not conflict. Finally, the fact is that many of the important spheres of activity have shifted to the provinces so that the national government can no longer pretend to be the sole actor. In fact, more often than not, it must negotiate its way into provincial domains through its phenomenal wealth vis-à-vis the provinces.

In this context, Mallory's work is an exceptional study of the resolution of constitutional conflict at a time when Ottawa politicians and public servants had little difficulty in convincing themselves of their role in the future of the nation. The West felt the brunt of these interventions and as the writer points out, that region has never forgotten or forgiven the eastern establishment for developing the hinterland in its own image. The book is written to give the reader a feeling for the challenge afforded by the growth of third parties. Their origins in the hinterland were alien to both Liberals and Conservatives. Neither party had a grasp of the significance of populism as the westerner's gut reaction to national policies. However, their arguments against Confederation were always advanced within existing institutions whose survival amazed observers. Mallory's weakness stems from sharing this fascination with Ottawa's survival. While he admits in a new forward that the legitimacy of the federal government has been severely challenged in the past, Mallory comments that "the emergency of some externally generated threat has persuaded Canadians that strong central authority over economic policy is essential to survival. The effectiveness of this role will present a challenge to the resources of political leadership in Canada." (pp. XVII-XVIII)

The past is no simpler than the present. To hope to solve the present crisis with yesterday's strategies and weapons is a false premise for a federal strategy. For those who would like to see the federal government move with determination and overrule Québec legislation, Mallory's book is no comfort. Disallowance has been applied against the West, not against Québec. Instead the Liberal governments since the thirties have bargained or argued in the courts for consensus. If one party does not want to bargain, then it is not at all clear what the federal government can do about it.

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Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, with a commentary by Bernard Brodie, Princeton University Press, 1976, pp. 717, $18.50 cloth.

Carl von Clausewitz's great treatise, *On War*, like other modern classics by such theorists as Adam Smith, Darwin and Marx, is a book often cited but

seldom read, even by specialists in the field of military history. The original works being adjudged difficult and the modern student being deluged by the new material that rolls off the presses every year, one prefers later writers' commentaries on the great seminal thinkers, pre-digested and interpreted. Often the original works *are* difficult, written or translated in a dated style and requiring considerable investment in time and energy to read. *On War* is a good example of this. The first edition appeared in 1832 after the author's death in November, 1831, from a heart attack precipitated by cholera. The second German edition, published in 1856, introduced changes into the text which obscured or misrepresented the meaning and which were retained in subsequent editions. The first English translation, by the British Colonel J.J. Graham in 1874, worked from the altered text, contained many obscurities and inaccuracies, and the second, by Professor O.J. Matthijs in 1943, although clearer, continued to be based on the altered German text rather than on the original.

To provide a more accurate and up-to-date translation of Clausewitz's great work in response to a growing interest in his writings, we now have the third English translation of *On War*. This impressive new edition was translated from the 1832 text by Peter Paret, Professor of History at Stanford University, and Michael Howard, Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, under the auspices of the Center of International Studies, Princeton University. Both men are experts in the field of nineteenth-century military history and are therefore well-qualified to interpret the ambiguities and obscurities in Clausewitz's writing while retaining the flavour of the original style and vocabulary. The result is a clear, readable text which encourages the reader to discover Clausewitz's ideas on war through the Prussian's own words. To clarify these ideas further, the third collaborator on this edition, Bernard Brodie, Professor of Political Science at the University of California at Los Angeles, has contributed a useful commentary to guide the reader through the text, book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter. Each collaborator has also written an introductory essay exploiting his respective field of expertise to comment on the origins, the impact and the continuing influence of *On War*.

In the opening essay, "The Genesis of *On War*," Professor Paret discusses Clausewitz's career, and the influences which caused him, after the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, to begin a collection of essays "which gradually coalesced into a comprehensive theory that sought to define universal, permanent elements in war on the basis of a realistic interpretation of the present and the past." It is Clausewitz, the realistic, pragmatic observer of war, rather than the dogmatic, systems-maker, that Paret stresses. Having encountered his first battlefield as a thirteen-year old ensign in the Prussian infantry, served under both Scharnhorst and Gneisenau in the age of Prussian military reforms after the disaster at Jena in 1806, transferred to the Russian army in 1812, and taken

part in the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815, when his corps of Prussians tied down Grouchy's force until the issue at Waterloo had been decided, Clausewitz wrote about war from first-hand knowledge, and the influence of the great Napoleon fills his pages.

Clausewitz's experience in war led him to three conclusions which were developed in *On War*. He rejected any single standard for fighting wars, since military institutions and the manner in which they were used were linked with the social, political and economic conditions of individual states. Clausewitz therefore also rejected the prevailing dogma that victory could be won by observing binding rules for warfare: each case had to be considered on its merits and the influence of chance could not be obviated by following the procedures laid down by the eighteenth-century strategists. Elasticity rather than dogma forms the pattern for success as Clausewitz describes the full range of possibilities on the battlefield. Finally, he began developing his idea that war was a political phenomenon and that everything that went into war should accord with war's political purpose. "Just as war and its institutions reflected their social environment, so every aspect of fighting should be suffused by its political impulse, whether this impulse was intense or moderate." Thus Clausewitz rejected the efforts of those, like Bülow and Jomini, who attempted to turn war into a predictive science, and instead sought a higher truth, stressing violence, political factors, and human intelligence, emotion, and will, as forces dominating the field of battle.

Although Clausewitz eschewed a rationalist (or systematic) approach to war, he was, as Paret points out, saved from "the anarchy of pure pragmatism" by his method which employed an interplay between observation (small details led to an understanding of large forces), historical interpretation (Scharnhorst taught him that military theory was dependent upon history), and German speculative philosophy (the search for absolute truth and the regulative idea). His method, as Rothfels pointed out in 1943, was coordination of philosophy with experience. Above all, Paret stresses that Clausewitz was interested in cutting to the core of reality about the phenomenon of war; and his method "transformed reality into analyzable form . . . ." Paret uses the development of the concept of friction — imponderable factors, such as ignorance, human error, bad weather, politics, which interfered with the effective application of force — as an example of Clausewitz's ability in this direction; through friction he rendered the important element of chance subject to theoretical analysis. Unlike his eighteenth-century predecessors, Clausewitz welcomed chance, believing that a genius could exploit it positively through initiative on the battlefield.

Also in line with his penchant for reality was Clausewitz's emphasis on violence as the essence of war. To overcome Rococo theory of bloodless conflict, he advocated extreme violence in waging war; yet he understood that extreme

violence was impossible because in the real world friction would ameliorate abstract violence. Hence he developed the dual nature of war in which history served to provide examples of graduations of violence. History is therefore a key to Clausewitz's intellectual system: history depicted reality and theory's role was to help one understand history.

Michael Howard examines the influence of Clausewitz to the present day and asserts that "later writers were to quarry ideas and phrases to suit the needs of their own theories and their own times." The elements that most impressed posterity were the intrinsic violence of war and the importance of chance; Clausewitz's other great principle, the necessity to subordinate war to political purposes, was neglected, partly, Howard claims, because Clausewitz died before making the revisions which would have emphasized it. The distorted view of *On War* gained acceptance throughout Europe but particularly in Germany before World War One. German strategic planning for war took little account of political factors and, in turn, politicians sought not to interfere with the military planners. The Schlieffen Plan, which turned a Balkan dispute into a world war, is an example of the primacy of military over political ends; but, after war had been declared, the supremacy of battle actuated all of the belligerent powers.

Between 1914 and 1918 the generals continued to be selective in their reading of Clausewitz. They ignored his teaching on the superiority of the defence to the offense, preferring his ideas on the importance of moral forces (which sent thousands of young French soldiers to death in the summer of 1914) and of destroying the enemy in battle (which justified millions of casualties in Flanders, the Somme and Verdun). Policy seemed to have lost its control over war. Hence, in the general tide of disillusionment following the war, Clausewitz's reputation suffered in the English-speaking world, particularly at the hands of Sir Basil Liddell Hart, whose criticisms Howard calls "distorted, inaccurate and unfair."

Howard treats Clausewitz's influence on World War II in one short paragraph, which is disappointing, since in a war of movement on a vast scale it would have been interesting to know his influence on the German Panzer generals, like Rommel and Guderian, and allied generals, like Montgomery, Eisenhower and Patton. Howard is more provocative, however, when it comes to the Korean war which he credits with leading to a revival of Clausewitzian studies since it forced the United States government to grapple with Clausewitzian problems: the relation between civilian and military power (Truman vs. MacArthur) and the conduct of a war for limited aims. Although Howard points to the primacy of political aims and limited war in the contemporary world, he does not explore the experience in Vietnam in the light of Clausewitz's teaching, although Clausewitz understood the principle of "escalation".

The purpose of Bernard Brodie's introductory essay, "The Continuing Relevance of *On War*," is to help the reader avoid misunderstanding the work. He warns of the real or imagined difficulties in reading *On War*, and asks whether, in the Nuclear Age, it is worth the trouble. It is, he answers, because "Clausewitz's work stands out among those very few older books which have presented profound and original insights that have *not* been adequately absorbed in later literature." Moreover, his stands alone as "the only truly great book on war." But any reader who expects formulae or axioms as guides to action will be disappointed: "Clausewitz, on the contrary invites his readers to ruminate with him on the complex nature of war, where any rule that admits of no exceptions is usually too obvious to be worth much discourse." Expect insights into the essence of war but prepare also to stop for reflection. It is with this challenge that Brodie invites the reader to begin *On War*.

Before his death Clausewitz had succeeded in revising to his satisfaction only the first chapter of Book One of the eight books that comprise *On War*. In 1827 he wrote that, "If an early death should terminate my work, what I have written so far would, of course only deserve to be called a shapeless mass of ideas. Being liable to endless misinterpretation it would be the target of much half-baked criticism . . . ." The present edition seeks to correct the misunderstandings and rescue Clausewitz's reputation from historians like Liddell Hart and Major-General J.F.C. Fuller, the latter of whom wrote in 1961 that Clausewitz "indirectly was largely responsible for the vast extension of unlimited warfare in the twentieth century." Although the new translation is crisp and clear, only the dedicated specialist will sit down to read *On War* from cover to cover. It *is* long, it *is* repetitious, and much of it *is* fragmentary and inchoate. Yet here is a book which one can dip into with great profit and return to again and again for the brilliant insights it offers into the nature of war. It is, in short, a book which no student of general or military history can ignore.

For *On War* is two things: it is a treatise on the phenomenon of war and a present-minded handbook prescribing the means for a state like Prussia to survive in an age of revolutionary warfare. The stark definition of war ("War is . . . an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.") and the repetition of the theme of violence and bloodshed was meant to overcome the lingering Enlightenment theories of the bloodless battlefield. "Kind-hearted people might of course think there was some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed, and might imagine that this is the true goal of the art of war. Pleasant as it sounds, it is a folly that must be exposed . . . ." Clausewitz reacts too against the eighteenth-century idea that war, like the rest of man's activities, is solely a product of man's reason. Rather, "If war is an act of force, the emotions cannot fail to be involved." Indeed, even the progress of civilization does not obviate "the impulse to destroy the enemy," a fact which improvement in weaponry substantiates. Having demolished the

Enlightenment belief in progress and civilization, Clausewitz asserts that in the act of war, there can be no logical limit to violence.

But Clausewitz is above all a realist. He states clearly that his absolute war of utmost violence, "a pure concept of war," is for purposes of argument only, an extreme belonging to the field of abstract thought. In practice, absolute war is mitigated by "the probabilities of real life."

> If we were to think purely in abstract terms, we should avoid every difficulty by the stroke of a pen and proclaim with inflexible logic that since the extreme must always be the goal, the greatest effort must always be exerted. Any such pronouncement would be an abstraction and would leave the real world quite unaffected.

Clausewitz thus denies the possibility of absolute military solutions to political problems in terms as applicable in the second half of the twentieth century, in Vietnam or the Middle East for instance, as when he wrote. In the real world, war should be subordinate to political policy: it should never be considered "as *something autonomous* but always as an *instrument of policy*," in the famous phrase, "a continuation of political activity by other means." This was the clear message that his nineteenth-century admirers chose to neglect and Clausewitz cannot be blamed for their action. Indeed, he understood that war is "a province of social life," and nineteenth-century ideas of conflict, Social Darwinism, and glorification of military values determined attitudes to war, not Clausewitz. He was used to justify and lend weight to ideas in existence and passages that did not accord with prevailing ideas were regretted or ignored. In fact, *On War* contains warnings against a light-hearted or irresponsible attitude to war: Clausewitz asserts that war is a deadly business and shows an appreciation for the dangers of the battlefield and suffering of combatants lacking in the general staffs of Europe prior to World War One. Of course, men like Schlieffen, Foch, and Wilson had never witnessed the horrors of total war as had Clausewitz.

Yet, by 1914 European society had altered drastically from Clausewitz's time. Democratic government, mass literacy, and surging nationalism placed great strain on his dictum that state policy should dominate war. Without popular involvement in war, political aims could dominate, statesmen could take decisions free from public opinion and the gap between reality and absolute war would be very wide. The Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars had gone a far way toward changing that state of affairs. Between 1914 and 1918, however, war became truly total and Clausewitz has the explanation: "The

more powerful and inspiring the motives for war . . . the closer war will approach its abstract concept . . . the more closely will the military aims and the political objects of war coincide, and the more military and less political will war appear to be." The Second World War, with strategic bombing of cities, extermination camps, unconditional surrender, and atomic bombings, furthered the trend. We should not, however, like Fuller, blame Clausewitz; rather, he helps us understand why war developed as it did. Furthermore, in the age of nuclear stalemate, he also helps us understand why wars, like the Korean and Vietnamese, were limited insofar as the generals were restrained from "winning" by political factors, political factors which, in turn, render absolute war (one hopes) more than ever an abstraction.

In defining the role of war vis-à-vis political policy and war as a social institution, a product of man's civilization, always with us, *On War* is not therefore a dead classic, but as relevant today as it was in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the experience of two world wars should cause twentieth century strategists to heed its lessons more than did their nineteenth-century predecessors: war is dangerous, each case must be approached on its own merits, and national policy must dominate military policy. The great issues that Clausewitz described with such brilliance are still with us; and because of nuclear weapons, his concept of pure war assumes a special significance. This attractive new edition, with its useful introductory and explanatory material, is therefore particularly welcome at this time. It should encourage the reader to read Clausewitz for himself rather than to depend upon the often distorted views of his interpreters.

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