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SYMPOSIUM – REVIEW/3

WAR, STATES, AND CITIZENSHIP
A comment on Sidney Tarrow's "War, States, and Contention"

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In an ambitious attempt to complete the work Charles Tilly had left undone, Sidney Tarrow sets out to connect contention to war and state-building. His highly welcome attempt connects with the big questions raised by the great master – 'Still a teacher!' as Sid writes in his dedication. There is much to say about this most stimulating book, but in this short comment, I shall discuss only one of the 'five intersecting questions' examined by Sid: the question of the relationship between war-making and state-building with citizens' rights and contention.

Indeed, as set out by Charles Tilly, one of the key aspects of the intimate relationship between war and state-making concerns the question of citizenship. In Tilly's scheme, war required the extraction of large amounts of resources from the population – financial resources (taxes), but also, since the French Revolution's 'levée en masse', human resources (conscription). The increasing demands of the state- and war-makers in terms of resources were not, however, fulfilled as a matter of course. They met with the resistance of the population, which the state- and war-makers, in turn, tried to break with a combination of repression and concessions. As far as the latter are concerned, the state-makers had to engage in negotiations with their populations, as a result of which, simultaneously with the centralization of political power and the creation of the state apparatus, a new relationship between the state and an increasing part of

the population developed – citizenship. As the states imposed increasing obligations on their populations, the latter became increasingly integrated into the politics of the state. The famous slogan of the American revolution of the 18th century – 'no taxation without representation' – serves to illustrate this exchange. As Ferguson (2001: 83) has observed, linking taxation to representation became the key for democratization. We might add nation-building to this process. To the extent that the state had to rely on the loyalty and cooperation of an ever growing part of its population, it was obliged to integrate it ever more into the imagined community of the nation and into the political process that binds this nation together. The concentration of power in the state, on the one hand, and the cultural and political integration of the population into the national community of solidarity and the democratic political process, on the other, constitute two contradictory trends, which we find intricately linked in the process of political modernization across Europe (Poggi 1990: 76). Giddens (1987: 202) has characterized the interplay between these two contradictory trends as *'dialectic of control'*.

In Sid's account, the aspect of *civil liberties* looms particularly large in the relationship between citizens and the state. As with Foucault (1977) or Giddens (1987), his state is above all a surveillance state that increasingly possesses the means to monitor and control its citizens in all walks of life. As Sid shows in detail, this aspect becomes particularly salient in times of war, when the state follows an 'emergency script' to control popular contention. The extension of surveillance and the omnipresence of the state change the relationship between its agents and the population: the state's hierarchical power (the power of the elite over civil society) and its infrastructural power (the power of the state to penetrate and centrally coordinate the activities of civil society through its own infrastructure) both serve to constrain civil liberties. Given the possibilities of modern technology, this danger becomes overwhelming in times of war.

But the state is not the only force that threatens the populations' civil liberties and Sid's account tends to give short shrift to the bottom-up threats to civil liberties linked to war. Thus, the end of a war often constitutes a critical juncture, where different options are available that may lead to very different outcomes in terms of civil liberties. In Tilly's optimistic account, at the end of the war, the populations of the belligerent states claim the rights that the war-making authorities had promised them during the war, with democratizing results. As Rüschemeyer et al (1992: 71) have observed, the outcome of the war can, however, have entirely different consequences, especially in the states that lost the war, or whose population, as in the case of Italy so aptly described by Sid in Chapter 4, did not really benefit from being on the winning side. The power vacuum at the end of a lost war or, as in Italy, at the end of a war that completely discredited the country's political elite, may open the door to contention which leads

to a new version of authoritarianism, again as was the case in Italy, but also in Russia at the end of World War I, and in Germany in 1933. Without the dissolution of the Russian army after the defeat against the German Reich the communists could never have imposed themselves in Russia (Pipes 1996). In Germany, the revanchism against the Treaty of Versailles and the humiliation imposed on Germany after its defeat in World War I constituted a central factor in the rise of National Socialism in the Weimar Republic. Another key factor for the rise of fascism both in Italy and Germany was yet another legacy of World War I – the presence of a large number of brutalized veterans who were neither capable nor willing to re-integrate into civil society. In both cases, they provided the troops for the private armies that militarized contentious politics in the aftermath of the war and that eventually led to the take-over of political power by fascist dictators.

For the more recent past, to which the bulk of Parts II and III are dedicated, Sid points to the decoupling between citizenship and the military. As armies become professional armies, and as fighting is increasingly subcontracted to private corporations that fight for profit and not for the defense of the homeland, the link between citizenship and the military becomes 'so thin as to be practically nonexistent' (p. 242). As we seem to return to the mercenary armies of the Ancien Régime, citizens are no longer involved in fighting. Except that they still have to pay for the military effort. As a matter of fact, as a result of the exchange between state-makers and an increasingly demanding population, not only the obligation to fight for the homeland, but also the obligation to pay for war had become more inclusive in the course of the development of the modern nation-state. The double drivers of war and democratization led to the introduction of increasingly progressive taxation. Thus, World War I was the first war financed in part by the rich (Steinmo 1993). But even in this respect, the burden is no longer that important. While the absolutist states Charles Tilly focused on did not do much except wage war, states have become increasingly civilized since the 19th century. It was above all their infrastructural functions – education, transportation, communication, energy provision – that grew in the 19th and early 20th century (Mann 1993: 380), while the mighty expansion of states after World War II has mainly been the result of the construction of the welfare state. As a result of this development, the share of defense in overall state expenditure declined rapidly to reach an OECD average of only 5.3 percent by the 1990s (Castles 1998: 103). What this implies is that war-making is no longer the central link between citizens and the state. This is especially the case in Western Europe, which has enjoyed an extended period of peace. It has not been the arena of war since World War II, and it has relied on protection by the US armed forces for most of its defense against imminent threats from abroad. To the extent that

Western European states have been involved in wars more recently, these wars have been out of sight and/or have not demanded great sacrifices from their populations. I do not have any detailed figures at hand, but I would assume that wars and matters of national defense have hardly been at the top of the West Europeans' concerns over the last decades.

Of course, Sid's story in Parts II and III of his book is above all an American story, i.e. the story of a country that has been at war for a much more extended period than Western Europe in the more recent past, and for which war has been an integral part of its foreign policy. There are, however, signs that in an age of what Sid calls 'composite wars' (p. 103), i.e. wars in which both non-state and state actors employ a variety of conventional and unconventional means, in which the laws of war are either ignored or twisted out of shape, and in which the distinction between transnational and domestic contention becomes blurred or is totally effaced, Western European citizens, too, are becoming increasingly concerned with security issues. Composite wars are less formal, they more frequently involve irregular combatants, and are more likely to drag on for years. Most importantly, I would like to suggest, they are no longer contained to particular world regions, far away from Europe, but their transnational consequences are omnipresent in Europe, too. Thus, Europe is flooded with the often traumatized refugees of wars that take place at its Southern borders or even in more distant places. The flood started with the Yugoslavia wars in the 1990s, and reached a new peak with the wars in Syria and in different parts of Africa. Desperate refugees try to cross the Mediterranean in makeshift boats, and are being rescued by European states. Thus, the Italian Operation Mare Nostrum, established by the Italian Government in October 2013 to tackle the dramatic increase of migratory flows had rescued no less than 150.000 refugees by the time it was replaced by the European operation Triton one year later. Moreover, Europe is becoming the site of contention by brutalized mercenaries returning from wars in other parts of the world, such as the Kouachi brothers – the two Islamist terrorists responsible for the attack on Charlie Hebdo. Last but not least, Europe is facing a 'composite' or 'hybrid' war at its borders in Ukraine (a case frequently alluded to in Sid's account), a 'combination of military and non-military instruments, choreographed to surprise, confuse and wear down an opponent' (The Economist, February 14, 2015), a war that does not speak its name.

As a result of these developments, civil liberties become threatened not only by increasing state surveillance, but also by contention from below. The violent attacks against journalists – Charlie Hebdo is only the most extreme and the most recent case – pose fundamental threats for the freedom of expression. Such terrorist attacks have given rise to counter-mobilization as is illustrated by the most impressive reaction by

the French population – almost 4 million people manifested their solidarity with Charlie Hebdo in a rally of national unity on January 11 2015 – as well as by the protest events that took place at the same time across Europe. These counter-mobilizations demonstrate the extent to which Europeans are vigilant when it comes to defending their civil liberties against fundamental attacks by illiberal movement actors. However, when it comes to the civil liberties of the refugees flooding into Europe, other parts of the European population prove to be just as illiberal as the terrorists who threaten the freedom of the press, even if (crucially) they do not use violence to make their point. I am referring here to the mobilization against immigrants by the radical populist right, which arguably constitutes the most massive contentious mobilization that has taken place across Western Europe over the last two decades. Large parts of the populations of the national containers that have been built as a result of war-making in Europe are not ready to include in their community of national solidarity newcomers whom they perceive as alien and undeserving. The paradoxical long-term consequence of the 'dialectic of control' is that those who have been included in the national container in the past as a result of their contribution to the defense of the nation-state are now facing a situation in which they can only save their own civil liberties (as well as their political and social rights) by extending them to people who are not part of their national community and whom they perceive as a threat to their own liberty.

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