Clearly, Pope’s role in the genesis of a new aggressiveness toward civilians is important. Still, as historian Daniel Sutherland (1992) has made clear, the credit for

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3. See Sutherland 1992, on which the discussion of Pope to follow is based. On the origins of the “hard” policy, see Ash 1995.

the new outlook in Pope's orders should be given less to Pope than to President Lincoln himself. More than any of Lincoln's commanding generals, Pope was a friend and supporter. He was a staunch Republican and an antislavery man. Lincoln had plucked him from the West and elevated him to command of the great invading force in the East. In fact, his arrival in the East coincided with Lincoln's political decisions to support the Radical Republicans in passing their Confiscation Bill, in beginning to discuss future emancipation in rebel-held territory, and—to the amazement of Lincoln's political associates—in putting freedmen into units in the U.S. Army.<sup>4</sup> Shaken by the disaster of the Seven Days battles in midsummer 1862, Lincoln accelerated both a political program and a military program that targeted the civilians of the South. In fact, it is possible that Lincoln himself drafted the orders that Pope issued.

In the end, Pope's ability to carry out a new kind of war in the eastern theater was short-lived. His defeat at the Second Battle of Manassas led to his replacement at the end of August 1862. Embarrassed, moreover, by the bad press generated by Pope's (Lincoln's) directives, the Union army made haste to soften some of the offending threats to civilians.

### The Lieber Code

In the wake of Pope's departure, Lincoln took up the offer of Francis Lieber, a professor at Columbia College in New York, to work out a clear codification of the legal basis for behavior in war. Although many modern commentators see the resulting "Lieber Code" as a humane set of laws limiting the cruelty of warfare,<sup>5</sup> a close study of Lieber's rules can yield a much less optimistic interpretation. Born in Berlin in 1798, Lieber had experienced the years of the Napoleonic War as a child during Napoleon's entry into Berlin in 1806. He served as a (very young) soldier in the Prussian army at Waterloo. After the war, he joined the nationalist student movement in Prussia. His politics fit well into the American Whig context, being quite representative of the vague liberalism, nationalist consolidationism, and romantic irrationalism that characterized the Turnverein (Gymnastic League) movement in the German states after 1815. Immigrating to the United States in 1827, Lieber spent much of his career in South Carolina as a college professor of history and government, moving to New York only in 1856 (Freidel 1943, 1947). He supported the Union wholeheartedly.

Lieber's guidelines, about nine thousand words long, appeared in early 1863 under the official title "General Orders 100."<sup>6</sup> Clearly, the guidelines set out rules with the aim of delimiting some of the chaos and violence of war. Lieber certainly did

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4. The orders are cited and discussed in Sutherland 1992.

5. For example, Freidel 1946; Sampson 1996; and Ross 2005.

6. "Instructions for the Government of the Armies" 1863. The text is widely available in printed collections and on the Internet (see the reference entry).

delimit some behaviors. In martial-law situations or occupations, the rules say, law is still to prevail, administered strictly by the state and its institutions. Although military exigency always takes precedence, in general the U.S. Army should not behave viciously and capriciously. The status of noncombatants should be clearly defined, with the condition of true noncombatants preserved and protected where exigency does not demand otherwise. “Military necessity,” Lieber wrote, “does not admit of cruelty.” And he clearly condemns “wanton violence” by soldiers against noncombatants: pillage, rape, murder (“even after taking a place by main force”)—all are punishable by death.

Yet the orders do condone acts that are cruel, but only within the framework of state action and at the behest of the military as the extension of the state: “Military necessity admits of all direct destruction of life or limb of armed enemies, and of other persons whose destruction is incidentally unavoidable in the armed contests of the war; . . . it allows of all destruction of property, and obstruction of the ways and channels of traffic, travel, or communication, and of withholding of sustenance or means of life from the enemy; of the appropriation of whatever an enemy’s country affords necessary for the subsistence and safety of the Army.” Starving an individual “belligerent,” armed or unarmed, is lawful, as is bombing civilian populations without warning should military necessity dictate it: “The citizen or native of a hostile country is thus an enemy, as one of the constituents of the hostile state or nation, and as such is subjected to the hardships of the war.” Actually, the more hardships the better, according to Lieber’s views on war: “The more vigorously wars are pursued the better it is for humanity. Sharp wars are brief.”

Obviously, part of the “sharpness” of the recommended brief wars was a willingness to inflict violence on civilians when needed. Measures of retaliation against civilian populations, in Lieber’s view, were indispensable in war. “Misdeeds” must at times be punished by retaliation against the innocent, with hostages and prisoners of war forming the principal pool of those to suffer. As a convinced supporter of the state in general, Lieber eschewed looting—at least if the loot is retained by private soldiers: “Private property, unless forfeited by crimes or by offenses of the owner, can be seized only by way of military necessity, for the support or other benefit of the Army or of the United States.”

Perhaps most significantly for the present study, Lieber dealt at length with the issue of partisans, whom he defined as nonuniformed fighters, those who are not in effect state sanctioned (even though such definitions presented problems for the Union government because it did not recognize the Confederacy as a state). Lieber considered the wearing of a uniform a crucial element in the delineation of combatants. This position was very much in line with European usage. Ever since the use of uniforms in military units became widespread in the eighteenth century, the Western world had tended to follow important conventions related to uniforms. Wearing one meant that the wearer could, on the one hand, be killed in circumstances of battle, but that the uniform conferred protected status in conditions of truce or where

soldiers were wounded or held as prisoners. Hence, to take action against the military forces of a state without wearing the uniform of a belligerent was seen as illegal and in a sense unfair. It was in any case potentially disastrous for all states because partisan units everywhere make a mockery of the state's monopoly of violence. Lieber made it clear that persons not in uniform who spied or carried out raids were outside the protection of the uniform and should "suffer death."

For Lieber, a citizen of a conquered area who takes or sends information about the conquering army to his own side should also suffer death. So should a civilian in an occupied area who agrees to guide his own army to battle. So should a person in a conquered area who intentionally misguides the conquering army. So should any individual who rises in arms against the conquering army: individuals in these categories Lieber deemed to be "war-rebels," people who are not only enemies, but also outside the state's sanction. Such individuals threaten the whole system of state control. All of them should "suffer death."

"General Orders 100" corresponded precisely to Pope's General Order No. 13 in the area of what one might call collective guilt and collective punishment. In the current "rebellion," according to Lieber, commanders of occupation should distinguish between citizens loyal to the Union and those loyal to the rebellion and act accordingly. The military commander should "protect the manifestly loyal citizens in revolted territories against the hardships of the war as much as the common misfortune of all war admits." He will, however, "throw the burden of the war, as much as lies within his power, on the disloyal citizens of the revolted portion or province, subjecting them to a stricter police than the noncombatant enemies have to suffer in regular war." Because an individual's life or death might well hinge on "loyalty" or "disloyalty," this kind of group definition was of the greatest significance. Here—and this pattern held with the European rules for warfare that emerged a short time later—the existence of the rule created a kind of antithesis: the rule could be used against civilians as much as in their favor.<sup>7</sup>

### **William Tecumseh Sherman**

For all of these theoretical behaviors and planned guidelines, it was surely in the attitudes and actions of Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan that Union plans for taking the war to civilians had the most effect. Indeed, we can trace both Grant's and Sherman's plans almost precisely from the summer of 1862, in the wake of the Battle of Shiloh. Grant later wrote that the Confederates' terrible tenacity in that battle convinced him that only a war to extinguish every spark of fight in the population would suffice to end the conflict. Sherman's conceptions, dating from the same historical moment, are both more complex and more extensive (see Walters 1948; Janda 1995).

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7. For a good, brief account of the Lieber Code episode, see Carnahan 1998.

The biography of William Tecumseh Sherman is significant here. When the nine-year-old William Tecumseh was orphaned in 1829, he was taken in by his father's best friend, Thomas Ewing, a canny and influence-hungry Whig who was on the verge of becoming senator from Ohio. Ewing's exercise of power eventually brought him into the Senate and into several national cabinets. His "network" of family and friends, such as William's brother John and Ewing's son, Thomas Ewing Jr., expanded at once into politics and railroads.

Judging from the relationships spelled out, often embarrassingly, in the family letters, the Ewing family followed the rule of absolute loyalty to the clan, each member playing or being pressured to play the assigned role in getting and keeping power and influence. Sherman's role in the family was to go to West Point and to marry Ellen Ewing, the senator's daughter, with whom he had grown up in the Ewing household. He fulfilled the former task sooner than the latter: he married Ellen only in 1850, after being officially affianced for eight years.<sup>8</sup> Their letters to each other paint the picture of a strange, animosity-filled marriage, but a productive one, both from the standpoint of children and influence: if Sherman was a failure in most of his endeavors up to 1862, his later fame owed much to Ellen's intervention.

Sherman's early adult life was marked by few successes. He was away from his growing family for months and years on end, even after he quit the army. A three-year stint as a banker in San Francisco ended when the bank went under. Just before the war, he worked in Louisiana as superintendent of a college, but the war broke out, and he offered his services again to the army.

As a colonel, Sherman played a role in the First Battle of Manassas, receiving afterward a promotion and the command of various Federal units in Kentucky. Here, fear of confusion, fear of the Confederates, and fear of failure beset him. Calling constantly for reinforcements even though he had little contact with the enemy, Sherman gained the reputation of being erratic. Neurotic and resentful, he resigned his command. His letters home and to associates are excruciating in their self-pity and shame. He confided to his brother in December 1861: "I am so sensible now of my disgrace from having exaggerated the force of our enemy in Kentucky that I do think I should have committed suicide were it not for my children. I do not think that I can again be entrusted with a command."<sup>9</sup> He was given a troop-training assignment at Benton Barracks, Missouri.

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8. On Sherman's family and early life, see Lewis 1932, 1–66. On the fascinating relationship between Sherman and his wife, see Fellman 1995; the reference to Sherman's motivations being those of a "warrior" is on p. ix.

9. A superb collection of the family letters may be viewed on-line as a result of excellent work of the Archives of the University of Notre Dame, at <http://cawley.archives.nd.edu/findaids/ead/html/shr.htm>, and the citation is the William T. Sherman Family Papers (SHR), University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA), Notre Dame, IN 46556. The quotation and a more extended analysis of Sherman's frame of mind are found in Walters 1948, 454–56.



At this humiliating juncture, the powerful family reflex kicked in, and Sherman's wife (Ewing's daughter), Ellen, wrote a plea to Abraham Lincoln, asking the president to "defend him [Sherman] from the enemies who have combined against him" and to remove him to the eastern theater. The president undoubtedly understood the wielding of power and influence, especially as it pertained to this powerful Whig family, but he apparently chose not to alleviate Sherman's disgrace for the moment.

By the end of 1861, very much connected to his failures of command in Kentucky and to his being consigned in "disgrace" to drilling troops in Missouri, Sherman was developing strong feelings about the intransigence of the population of the South. This intransigence, he thought, was reflected in widespread sabotage and guerilla activities. Indeed, by January 1862, Sherman believed that the "irregular" opposition he discerned really showed that virtually all civilians in the South should be numbered as legitimate enemies of the Union army. He reasoned that capturing Southern cities would never be enough for the invading Union army because widespread enmity in the countryside would constantly endanger communications and supply lines, potentially isolating occupied cities.

Thus, the recently suicidal Sherman took solace in broad military considerations. As historian John Bennett Walters wrote in an important 1948 article about these tendencies in Sherman, "Here was a manifestation of his tendency to arrive at generalizations by leaping over wide gaps of fact and reason and to proceed on the basis of his inspiration and convictions with the utmost faith in the soundness of his conclusions" (458). In this case, his generalization had to do with a kind of general guilt of all the inhabitants of the South.

In this frame of mind, Sherman was called upon to lead troops again in operations that culminated in the Battle of Shiloh (April 1862). Gaining praise for his performance, he was given command of the city of Memphis, Tennessee, which fell to the Federals. In this way, the city of Memphis became both scene and cause of one of those powerful strains that would later shape twentieth-century violence and brutality.

We have to delve here, with some of Sherman's biographers, into the strange psychology of William Tecumseh Sherman. Almost uniformly a failure up to April 1862, his suicidal attitude (which coincided with his observations about civilian resistance in the countryside) and his paranoia were suddenly reversed by modest success, praise from superiors, and significant responsibilities. His letters now show a total reversal. Far from suicidal, he is ebullient, arrogant, and swaggering. All of these mental changes seem to focus on the people of Memphis and its environs. He was surrounded again by "enemies," but his enemies were no longer his superiors and peers. These new enemies were at his mercy. Here, the historian-psychoanalyst might theorize, lies an important psychological key to Sherman's later behavior and thought.

The people of Memphis undoubtedly hated the Yankees. Nevertheless, uniformed rather than nonuniformed opponents threatened Sherman most. Nathan Bedford

Forrest and Earl Van Dorn were carrying out a harassing war of raids against Union supply lines, just as Sherman had feared. These uniformed troops, however, seem to have donned civilian clothing in Sherman’s mind. He branded all raiding activity as “guerilla” activity. He wrote to his brother in mid-1862: “The whole country is filled with guerilla bands, numbering hundreds.” About this time he announced to Grant: “All the people are now guerillas.” He commented in a letter to his wife: “The North may fall into bankruptcy and anarchy first, but if they can hold on the war will soon assume a turn to extermination, not of soldiers alone, that is at least part of the trouble, but the people” (qtd. in Walters 1948, 460–61).

His prophecies soon fulfilled themselves. In September, he initiated a terror regime in and around Memphis. He ordered the reprisal burning of the town of Randolph, Tennessee, on September 24. His statements from this time show that he blamed every “man, woman, and child” in the South, viewing them all as collectively responsible for any act against the invading Union forces. A few days later he decided to retaliate against small-arms fire on Union supply boats with deportations: “The provost-marshal will extend the list already prepared so as to have on it at least thirty names, and on every occasion when a boat is fired on will draw by lot ten names, who will be forthwith notified and allowed three days to remove to a distance of 25 miles from Memphis.” He wrote to Grant that he maintained a good hostage base so that he could expel “from the comforts of Memphis” families whose relatives were involved in guerilla activity. Grant made no objection. Indeed, Sherman added: “We cannot change the hearts of those people of the South, but we can make war so terrible that they will realize the fact that, however brave and gallant and devoted to their country, still they are mortal and should exhaust all peaceful remedies before they fly to war” (Walters 1948, 463).

In October, he began reprisal attacks against homes and plantations, carrying out burning and destruction of houses, barns, and fields for each attack on any Union supply boat. He eventually began driving so-called secessionist families from Memphis: that is, families whose men were fighting for the Confederate cause. Private property became meaningless as confiscations took place regularly. “The people at large,” he wrote in October 1862, “should be made to feel that in the existence of a strong Government, capable of protecting as well as destroying, they have a real interest” (Walters 1948, 463–65).

We have here as succinct a story as one may well imagine. At the moment when Pope, Lincoln, and Lieber were codifying a new war of aggressiveness toward civilians, Sherman was independently fashioning a new kind of modern warfare against civilians at Memphis. As historian John Bennett Walters (1948) pointed out, Memphis was the experiment station for everything to come. Sherman departed Memphis as a major-general leading troops in Grant’s operations against Vicksburg. In May 1863, he fell on Jackson, Mississippi, in a concentrated and brutal reprise of the “techniques” he had developed in Memphis, burning as much of the city as he could. He then treated

Meridian and other towns to the same fate. By the time he reached Atlanta, bombing it, burning it, driving the population from it, his army was well practiced.

Sherman began his famous March to the Sea in late 1864, his army primed for destruction. Marching through Georgia to Savannah, he seemed at the same time an avenging angel and a commander who had lost control. In front of Savannah, he wrote to the Confederate commander, demanding surrender and adding: "Should you entertain the proposition [of surrender], I am prepared to grant liberal terms to the inhabitants and garrison; but should I be forced to resort to assault, or the slower and surer process of starvation, I shall then feel justified in resorting to the harshest measures, and shall make little effort to restrain my army—burning to avenge the national wrong which they attach to Savannah and other large cities which have been so prominent in dragging our country into civil war." (Sherman to William J. Hardee, December 17, 1864, printed in U.S. War Department 1893, 737). Modern accounts of the campaign usually mention the freeing of slaves as the Union army moved southeastward, but the African American population suffered a wide variety of tribulations, including widespread rape of women and girls, whom Sherman's troops seem to have singled out for rape. In the majority of reported cases of rape at this time, the victims were black.<sup>10</sup>

Moving toward South Carolina, the home of secessionism, Sherman received advice from General Halleck, who suggested burning and salting the ground of Charleston. Sherman replied: "The truth is the whole army is burning with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance upon South Carolina. I almost tremble at her fate, but feel that she deserves all that seems in store for her." Throughout this period, Sherman's use of the word *extermination* was frequent and exuberant (Walters 1948, 447–61; DiLorenzo 2002, 171–99).

Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, and other participants wrote memoirs that downplayed the sheer brutality of their policies and attempted to justify the new brand of warfare against noncombatants, usually arguing that the victims had brought the war on themselves and hence deserved what they got. Some historians likewise have justified the horrifying violations of accepted norms by saying that the preservation of the Union necessitated any and all measures to bring the country back together or, more recently, that Sherman and his friends were crusaders in the cause of freedom and understandably enthusiastic. Or that this fratricidal war brought out the worst on both sides. Some biographers, such as Lloyd Lewis in the 1930s, have passed the whole thing off as extended chicken stealing. Some of Sherman's biographers have claimed that the extreme measures of his policies stemmed from his being both warrior and "prophet" (Michael Fellman [1995]) or a "Fighting Prophet" (Lewis [1932]).

Now, in the light of these justifications, we might ask: Are these elements of war against civilians simply a concomitant to nineteenth- and twentieth-century

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10. See Lowry 1994, which includes a chapter on rape. See, as a typical example, *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, Series 1, vol. 15, p. 373, for a case of the mass rape of slave women by Union troops. Patrick Alliot has done much work compiling reports from the *Official Records* and other sources; see his Web site "Civil War Crimes" at <http://hometown.aol.com/cwrapes/>.

war? Is large-scale warfare simply productive of a generalized brutality of this sort? Along with a number of recent historians of Civil War brutality (see Glatthaar 1985; Linderman 1987; Royster 1993), I would answer in the negative. One might envision many permutations of generalized “brutality” without hitting upon anything like the demographic destruction that Sherman embraced. His perceptions and actions were specific and indeed innovative in the sense of bringing together disparate elements to create a synthesis. He had come to hate Southerners as a people and to associate them in some way, it seems, with his own failures. His solution was not just similar to the worst of twentieth-century brutalities: it was the blueprint for those brutalities. His brother John Sherman and undoubtedly others, including Lincoln himself, helped bring about the transformation from suicidal failure to boasting, pride-hating, punisher of the South. John Sherman wrote to his brother in August 1862, just as the general was assembling his thoughts on countercivilian warfare: “If we can’t depend on the loyalty of the white men of the South, I would give the land to the blacks or colonize a new set,” meaning Northern or foreign whites. Indeed, over and over, from 1862 to 1865, William Tecumseh Sherman repeated in various ways his plans to “dispossess them [Southern whites] and put our friends in their place,” to resettle Northern whites on Southern lands or to parcel out some parts of the South to be completely black, the slaves essentially to be handed the property of their former masters and remain to themselves, where they had been “colonized.” For this purpose, he envisioned the lower Mississippi Valley (Fellman 1995, 167).

In his vast, almost demographic outlook, Sherman seems much less like a “fighting prophet” or a mere cruel warrior than a precise model for Erich Ludendorff, with his geopolitical plans for the German East after 1915, or for Hitler, with his *Lebensraum* schemes, or for Stalin, with his vast cleansing of “traitorous” peoples, combining forced labor and forced migration across the Soviet Empire. Indeed, Sherman’s wholesale adoption of the concept of collective guilt is quite comparable to Hitler’s and Stalin’s ideas on the subject.<sup>11</sup> The brutalities of the Union armies from 1862 to 1865 are no more defensible than Stalin’s ethnic cleansing of the Crimean Tatars after 1945 or the Turkish slaughter of Armenians in 1915. And, as I intend to show, Sherman’s way of war was a direct ancestor of such defining events in the twentieth century.

## Philip Henry Sheridan

Philip Henry Sheridan was born in 1831 to Irish immigrants in New York and was raised in Ohio. He attended West Point, graduating near the bottom of his class in 1853, and served in the West. His first Civil War combat came in Missouri in 1861, and within six months of fighting he had been promoted from captain to major

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11. On Ludendorff’s Sherman-like plans, see Liulevicius 2000. On some of the “cleansings” carried out by Stalin, the best short introduction is still Conquest 1991; more details are found in Vardy and Tooley 2003. On Hitler, the sources are massive; for a clear, short introduction, see Haffner 1983, 78–95.

general. He was well known to both Grant and Sherman, and Grant brought him along to the eastern theater in 1864, putting him in charge of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac. After Sheridan directed much action with this army, Grant appointed him to command the Army of the Shenandoah in the fertile Valley of Virginia.

This breadbasket of the Confederacy also served as a secondary avenue to Washington, D.C., and the Confederates had used it accordingly. The last of their threats from the valley came in 1864, when Jubal Early led an army northwest to raid areas west of Washington, menacing the capital itself. Sheridan's job was to counter this threat, and he did so with vigor and aggressiveness. Defeating Early at Winchester and Fisher's Hill, Sheridan then delivered a resounding victory over him and his Confederates at the Battle of Cedar Creek on October 19, 1864 (Gallagher 1991). Long before the battle, Sheridan had begun to act on his specific instructions from Grant to make the valley a "barren waste." He reported to Grant on October 7: "I have destroyed over 2,000 barns filled with wheat, hay, farming implements; over seventy mills filled with flour and wheat; have driven in front of the army over 4,000 head of stock; and have killed and issued to the troops not less than 3,000 sheep. . . . [T]he Valley, from Winchester up to Staunton, ninety two miles, will have little in it for man or beast" (qtd. in Janda 1995, 17).

Local Virginians remembered the episode simply as "the burning." Barns, houses, and implements went up in smoke that filled the valley's September and October skies. Some historians have commented that compared to the disorganized, slovenly destruction by Sherman's soldiers in the March to the Sea, Sheridan's demolition of the valley was a model of destructive efficiency. As Sheridan described it, "If a crow wants to fly down the Shenandoah, he must carry his provisions with him."<sup>12</sup>

There is no doubt that Southern soldiers also carried out some outrages during the War Between the States. Southern armies or raiders invaded the North numerous times during the war, and in spite of the well-known precautions by Lee and others, Southerners could have been no more immune to the deleterious moral and physical effects of war than Northerners. Confederate troops sometimes did take food from farms (Hunsecker 1924). In the single case of its kind carried out by Confederates, the Confederate army burned the city of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, in reprisal for an earlier burning by Union units (Smith 1991). But Southerners had many fewer opportunities to carry out such outrages: most of the war was fought in Southern territory. Moreover, the present study has to do with the continuity of military behavior and total-war attitudes, and Southern soldiers and officers had little to do with the indoctrination of the U.S. Army in the years after the war or with the continued shaping of "the American way of war."

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12. For the full story, see Heatwole 1998.

## Transmission of Total-War Ideas

The total-war ideas implemented during the War Between the States were thereafter transferred in space and time by many pipelines. There was much communication between European and American armies in the nineteenth century, including mutual attendance at other countries' academies of war. European observers were on hand for nearly every major operation of the War Between the States. After the war, U.S. officers were present to observe the Franco-Prussian War (the final war of the three wars for German unification) in 1870–71. Indeed, Phil Sheridan himself was an observer at a number of battles in this war and gave some famous advice to the Prussian prime minister, Otto von Bismarck: “The proper strategy consists in inflicting as telling blows as possible on the enemy's army, and then causing the inhabitants so much suffering that they must long for peace, and force the government to demand it. The people must be left with nothing but their eyes to weep with over the war.”<sup>13</sup> With Sheridan was James Forsyth (1836–1906), his former chief of staff and future subordinate in the Indian wars. Years later Colonel Forsyth would command the troops at the “battle” of Wounded Knee.

### *Slaughtering Native Americans*

It was indeed Sherman and Sheridan, along with their former commander, Grant, who carried out the next great mission of the U.S. Army after 1865: the “pacification” of the American Indians from 1865 to 1891. Sherman succeeded Grant as commanding general of the U.S. Army in 1869, and Sheridan followed Sherman from 1883 to 1888, having commanded forces in many of the districts involved in the Indian wars. Many of the army units that served in the West were composed in part of Civil War veterans. Not surprisingly, the much-vaunted cavalry units brought to the Indian wars the same tendency to place women and children at the center of conflict, to starve the populace, and to disregard accepted rules of warfare—and with even more inhuman cruelty. Subsidizing the killing of buffalo herds by providing “security,” compliments of the public Treasury, the U.S. Army helped to wipe out the food source of thousands. The Indians fought back, to be sure, but many of the famous “battles” from Sand Creek in 1864 to Wounded Knee in 1890 were in fact massacres in which women, children, and the elderly made up the bulk of the victims.<sup>14</sup>

The “battle” of Wounded Knee is in global terms a small episode of deceit and butchery, but from the perspective of the present study it plays a disproportionate role in the history of the idea of total war. In brief, in the late 1880s a religious cult

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13. Qtd. in Pflanze 1990, 483.

14. See the suggestive short piece “The Feds versus the Indians” by Thomas J. DiLorenzo (1998). Janda (1995) provides a more extensive study of the connections stretching from 1860 to 1880.

growing among the Lakota (Sioux) Indians living on several adjacent “agencies” in South Dakota alarmed some local whites. A few thousand Lakota were involved in the cult, the so-called Ghost Dance religion; there was little to suggest that they had warlike intentions. Nevertheless, the army sent three thousand troops, including the Seventh Cavalry (Custer’s old command), under Colonel James Forsyth, Sheridan’s traveling partner in Europe twenty years earlier. In mid-December 1890, Indian policemen at the Standing Rock Reservation were sent to arrest the famous Sitting Bull, the victor at Little Big Horn many years earlier but now pardoned and living peacefully on the reservation. The policemen killed Sitting Bull and eight other Lakota men; the Ghost Dance followers now calculated the troops would begin a general crackdown, and one group of Lakota, afraid that their practice of religion would be denied, left their reservation to make their way—men, women, and children in a bitter week-long trek in the South Dakota winter—to the Pine Ridge Agency to find the well-known chief Red Cloud, who had promised food and horses. Nearing the agency on December 28, the band of a few hundred was found by the cavalry and forced to “surrender” and make camp on Wounded Knee Creek. On an adjacent hill, the troopers set up two Hotchkiss guns (small, rapid-fire field pieces with exploding rounds) while the Indians were interrogated. Forsyth arrived and took charge that evening, but the next day soldiers began to move among the Indians to disarm them, causing consternation and even some Ghost Dancing. When a rifle discharged, probably one being taken from a Lakota, the soldiers opened fire with rifles and the explosive shells of the Hotchkiss guns.

The Lakota were killed regardless of age or sex. Some were shot down from a distance. Some women and children were executed pointblank. The Indians fought back as best they could. Many had already been disarmed, and, in any case, between three and four hundred people, with a total of perhaps one hundred men of fighting age, were facing five hundred trained U.S. troopers with rapid-firing artillery and repeating rifles. Some of the Lakotas’ bodies were found up to three miles away—clearly, the troopers rode down and shot those trying to escape. Some of the Indians survived by escaping; most died. Twenty-five soldiers were killed and thirty-nine wounded. Most recent historians of the massacre assume that the bulk of the army casualties resulted from “friendly fire.” (See Brown 1970 and Coleman 2000 for fuller accounts of this event.)

General Nelson Miles immediately relieved Forsyth and branded the whole episode a reprehensible massacre. The well-connected Forsyth weathered an inquiry, however, and he was promoted three years later to brigadier general and given command of the Department of California, where he served until his promotion to major general and retirement.<sup>15</sup> Twenty of the soldiers were awarded Congressional Medals of Honor.

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15. Some material on Forsyth is on-line in connection with the James Forsyth Papers at the Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, at <http://webtext.library.yale.edu/xml2html/beinecke.FORSYTH.con.html#a2> (accessed May 2005).

We will do well to think of these “Indian wars” in the context of what historians call “the New Imperialism” by Western powers. This new style of political control of overseas empires emerged immediately in the wake of the American conflict and the wars of German Unification (1864–1871). It also coincided precisely with the chronological framework of the new, hard-shelled, and one might say social Darwinistic nationalism. Indeed, connections between imperial conquest and domestic militarism, cruelty, and authoritarianism constituted one of the central tenets of the anti-imperialist movement in Europe and the United States.<sup>16</sup> More than one historian has suggested some direct connections between overweening nationalism, social Darwinism (see, e.g., Koch 1984), and imperial cruelty in their classic histories of Europe during this period, which Carlton Hayes (1941) called “an age of materialism.”

### *Slaughtering Filipinos*

The United States dabbled with the New Imperialist model in several ways, but launched into the full-fledged version only as it started the Spanish-American War in 1898, fighting Spain in Cuba and the Philippines and in the latter case taking this vast area from Spain and imposing its rule on the local peoples. Many of the groups that had cooperated with the United States in driving out the Spaniards soon became dissatisfied with their new imperial masters, however, and these “insurgents” attempted to “revolt” against the Americans. In the ensuing “insurgency,” U.S. commanders (many of them veterans of American “Indian wars”) carried out a “dirty” war against Filipino forces, in the end losing approximately five thousand troops—a small number compared to the enormous death toll of more than two hundred thousand Filipinos. From the events of this imperial war, we may learn much about the cultural transmission of the total-war approach. Indeed, we can even locate a specific group of officers who were noted for waging war with brutality in general and for employing the tactics of Sherman and Sheridan in particular. These officers represent a crucial conduit through which the methods of American total war were transmitted to the future. But they were also innovative in ways that added to the fund of total-war technique, above all the techniques of manipulating large numbers of civilians during war and as a part of the war. Oddly, most of this group of officers were directly connected to the Wounded Knee massacre operations of 1890–91.

In the course of the U.S. war of conquest and “pacification” in the Philippines, General Jacob Smith emerged as one of the most aggressive commanders of that “splendid little war.” Smith’s military career actually spanned the period from the Civil War to the Spanish-American War: born in Ohio in 1840, he enlisted in the Union army in

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16. See, for example, Van Dyke [1898]]; Anti-Imperialist League 1899; and Washington 1904. On the Anti-Imperialist League, see Zwick 2001 and n.d.a. On the concentration camps, see Linn 1989, 25–37, 154–69.



northeastern Kentucky in 1861 and was soon commissioned as an officer. By 1862 a captain (a rank at which he would remain for the next twenty-seven years), Smith was disabled with a wound to the hip at the Battle of Shiloh and spent the rest of the war as a recruiting or mustering officer in Louisville, specializing in black recruits. In legal proceedings after the war, it came to light that Smith had been part of wide-ranging scheme to bilk black recruits out of the bigger part of their recruiting bonus. Smith later claimed that he had been gulled and that in any case the scheme was legal.

The U.S. Army apparently agreed and instead of cashiering Smith, it merely turned down his application for transfer to the position of (amazing to say) army judge advocate and sent him out West. Smith's legal and behavioral troubles continued, and he was often away from his posts on sick leave, but he managed to be present at the "battle" of Wounded Knee in 1890. Nearing sixty as the Spanish-American War started, Smith went to war in Cuba, received a bullet wound, was promoted to colonel, and was transferred to command troops in the Philippines. Serving in the Samar region, he applied liberally his experience in "fighting" Confederates and Indians, justifying every action by reason of military necessity. Clearly using models of Spanish population manipulation and the "reconcentration" camps the Spaniards had set up in Cuba to deal with their own "insurgents," Smith and his brother officers used concentration camps, destruction of food stores, torture, forced migration, and various other measures of "military necessity" to quell the movement of Filipinos who had assisted the United States in ousting Spain and now objected to being simply transferred to a different imperial overlord. Smith's orders and communiqués included famous phrases of brutality: "I want no prisoners, I wish you to kill and burn, the more you kill and burn the better it will please me. I want all persons killed who are capable of bearing arms (ten years of age and above) in actual hostilities against the United States." He emphasized what might be called the demographic function of his mission: "The interior of Samar must be made a howling wilderness," he declared in an echo of Sherman and common talk about the March to the Sea (qtd. in Gillon and Matson 2002, 864–65). Proud of his aggressiveness, Smith was outspoken about fighting Philippine "savages," commenting that fighting them was "worse than fighting Indians." The colonel's comments became the focus of Anti-Imperialist League denunciations of the war in the United States. The army's answer to the league's objections was to promote the career captain to brigadier general, from which position he continued his dirty war against Philippine insurgents until 1902, when he was caught lying during the court-martial of a subordinate who had executed some Filipino civilians. Smith himself was later court-martialed, not for war crimes, but for behavior prejudicial to good discipline. His sentence: verbal "admonishment." Shortly after being admonished, he retired. It should be pointed out that Smith's commander at Wounded Knee was James Forsyth.

Smith was not the only member of Phil Sheridan and James Forsyth's "lineage" to make his mark in the Philippines. J. Franklin Bell was born in 1859 and graduated from West Point in 1878 with a commission as lieutenant of cavalry, joining

the famous Seventh Cavalry only a short time after the Little Big Horn disaster. In December 1890, Bell, just promoted to first lieutenant, was away on leave and so missed the actual “battle” of Wounded Knee, but he took part in the mop-up operations at the Pine Ridge Agency in 1891. He was promoted a short time later to the position of chief of the Army War College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Four years later he rejoined his old Seventh Cavalry colonel, James Forsyth, now a general commanding the Department of the West, as adjutant on his staff. Bell, still a first lieutenant but temporarily in the position of an acting captain, had just been appointed to serve as judge advocate of the Department of Columbia when the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898. With Forsyth’s help, he organized a volunteer regiment, sailed to the Philippines, joined in fighting Philippine “*insurrectos*,” and won a Medal of Honor by charging seven insurgents with only a pistol. In March 1899, Bell was still a first lieutenant; by December, though, he had become a brigadier general of volunteers. In February 1901, he received his regular army commission as brigadier general.<sup>17</sup>

Active at first in Luzon as commander of the fourth brigade of the U. S. Second Division and later in Batangas, Bell used many of the same methods of his counterpart in Samar, Jacob Smith. He was so successful that in his two years of command one-sixth of the district population had died or been killed. Bell wielded virtually every tool of the modern total warfare: extensive destruction of property, a virtual pyromaniac war on food supplies and growing fields, reprisal shootings, the rounding up of unproven “suspects” and torturing them to gain evidence, “concentration” of the population in certain areas and cities, and the declaring of a basically free-shooting zone outside of those areas. Bell’s orders, however, perhaps literate and more revealing than Smith’s well-known tirades, provide parallel reference to the whole experience of the 1861–65 war: where Smith borrowed Sherman’s phrase of making Samar/Georgia–South Carolina a “howling wilderness,” Bell justified his brutal subjugation of his district with virtual quotations both from Sherman and from the Lieber Code. In an April 1901 dispatch, he elaborated on his policy of concentration for his subordinates. The people of northern Luzon, he wrote, “have never felt the full hardship of War and their professions of a desire for peace are merely words and do not come from a full realization of the discomforts and horrors of war that is waged in earnest and with full vigor. It is confidentially believed that if the people realize what war is, they will exert themselves to stop the system of aid and contributions to the insurgents by the non-combatants and thus bring hostilities to a close” (qtd. in May 1991, 246).

Like his distinguished predecessors and his contemporary “Howling” Jacob Smith, Bell was not charged with war crimes, but was instead promoted. He went

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17. Much material on Bell is available on-line at the Arlington National Cemetery Web site, including his Medal of Honor citation, his family background, and his military record: <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/jfbell.htm> (accessed July 10, 2006).

on to serve as army chief of staff from 1906 to 1910 and was commander of the Department of the East in 1919 when he died.

Another member of this “club” of total-war evangelists was not at Wounded Knee, but he had been engaged in the campaigns against Geronimo’s Apaches four years before Wounded Knee. He certainly proved himself able to apply the lessons of Wounded Knee in the Philippines. General Leonard Wood directed the Battle of Bud Dajo, today more often called the Moro Crater Massacre, an operation that seems to have been patterned on Forsyth’s great victory. Wood had started out as an army doctor, receiving a Congressional Medal of Honor in fighting against Apaches. He later served as personal physician for both Grover Cleveland and William McKinley. With Theodore Roosevelt, Wood helped form and lead the “Rough Riders” in the Spanish-American War, no doubt transferring the attitudes and skills learned as a fighting doctor in the Apache wars. After a stint as military governor of Cuba, he was sent to serve in the Philippines and was eventually appointed governor of Moro Province in 1902. Among the first U.S. measures was the imposition of strict centralized government over the remotest reaches of the area and, in particular, the levying of a new head tax (a common measure among European conquerors, with the side effect of forcing at least some locals to provide labor for money to pay the new taxes). To tell the truth, Wood did not care much for his charges in the first place. He especially despised the feuds, human traffic, and other customs of the Moro world. The people were also Muslim—this was the U.S. Empire’s first encounter with the Islamic world. Armed resistance began almost immediately, and Wood held it in contempt, calling those who resisted his measures “a collection of pirates and highwaymen” (Bacevich 2006).

In late 1905, a small group of a few hundred Moros who were trying to escape the taxation and repression that accompanied the U.S. war against them started filtering up into the mountains to take refuge in a dormant volcano crater called Jolo. Soon between six hundred and one thousand Moro men, women, and children were resisting American taxes there. Wood considered this action a particular outrage and so mounted an attack. In March 1906, he was able to surround the crater with more than a thousand troops and the artillery they had manhandled into the mountains. Opening fire on the Moros huddling in the crater, the Americans continued firing until no more targets remained alive. Sixteen members of the U.S. force (Americans or their Philippine scouts) were wounded. All the Moros were killed: men, women, and children.

News of the “battle” leaked to the press, as did a contraband and gruesome photograph of Moro corpses. The “Howling” Jacob Smith affair had come to light several years earlier. Now the Anti-Imperialist League and its allies renewed their attack on the brutal U.S. military posture in the Philippines. Yet President Theodore Roosevelt countered by calling the “battle” a “brilliant feat of arms” that had been essential in “holding up the honor of the flag.” The majority of U.S. press sources seems to have accepted the president’s spin (see Zwick n.d.b).

Younger Wounded Knee heroes also made their mark in the Spanish-American War and carried the traditions of Sherman and Sheridan onward. Selah Reeve Hobbie Tompkins survived Wounded Knee, fought in Cuba, and married the daughter of a staff officer of General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau, the inventor of reconcentration camps just a year or two earlier. Tompkins was in the Philippines for two tours, helping implement Weyler’s Cuban system of camps there (Carroll 1984).<sup>18</sup> John Pershing served against Geronimo, against the Sioux in the Wounded Knee aftermath, and repeatedly as a hard-charging commander against the Moros. Dozens of other relatively low-level American officers—many of them participants in the “battle” of Wounded Knee—tied together neatly many of the facets of the modern brutalization of warfare: invasion and “pacification,” concentration camps, brutal warfare against partisans, and more.

### Everyone Is Fair Game

Admittedly, on the sharp edges of empire, civilians could be redefined as fair objects of violence even if they did not engage in the explicit guerilla behavior proscribed by international agreement. Social Darwinist modes of thinking tended to dehumanize individuals in any event. Yet at the end of the nineteenth century, the imperial process made it easy to interpret the new international rules of warfare in such a way that enemy civilian populations were defined as being outside the rules of civilized warfare, as refractory and hidden “enemies”—as *guerillas*, to use Sherman’s term.

All of the new international rules of warfare arising in the wake of the the Lieber Code defined combatants strictly as those in uniform.<sup>19</sup> By the same definitional logic, persons in civilian clothing who committed acts of war (ambush, sabotage, spying) were risking immediate execution because this behavior was inimical to the agreed-on system of European warfare. The 1899 Hague Convention regulations on land warfare were explicit: irregular fighters could not be identified clearly on the battlefield as enemy troops and hence might be on either side, forcing uniformed soldiers to be more on guard and more trigger-happy when facing civilians. The irregular partisans, or guerillas, “hid” in the civilian population, making the population that “harbored” them guilty of aiding secret enemies. Soldiers had no way to ferret out irregular fighters or even to identify them, and because these fighters had set aside the rules of “civilized warfare” by nonsanctioned fighting, the armies faced with such uncivilized behavior outside the law had no choice but to fight back with uncivilized behavior

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18. See also Carroll’s useful short entry “Tompkins, Selah Reeve Hobbie” in *The Handbook of Texas Online*, at <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/TT/fto37.html> (accessed July 13, 2006).

19. The Hague Convention annex entitled “Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land” included among its first regulations that combatants must “have a fixed distinctive emblem recognizable at a distance” and would “carry arms openly.” Hague Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague II), signed July 29, 1899, entry into force September 4, 1900.

outside the law. Hence, if a region produced insurgents or guerillas, then the civilian population harboring and aiding those insurgents was fair game for reprisal, removal, and other means of control.<sup>20</sup>

This line of reasoning is not new to the twentieth century. Irregular tactics had emerged occasionally in eighteenth-century warfare, and the French army had faced well-coordinated Spanish guerillas during the Peninsular War after 1808.<sup>21</sup> The French sometimes responded in the ways depicted in Goya's famous series of paintings about the war, in particular in the shocking image *The Execution of the Rebels 3rd May, 1808*. At the end of the nineteenth century, virtually at the moment of heightened hopes of "civilizing" warfare's cruelties toward civilian populations, European armies on imperial frontiers—as we have seen—came to conclusions much to the disadvantage of civilians in wartime. Indeed, the imperialists were armed with definitions that multiplied the ways in which a population could put itself outside the rules of warfare and therefore in a sense could "deserve" the consequences. The new definitions also multiplied the methods that could be used to control, police, and punish such large numbers of refractory enemy civilians.<sup>22</sup> Legal scholar Burrus Carnahan, generally favorable to the rules that Lieber compiled for Lincoln, has described an important facet of this general phenomenon: "Adoption of the Lieber Code by Prussia in 1870 has been hailed as one of the early triumphs of the code as a restraint on wartime behavior. By 1902, however, Lieber's principle of military necessity had evolved into the doctrine of *Kriegsraison*, which permitted the German army to violate many of the laws and customs of war on the basis of military necessity" (1998, 218). Confederate secretary of war James Seddon had essentially predicted this kind of shift at the time of the issuance of the Lieber Code, commenting, "They cannot frame mischief into a code or make an instituted system of rules embodying the spirit of mischief under the name of a military necessity" (qtd. in Carnahan 1998, 218). But they could indeed.

## World War I

By the time of World War I, all armies—not just the German and U.S. establishments—had learned to use the rules against civilians. The Russian armies that surprised the Germans by bursting into East Prussia a few weeks into the war carried on with brutality, targeting civilian housing in particular, burning and looting on a wide scale, and killing civilians, thousands in the end. Probably most of those killed were regarded as "spies" or perceived as giving other nonuniformed help to their country's army, thereby making themselves prime targets in terms of the Lieber Code. At the same

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20. See the perceptive essay "The Social Function of War: Observations and Notes" by Robert E. Park (1941).

21. For a primary account of fighting guerillas, see the excellent memoir by Heinrich von Brandt (1999).

22. A good review of the U.S. approach to the question is Gates 1983.

time and more famously, the German armies that invaded Belgium and France in August 1914 seemed so casual about applying terror and reprisal as the remedy for civilian resistance that historians have not yet decided whether the policy of terror or *Schrecklichkeit* trickled down from above or rose up from below. Here the water is muddied somewhat because of the well-known piece of British propaganda called the Bryce Report issued in 1915, a compendium of German atrocities in Belgium. Much of the Bryce Report seems to have been fabricated, but some historians are now reexamining German violence against civilians in Belgium. One way or the other, more than six thousand Belgian civilians were killed by the Germans in roughly the same weeks that Germans equaling approximately the same number were being killed by the Russians. The property damage in Belgium, in the end, was less than that in East Prussia. The Germans burned almost sixteen thousand houses and buildings, almost all during the first month of the war, whereas the Russians destroyed some forty-two thousand buildings in East Prussia and damaged many more. Still, the Germans carried out the most senseless property crime of the war when they systematically burned parts of the Belgian city of Louvain (Leuven), including one of the great libraries of Europe, that of the University of Louvain (see Kossmann 1978 and Asprey 1991).<sup>23</sup>

In both Belgium and East Prussia, refugees fled from the approaching armies and from their depredations. More than a million people fled from Belgium to Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands. A majority returned after German guarantees of safety, but some 300,000 Belgian refugees remained abroad. In East Prussia, two Russian invasions early in the war sent some 870,000 Germans (out of a population of 2 million) fleeing from the invaders. All these refugees were housed elsewhere in Germany, but property destruction was so great that for years most had no place to live if they did return. Before the Russians were pushed out of German territory, they sent some 11,000 German civilians (predominantly women, children, and elderly men) to Siberia (Pope and Wheal 1995, 65).<sup>24</sup> Civilians suffered everywhere in the war.

From the placing of enemy populations outside the law to the cleansing or killing of groups within one's own borders (termed *democide* by R. J. Rummel [1994]) is a very short step. If a segment of one's own population or a particular region has likely connections (perhaps ethnic but not necessarily) with a regularly organized enemy army, then redefining this group as an enemy population is still less difficult. If partisan fighting—or merely the threat or possibility of it—is involved in any way, then this enemy population “within” can be set outside the bounds of law. All measures taken against them, even “terror,” seem justified because the winning or losing of the war might depend on these measures.<sup>25</sup>

23. Significant studies of the issue of German atrocities are in Wilson 1979 and Horne and Kramer 2001.

24. The East Prussian figure comes from an article by a German official who had been involved in the administrative provision of food and shelter for the East Prussian refugees (*Landesrat Meyer* 1928, 120).

25. Horne and Kramer discuss the “*franc tireur*,” or irregular, issue intensively for the German case (2001, 94–174).

## Conclusion

In the end, the connections between the warfare of Lincoln, Sherman, and Sheridan and the rise of total warfare attitudes are many and complex. The growth of the state in size and reach, its centralization, and its codification of war are integral parts of this story. At the same time, the story is surprisingly personal in nature. Members of the the institutions of the state—Sherman, Sheridan, Lincoln, Forsyth, and the others—made specific personal decisions and carried out individual activities that molded their world to be more accepting of brutality, and they prepared the way for more brutality to come. Only a few refinements were needed to put the final touches on the picture of the terror wars of the twentieth century. By the time of the World War I—with much extension in World War II—Sherman’s definition had become a commonplace: “All the people are now guerillas.” In potential or in actual fact, the modern state has found it impossible to operate without adopting this simple principle.

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