

The appendix, "Rules for the Guidance of Authors and Translators," prepared by Raymond A. Preston, is a commendable addition to the book.

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WAR AND HUMAN PROGRESS: AN ESSAY ON THE RISE OF INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION. By *John U. Nef*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1950. Pp. ix, 464. \$6.50.)

THIS is in many respects perhaps the most important book that has been published recently. Its intellectual integrity, its humane pathos, its analytical force are exceptional. The title gives only an inadequate indication of its contents: it is at the same time an economic, technological, and cultural history of the rise of industrial civilization. This history is focused on the interconnection between war and industrial and technological progress—a single-mindedness of purpose which breaks through the well-established framework of traditional historiography and opens new insights into the period. This reviewer is not competent to judge the details of Nef's economic and technological analysis and will therefore confine himself to the main thesis of the book and to certain aspects of its development. The limitation of this review is not meant to convey the impression that Nef discusses on the level of generalities, for the value of the book lies to a great extent in the detailed historical analysis, in the wealth of material from economic, social, and military history which supports the argument.

The book is divided into three parts: the "New Warfare and the Genesis of Industrialism" (ca. 1494 to 1640); "Limited Warfare and Humane Civilization" (ca. 1640 to 1740); "Industrialism and Total War" (ca. 1740 to 1950). Nef describes the military strategy and objectives characteristic for each period and analyzes their connection with the prevailing stage of the industrial and intellectual development. The tripartite division of the book indicates the principal argument: during the period ending around 1494, the progress of technology and science had led to the basic discoveries and inventions which made a widespread use of firearms possible. Together with the economic progress in material wealth, this created the basis for the large and violent wars of the sixteenth and of the first half of the seventeenth century. They were followed by a period of restraints on warfare, during which European civilization developed its most humane and promising traits. The Enlightenment and the French Revolution marked the turning point and the beginning of the third period: the same impetus that shattered absolutism, liberated the "common man," and extended the societal wealth to hitherto outcast groups of the population also unleashed the forces which generated total war and a new barbarism. No longer guided by the humane and transcendental values of Christian civilization, technological rationality led to the subordination of man to the ever-growing industrial apparatus, to mass manipulation and mechanization, and to the violent escape from economic, psychological, and emotional suffocation caused by this development.

The principal questions which Nef proposes to answer are: (1) What was the nature of the restraints which, during part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, limited the rapidly increasing potential of industrial society for total war and destruction? (2) Why did these restraints become increasingly less effective during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?

The restraints on war during the earlier period of industrial society were first, of course, its limited natural and human resources, which enforced restrictions in the scope and intensity of warfare. However, this was not the only factor, because (as Nef demonstrates by several examples from military history) limitations on the violence and objectives of warfare were also imposed by the military and political leaders even if not required by the prevailing scarcity. Nef finds these restraints in the "improvements of manners, customs, and laws," in the "growth in the influence of rational thought upon politics" (pp. 250-51); a strong drive for the pursuit of delight and beauty rather than efficiency and abundance; and the Christian faith in the transcending value of man.

It is easy to point up the weakness of this argument. The cultural, artistic, and religious tendencies enumerated by Nef have always been compatible with the practice of utmost violence against enemies, outcasts or outsiders; the low development of techniques and resources rather than a more humane social attitude may have been responsible for the greater effectiveness of cultural and religious restraints during certain historical periods. Throughout Nef's book there is a trend to glorify past stages of Western civilization and to minimize the extent to which the underlying population, the weak and the heretic, has always remained untouched by the beneficial and alleviating aspects of Christian culture. However, Nef's interpretation proves valid in so far as it enables him to demonstrate the dialectic of progress: how the very same process which created the preconditions for a civilization without scarcity and repression came to refine and perpetuate—eventually by total war—scarcity and repression.

This demonstration provides the answer to the second question raised above: Why did the restraints of Western civilization become increasingly less effective during its later period? The problem is that of the relation between industrial-technological progress and war and destruction. Nef revises Sombart's thesis that modern war played a prominent part in the rise of modern capitalism and capitalist prosperity. Although it is true that war promoted large-scale industry and machinery, it is equally true that it retarded the progress of industrial prosperity, and that the latter made its greatest strides in regions which were saved the ravages of unlimited warfare (for example, Elizabethan England; the United States). On the other hand, industrial-technological progress, in the societal framework within which it has developed especially since the second half of the nineteenth century, engenders in itself total war and the destruction of its own goal: abundance and a better life. Directed toward ever more quantitative production of commodities under the incentive of profit and toward ever greater efficiency, industrial society began to lose sight of all other goals and to transform

man as well as nature into efficient and exploitable material. Nef discusses the principal aspects of this transformation. First the extension of military service to all able-bodied citizens, and the simultaneous glorification of the soldier. In the period preceding the French Revolution, military service was mainly confined to the "dregs" of society, to mercenaries and brutally conscripted subjects. Paradoxically, the proclamation of liberty and equality of all men by the French Revolution was first realized in the creation of the large citizen armies of the Revolution: "war proved the sphere to which it was easiest to admit all men on something approaching equal terms." The "most immediate tangible result" of Danton's and Robespierre's intercession on behalf of the common man was "to put him into the army" (pp. 310, 311). Beginning with the Napoleonic wars of conquest, the liberated citizen was taught to see the most honorable fulfillment of his purpose in war service—a glorification which became the more absurd the more modern wars required machines and technical skills rather than human activity. Later, the ability to destroy enemy manpower, resources, and cities by remote control eliminated to a great extent the horror of personal killing and weakened the former inhibitions against unlimited warfare. Secondly, training and education for total war were vastly facilitated by "changes in the organs of publicity and in the purposes they were coming to serve" (p. 386). From a means for disseminating authentic information and enlightenment, they were turned into an instrument for advertising and indoctrinating in the interests of the ruling groups. Striving to win and retain an ever larger audience, they engaged in the increasingly successful "search of a common denominator of inanity" which tends to obliterate all distinction between true and false, right and wrong, good and evil. Promoted by the techniques of mass production and communication, this led to a state in which the "common man" is no longer capable of deciding what is his own rational interest. Thirdly, mass production of commodities manipulated by particular national and group interests, and the subordination of all values to the pragmatic norms of efficiency and success, absorbed the utopian elements of creative imagination which had kept alive the promise of happiness, delight, and satisfaction, and made "mere activity" the "justification for existence." Men "contented themselves with the fact that, at any rate, they were marching," and in doing so, they "moved in step with the machines that have come to govern the industrialized economy" (pp. 389 f.). "As growing youths were confronted rudely with the consequences of carrying the personality of Little Lord Fauntleroy into practical life, there was increasing disposition to regard every kind of fancy as an evidence of immaturity, of lack of the crude roughness or the matter-of-fact outlook which were mistaken for maturity" (p. 392). Trained to suspect their dreams and fancies, people became submissive to their victimization and resignation. But they also became "ripe for the uneasy fear, the anger, and hatred which boredom and uninteresting labor breed and which lead to war" (p. 401).

Nef puts the blame too much on the shift of emphasis from quality to quan-

tity, from craftsmanship to the mass production of material wealth. Is not the latter a precondition for the universal realization of the values of delight, beauty, and truth which he praises so highly? But Nef believes that the forces that make for total war, although inherent in the specific development of modern industrial society, can be dominated by the collective will and rational effort of man. For the attainment of this goal, he has little faith in any of the national or international power groups. Not in the politicians and the institutions they represent: "Just as the modern purveyors of news and entertainment make a caricature of the common human being and provide fare for this caricature, so modern states represent only caricatures of the public and the public opinion they are supposed to embody in their politics" (p. 414). Not in organized labor, whose leadership has long since become an integral part of the system of manipulation and profitable performance. Nef questions the very right of the present forms of civilization to defend their existence by means of war: "The only justification for war is the defense of a culture worth defending, and the states of the modern world have less and less to defend beyond their material comforts, in spite of the claims of some to represent fresh concepts of civilization" (p. 412). (This statement is deprived of its full force by Nef's overemphasis on transcendental values. "Material comforts" may well be worth defending unless they are repressive and unjust in themselves, and are sustained by the poverty and misery of whole populations.) He sees the only hope in the "growth of a common community of understanding," not confined to the "Western peoples," but including the "best in the human being, wherever that best may be found, whether it be in Chicago, in Paris, in Mexico, in Moscow, on the steppes, or in some far off African village" (pp. 414, 415). Nef has no concrete suggestion as to how such a community could be established. He relies, as so often throughout his analysis, on a turn of the human mind from the predominance of "the special, the immediate, the practical, the national" to the higher values of the good, the true, and the beautiful. Again, it need hardly be pointed out how evasive this answer is. But if none of the organized powers, institutions, and policies of our time provides a solution, then the uncompromising demonstration of their failure and their guilt itself contributes to a future solution.

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GLEICHGEWICHT ODER HEGEMONIE: BETRACHTUNGEN ÜBER  
EIN GRUNDPROBLEM DER NEUEREN STAATENGESCHICHTE. By  
*Ludwig Dehio*. (Krefeld: Scherpe Verlag. 1948. DM. 8,40.)

"*Wie es denn gekommen ist,*" rather than "*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist,*" is an inevitable postwar question. It is almost equally inevitable that the answer will be accepted more as a document of contemporary intellectual history than as history in the strict sense of the word.

Ludwig Dehio, the archivist at Marburg and editor of the revived *Historische*