

CIVIL WAR HISTORY

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The cover illustration of William T. Sherman is from Benjamin G. Smith (ed.), *The War with the South* (New York, 1862), 3:376.

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WAS THE CIVIL WAR A TOTAL WAR?

Mark E. Neely, Jr.

IN A RECENT ARTICLE, Charles Strozier, a Lincoln biographer and co-director of the Center on Violence and Human Survival, argues that the United States' demand for unconditional surrender in World War II, and ultimately the use of two atomic bombs on Japan, found antecedents in President Lincoln's surrender terms in the Civil War.

Precedent, it might be said, is everything in human affairs. [Franklin D.] Roosevelt's inventive reading of the surrender at Appomattox draws us back into that most curious of American events, the Civil War, as the crucible in which the doctrine of unconditional surrender was forged. In this first of modern wars, a new technological capacity to kill and destroy emerged, along with a strikingly new set of ideas about military strategy, the relationship between a fighting army and noncombatant civilians, and the criteria that determine when war is over. The latter are of enormous significance and relate directly to the brutality, length, and totality of twentieth-century warfare.

The crucial term here is not *unconditional surrender*, a phrase perhaps coined by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Fort Donelson early in 1862, but the idea of *totality* in war, a concept that comes from our own century. "It was Lincoln, Grant, and the Civil War that incorporated total war into modern experience," Strozier maintains. "There is a clear connection here between the emerging nation-state, a new type of deadly warfare, and an ending in which an enemy capitulates completely. To put it epigrammatically, the totality of the modern state seems to require unconditional surrender as a necessary correlative of its total wars. The American Civil War brought that into focus."¹

The assertion that the United States insisted on unconditional surrender in the Civil War can be quickly proven wrong. Grant's terms at Fort

¹ Charles Strozier, "The Tragedy of Unconditional Surrender," *Military History Quarterly* 2 (Spring 1990): 12, 14; Charles Strozier, *Unconditional Surrender and the Rhetoric of Total War: From Truman to Lincoln*, Center on Violence and Human Survival Occasional Paper Number 2 ([New York]: Center on Violence and Human Survival, 1987). See also James M. McPherson, *Lincoln and the Strategy of Unconditional Surrender* (Gettysburg, Pa.: Gettysburg College, 1984), 11-13, 23-24.

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Donelson were not those of Abraham Lincoln in Washington. As the war approached its conclusion, Lincoln on three occasions wrote his peace terms down on paper. In the first instance, instead of demanding unconditional surrender, he insisted on two conditions for surrender. On July 9, 1864, he told Horace Greeley, who was about to meet Confederate agents in Canada, "If you can find, any person anywhere professing to have any proposition of Jefferson Davis in writing, for peace, embracing the restoration of the Union and abandonment of slavery, *whatever else it embraces*, say to him he may come to me with you. . . ." Lincoln would negotiate any other terms the Confederate agents might have in mind. As the summer wore on, the Northern military cause, and with it Republican political fortunes, sank dangerously low. On August 24, Lincoln drafted a letter about peace for *New York Times* editor Henry J. Raymond, saying, ". . . you will propose, on behalf this government, that upon the restoration of the Union and the national authority, the war shall cease at once, *all remaining questions to be left for adjustment by peaceful modes.*" The president chose not to use this letter and later insisted on the two conditions previously stipulated to Greeley, but he remained willing to negotiate other things.²

True, Congress might have some say as well, and Union and emancipation amounted to a great deal when one considers that the Confederate states seceded in order to become an independent nation and a slave republic. Yet there were many other things a less lenient president might reasonably have demanded: the exclusion of Confederate political leaders from future public office, disfranchisement of Confederate soldiers, enfranchisement of freed blacks, legal protection for the Republican party in former Confederate states, recognition of West Virginia's statehood, the partition of other Southern states, no reprisals against ex-slaves who served in Union armies, and so on. More important, agreement to the abandonment of slavery did not consider how slavery would be abandoned, and this would matter a great deal five months later at the Hampton Roads peace conference, discussed below. For the purposes of this article, however, what Lincoln might have insisted upon is not the point. The point is that he had, for much of the Civil War at least, only two conditions for surrender. Abraham Lincoln was *not* committed to unconditional surrender.

By January 31, 1865, as Confederate resistance appeared increasingly senseless, Lincoln added a third condition (in his instructions to Secretary of State William H. Seward for the Hampton Roads peace conference): "No cessation of hostilities short of an end of the war, and the disbanding of all forces hostile to the government." Such conditions more nearly

² Roy P. Basler et al., eds., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1953-1955), vol. 7, 435, 517. (Italics mine.)

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approached unconditional surrender, but Lincoln also instructed Seward to tell the Confederate peace commissioners "that all propositions of theirs not inconsistent with the above, will be considered and passed upon in a spirit of sincere liberality." Thus, Lincoln was still willing to negotiate on other matters if the Confederates agreed to Union, emancipation, and peace.³

For their part, the Confederates considered Lincoln's peace terms tantamount to unconditional surrender. This was especially true of President Jefferson Davis, who never shared the optimism of the Confederate negotiators at Hampton Roads. When the Southern commissioners returned, Davis saw to it that the report on the conference given to the Confederate Congress embodied his own view that Lincoln had refused to offer any terms except "those which the conqueror may grant, or to permit us to have peace on any other basis than our unconditional submission in their rule. . . ." Though Davis described the terms as "unconditional submission," Lincoln, after returning to Washington, immediately drafted a bill offering \$400 million as compensation for slaves if the rebellion ended before April. He had discussed compensated emancipation at Hampton Roads. In other words, to say that Lincoln's terms amounted to unconditional surrender is to adopt the views of his worst political enemy, Jefferson Davis himself.⁴

The attribution of the concept of unconditional surrender to Lincoln has gained prominence only recently in serious historical writing, but the idea in which it is rooted, that of the Civil War as a total war, has been around a long while. In fact, it might be said to constitute the regnant interpretation of the nature of the great American conflict. Its appeal transcends the sections in Civil War debates, and the idea lies at the heart of most modern interpretations of the war by the most respected and artful writers.

The idea of total war was first applied to the Civil War in an article about William T. Sherman published in the *Journal of Southern History* in 1948: John B. Walters's "General William T. Sherman and Total War."⁵ After this initial use of the term, it was quickly adopted by

³ Ibid., vol. 8, 250-51.

⁴ Edward Chase Kirkland, *The Peacemakers of 1864* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 253, 258; Basler et al., vol. 8, 260-61.

⁵ John B. Walters, "General William T. Sherman and Total War," *Journal of Southern History* 14 (November 1948): 447-80. See also John B. Walters, *Merchant of Terror: General Sherman and Total War* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973). Phillip Paludan mistakes the origins of Walters's ideas as being a product of the Viet Nam War era, ignoring the anti-Yankee roots of the idea apparent in the earlier article. See Philip Paludan, "A People's Contest": *The Union and the Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 456. Other books on Sherman embracing the total war thesis include: John G. Barrett, *Sherman's March through the Carolinas* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1956); Burke Davis, *Sherman's March* (New York: Random House, 1980); and James M. Reston, Jr., *Sherman's March and Viet Nam* (New York: Macmillan, 1984).

T. Harry Williams, whose influential book *Lincoln and His Generals*, published in 1952, began with this memorable sentence: "The Civil War was the first of the modern total wars, and the American democracy was almost totally unready to fight it." Among the more popular Civil War writers, the idea also fared well. Bruce Catton, for example, wrote in a 1964 essay on "The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant" that "He was fighting . . . a total war, and in a total war the enemy's economy is to be undermined in any way possible." Scholarly writers continued to use the term as well. In his masterful *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, Princeton University's James M. McPherson writes, "By 1863, Lincoln's remarkable abilities gave him a wide edge over Davis as a war leader, while in Grant and Sherman the North acquired commanders with a concept of total war and the necessary determination to make it succeed." Professor McPherson's book forms part of the prestigious Oxford History of the United States. In another landmark volume, "*A People's Contest*": *The Union and the Civil War* (Harper & Row's New American Nation series), historian Phillip Shaw Paludan writes, "Grant's war making has come to stand for the American way of war. For one thing, that image is one of total war demanding unconditional surrender."⁶

Surely any idea about the military conduct of the Civil War that has been championed by Williams, Catton, McPherson, and Paludan, that is embodied in the Oxford History of the United States and in the New American Nation series, can fairly be called accepted wisdom on the subject. Most writers on the military history of the war, if forced to articulate a brief general description of the nature of that conflict, would now say, as McPherson has, that the Civil War began in 1861 with a purpose in the North "to suppress this insurrection and restore loyal Unionists to control of the southern states. The conflict was therefore a limited war . . . with the limited goal of restoring the status quo ante bellum, not an unlimited war to destroy an enemy nation and reshape its society." Gradually, or as McPherson puts it, "willy-nilly," the war became "a total war rather than a limited one." Eventually, "Union generals William Tecumseh Sherman and Philip Sheridan saw more clearly than anyone else the nature of modern, total war, a war between peoples rather than simply between armies, a war in which the fighting left nothing untouched or unchanged." President Lincoln came to realize the nature of the military contest and "sanctioned this policy of 'being terrible' on the enemy." Finally, "when the Civil War became a total

⁶ T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 3; Bruce Catton, "The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant," in *Grant, Lee, Lincoln and the Radicals: Essays on Civil War Leadership*, ed. Grady McWhiney (New York: Harper Colophon, 1966), 8; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 857; Paludan, 296.

war, the invading army intentionally destroyed the economic capacity of the South to wage war." Northern victory resulted from this gradual realization and the subsequent application of new and harsh doctrines in the war's later phase.⁷

The idea of total war embodies a rare quality among interpretations of the American Civil War: it is without sectional bias. Walters, after all, was a Southerner; he saw in Sherman's doctrines the breeding ground of a counter-productive hatred at odds with the North's mission to heal the nation after the war. Williams and Catton were both Northerners, and James McPherson and Phillip Paludan might fairly be termed neo-abolitionist in their interpretations of the war. Yet all agree that it was a total war. Modern writers on the Confederacy also remain ready to regard the war as a total war. Indeed, the idea provides the key to historian Emory M. Thomas's book, *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*, which argued that "by 1865, under the pressure of total war, the Confederate South had surrendered most of its cherished way of life."⁸

Northerner and Southerner alike have come to agree on the use of this term, total war, but what does it mean exactly? It was never used in the Civil War itself. Where does it come from?

The roots of the term are instructive. It was coined in 1921 by Giulio Douhet, the pioneering Italian advocate of air power, when he wrote: "The prevailing forms of social organization have given war a character of national totality,—that is, the entire population and all the resources of a nation are sucked into the maw of war. And, since society is now definitely evolving along this line, it is within the power of human foresight to see now that future wars will be total in character and scope." Such ideas were rife in the 1920s among military thinkers who had witnessed the appalling slaughter on the Western Front in the Great War, and who fancied how much better it would be to vault over the stalemated trenches and attack the enemy's industries and centers of population remote from their armies.⁹

⁷ James M. McPherson, "Lincoln and the Second American Revolution," in *Abraham Lincoln and the American Political Tradition*, ed. John L. Thomas (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 148, 149, 151, 145-55.

⁸ Walters, "General Sherman and Total War," 480; Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 135.

⁹ Giulio Douhet, *Command of the Air* (Eng. trans. New York: Coward, McCann, 1942), 5-6; Klaus Knorr, "Military Power Potential," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills (New York: MacMillan, 1968), vol. 10, 327; Michael Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1987), 24; Edward Warner, "Douhet, Mitchell, Severksy: Theories of Air Warfare," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*, ed. Edward Mead Earle (New York: Atheneum, 1966), 488.

Although the idea began mainly as an apology for air power, and is therefore virtually unthinkable outside a technological environment that includes airplanes and strategic bombing, it was related to another term that originated in the 1920s and shared the same root word, *totalitarianism*. In fact, the first book to use total war in its title was *Der Totale Krieg*, written by the German Great War general Erich Ludendorff, and published in Munich in 1935. Ludendorff used the term to suggest that modern wars fought by the totality of society needed totalitarian political control by a general at the top, a military dictator (presumably Ludendorff himself).¹⁰

These seem like strangely unattractive origins for an idea that would take American historians by storm. Douhet briefly served the Fascists in Rome and his works were republished by them, while Ludendorff's ideas were conservative competitors of Adolf Hitler's. Nevertheless, total war took on a new meaning and respectability during World War II, when it invoked, along with its old associations, the idea of planning and mobilization of the domestic economy for the war effort. In the 1940s, titles began appearing such as these: *Total War: The Economic Theory of a War Economy* (1943) by Burnham P. Beckwith; *Fiscal Planning for Total War* (1942) by William Leonard Crum; and *Financing Total War* (1942) by Robert M. Haig.¹¹ World War II became synonymous with total war, and greatly accelerated interest in the idea and use of the term. In 1946, for example, constitutional scholar Edward Corwin delivered a series of lectures at the University of Michigan called "Total War and the Constitution." By 1948, John B. Walters began his landmark article on Sherman by saying, "Within recent years the term 'total war' has become . . . definitely accepted as a part of the everyday vocabulary."¹²

Unfortunately, like many parts of everyday vocabulary, total war is a loose term with several meanings. Since World War II, it has come to mean, in part, a war requiring the full economic mobilization of a society. From the start, it meant the obverse of that idea as well: making war on the economic resources of the enemy rather than directly on its armed forces alone. Yet there was nothing really new about attacking an enemy's economic resources; that was the very essence of naval blockades and they long predated the Civil War. The crucial and terrible

¹⁰ Hans Speier, "Ludendorff: The German Concept of Total War," in Earle, 307, 308, 315-17.

¹¹ Published respectively by Meador in Boston, the National Bureau of Economic Research in New York, and Columbia University Press.

¹² Walters, "General Sherman and Total War," 447; Edward S. Corwin, *Total War and the Constitution: Five Lectures Delivered on the William W. Cook Foundation at the University of Michigan, March 1946* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947). Note also the title of one of the standard histories of World War II: Peter Calvocoressi et al., *Total War: Causes and Courses of the Second War* (New York: Pantheon, 1989).

new aspect of the notion of total war was embodied in the following idea, part of a definition of the term cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "Every citizen is in a sense a combatant and also the object of attack." Every systematic definition of the term embodies the concept of destroying the ages-old distinction between civilians and soldiers, whatever other ideas may be present. Another citation in the *OED*, for example, terms it "a war to which all resources and the whole population are committed; loosely, a war conducted without any scruple or limitations." *Webster's . . . Unabridged dictionary* describes total war as "warfare that uses all possible means of attack, military, scientific, and psychological, against both enemy troops and civilians." And James Turner Johnson, in his study of *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War*, asserts that in total war "there must be disregard of restraints imposed by custom, law, and morality on the prosecution of the war. Especially, . . . total war bears hardest on noncombatants, whose traditional protection from harm according to the traditions of just and limited warfare appears to evaporate here."¹³

Close application of this twentieth-century term, the product of the age of strategic bombing and blitzkrieg and powerful totalitarian governments capable of mobilizing science and psychology, to the Civil War seems fraught with difficulty. Surely no one believes, for example, that the Civil War was fought "without any scruple or limitations." From the ten thousand plus pages of documents in the eight full volumes of the *Official Records* dealing with prisoners of war, to the many copies of General Orders No. 100, a brief code of the laws of war distributed throughout the Union army in 1863, evidence abounds that this war knew careful limitation and conscientious scruple. Even World War II followed the rules bearing on prisoners of war. Any assessment of the Civil War's nearness to being a total war can be no more than that: an assertion that it *approached* total war in some ways. By no definition of the term can it be said to *be* a total war.

Occasionally, the term total war approximates the meaning of *modernity*. T. Harry Williams used the terms interchangeably, as in this passage from a later work in which he hedged a bit on calling the Civil War a total war: "Trite it may be to say that the Civil War was the first of the modern wars, but this is a truth that needs to be repeated. If the Civil War was not quite total, it missed totality by only a narrow margin."¹⁴

¹³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., 18:286-87; James Turner Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and Historical Inquiry* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), 229. The U.S. Department of Defense, incidentally, says that the term is "not to be used." See Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military Terms* (New York: Arco, 1988), 362.

¹⁴ T. Harry Williams, *Americans at War: The Development of the American Military*

definition of total war to measure the proximity of the Civil War to it? Surely this can be done, and short of a study of the Civil War day by day, there can hardly be any other test.

William T. Sherman, Ulysses S. Grant, and Philip H. Sheridan are the obvious figures for study, with particular emphasis on the March to the Sea and the campaign in the Carolinas from 1864 to 1865, and actions in northern Virginia in 1864. Likewise, some attention to President Lincoln's views would also fit the traditions of the literature on this subject.

Sherman is the Civil War soldier most often quoted on the subject of total war. An article about him gave rise to this interpretation of the Civil War, and indeed it is now widely held that, as historian John F. Marszalek has expressed it, William T. Sherman was the "Inventor of Total Warfare."²⁰ "We are not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war, as well as their organized armies," Sherman told Gen. Henry W. Halleck on Christmas Eve, 1864. As early as October 1862 he said, "We cannot change the hearts of these people of the South, but we can make war so terrible . . . [and] make them so sick of war that generations would pass away before they would again appeal to it."²¹

The gift of sounding like a twentieth-century man was peculiarly Sherman's. Nearly every other Civil War general sounds ancient by comparison, but many historians may have allowed themselves to be fooled by his style while ignoring the substance of his campaigns.

Historians, moreover, quote Sherman selectively. In fact, he said many things and when gathered together they do not add up to any coherent "total-war philosophy," as one historian describes it. Sherman was not a philosopher; he was a general and a garrulous one at that. "He talked incessantly and more rapidly than any man I ever saw," Maj. John Chipman Gray reported. "It would be easier to say what he did not talk about than what he did." Chauncey Depew said Sherman was "the readiest and most original talker in the United States." And what Sherman said during the war was often provoked by exasperating, momentary circumstance. Therefore, he occasionally uttered frightening statements. "To secure the safety of the navigation of the Mississippi River I would slay millions," Sherman told Gen. John A. Logan on December 21, 1863. "On that point I am not only insane, but mad. . . . For every bullet shot at a steam-boat, I would shoot a thousand 30-pounder Parrotts into even helpless towns on Red, Oachita, Yazoo, or wherever a boat

²⁰ John F. Marszalek, "The Inventor of Total Warfare," *Notre Dame Magazine* 18 (Summer 1989), 28-31.

²¹ *OR* 44:798; *OR* 17, pt. 2:261.

can float or soldier march." This statement was all the more striking, coming from a man widely reputed by newspaper critics to be insane. On another occasion, Sherman said, "To the petulant and persistent secessionists, why, death is mercy, and the quicker he or *she* is disposed of the better" (*italics added*).²²

In other moods and in different circumstances, Sherman could sound as mild as Robert E. Lee. "War," the alleged inventor of total war wrote on April 19, 1863, "at best is barbarism, but to involve all—children, women, old and helpless—is more than can be justified." And he went on to caution against seizing so many stores that family necessities were endangered. Later, in the summer of 1863, when General Sherman sent a cavalry expedition toward Memphis from Mississippi, General Grant instructed him to "impress upon the men the importance of going through the State in an orderly manner, abstaining from taking anything not absolutely necessary for their subsistence while travelling. They should try to create as favorable an impression as possible upon the people. . . ." These may seem hopeless orders to give General Sherman, but his enthusiastic reply was this: "It will give me excessive pleasure to instruct the Cavalry as you direct, for the Policy you point out meets every wish of my heart."²³

Scholars who pay less heed to the seductively modern sound of Sherman's harsher statements, and look closely instead at what he actually did on his celebrated campaigns in Georgia and the Carolinas, find a nineteenth-century soldier at work—certainly not a man who made war on noncombatants. Joseph T. Glatthaar's study of Sherman's campaigns confirmed that, for the most part, Sherman's men did not physically abuse civilians who kept to themselves: atrocities were suffered mostly by soldiers on *both* sides; in Georgia and the Carolinas, Sherman's army recovered the bodies of at least 172 Union soldiers hanged, shot in the head at close range, with their throats slit, or "actually butchered." And only in South Carolina, the state blamed for starting the war, did Sherman fail to restrain his men in their destruction of private property. Before the idea of total war came to Civil War studies, shrewd students of the conflict had noted the essentially nineteenth-century nature of Sherman's campaigns. Gamaliel Bradford's *Union Portraits*, for example, written during World War I, observed: "Events . . . have made the vandalism of Sherman seem like discipline and order. The injury done by him seldom

²² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 809; John Chipman Gray and John Codman Ropes, *War Letters 1862-1865* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1927), 425, 427; Edmund Wilson, *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), 205; *OR* 31, pt. 3:459; *OR* 32, pt. 2:281.

²³ *OR* 24, pt. 2:209; John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, 16 vols. to date (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1967-), 9:155, 156n.

directly affected anything but property. There was no systematic cruelty in the treatment of noncombatants, and to the eternal glory of American soldiers be it recorded that insult and abuse toward women were practically unknown during the Civil War."²⁴

Though not a systematic military thinker, General Sherman did compose a letter addressing the problem of noncombatants in the Civil War, and it described his actual policies better than his frequently quoted statements of a more sensational nature. He sent the letter to Maj. R. M. Sawyer, whom Sherman left behind to manage Huntsville, Alabama, when he departed for Meridian, Mississippi, early in 1864. Sherman also sent a copy to his brother, Republican Senator John Sherman, with an eye to possible publication:

In my former letters I have answered all your questions save one, and that relates to the treatment of inhabitants known or suspected to be hostile or "Secesh." This is in truth the most difficult business of our army as it advances and occupies the Southern country. It is almost impossible to lay down rules, and I invariably leave the whole subject to the local commanders, but am willing to give them the benefit of my acquired knowledge and experience. In Europe, whence we derive our principles of war, wars are between kings or rulers through hired armies, and not between peoples. These remain, as it were, neutral, and sell their produce to whatever army is in possession.

Napoleon when at war with Prussia, Austria, and Russia bought forage and provisions of the inhabitants and consequently had an interest to protect the farms and factories which ministered to his wants. In like manner the allied Armies in France could buy of the French inhabitants whatever they needed, the produce of the soil or manufactures of the country. Therefore, the general rule was and is that war is confined to the armies engaged, and should not visit the houses of families or private interests. But in other examples a different rule obtained the sanction of historical authority. I will only instance one, where in the siege of William and Mary the English army occupied Ireland, then in a state of revolt. The inhabitants were actually driven into foreign lands, and were dispossessed of their property and a new population introduced.

... The question then arises, Should we treat as absolute enemies all in the South who differ from us in opinion or prejudice, kill or banish them, or should we give them time to think and gradually change their conduct so as to conform to the new order of things which is slowly and gradually creeping into their country?

²⁴ Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman's Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1985), 72-73, 127-28; Gamaliel Bradford, *Union Portraits* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1916), 154n-155n. Paludan, though he says Sherman "helped announce the coming of total war," also states that "Sherman's idea of war was more description than doctrine." Paludan, 291, 302.

When men take up arms to resist a rightful authority, we are compelled to use like force. . . . When the provisions, forage, horses, mules, wagons, etc., are used by our enemy, it is clearly our duty and right to take them also, because otherwise they might be used against us. In like manner all houses left vacant by an inimical people are clearly our right, and as such are needed as storehouses, hospitals, and quarters. But the question arises as to dwellings used by women, children and non-combatants. So long as non-combatants remain in their houses and keep to their accustomed peaceful business, their opinions and prejudices can in no wise influence the war, and therefore should not be noticed; but if any one comes out into the public streets and creates disorder, he or she should be punished, restrained, or banished. . . . If the people, or any of them, keep up a correspondence with parties in hostility, they are spies, and can be punished according to law with death or minor punishment. These are well-established principles of war, and the people of the South having appealed to war, are barred from appealing for protection to our constitution, which they have practically and publicly defied. They have appealed to war, and must abide its rules and laws. . . .

Excepting incidents of retaliation, Sherman by and large lived by these "principles of war."²⁵

Leaving "the whole subject" to local commanders nevertheless permitted considerable latitude for pillage or destruction and was in itself an important principle. Moreover, Sherman, who was a critic of universal suffrage and loathed the free press, thought a volunteer army, the product of America's ultra-individualistic society, would inevitably loot and burn private property. His conservative social views thus led to a career-long fatalism about pillage.²⁶

Sherman's purposes in the Georgia and Carolinas campaigns, usually pointed to as the epitome of total war in the Civil War, are obscured by two months of the general's letters to other generals describing his desire to cut loose from Atlanta and his long, thin line of supply to march to the sea. From mid-September to mid-November 1864, Sherman worried the idea, and his superiors, explaining it in several ways. At first, he argued from his knowledge of the political disputes between Jefferson Davis and Georgia Governor Joseph E. Brown that the march would sever the state from the Confederacy. "They may stand the fall of Richmond," Sherman told Grant on September 20, "but not of all Georgia." At the same time he belittled the effects of mere destruction: ". . . the more I study the game the more I am convinced that it would be wrong for me to penetrate much farther into Georgia without an

²⁵ Rachel Sherman Thorndike, ed., *The Sherman Letters: Correspondence between General and Senator Sherman from 1837 to 1891* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), 228-30.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 175-76, 181-82, 185; M. A. DeWolfe Howe, ed., *Home Letters of General Sherman* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 209.

objective beyond. It would not be productive of much good. I can start east and make a circuit south and back, *doing vast damage to the State* [italics added], but resulting in no permanent good. . . ."²⁷

Less than three weeks later, Sherman gave a rather different explanation to Grant: "Until we can repopulate Georgia, it is useless to occupy it, but the utter destruction of its roads, houses, and people will cripple their military resources. By attempting to hold the roads we will lose 1,000 men monthly, and will gain no result. I can make the march, and make Georgia howl."

Ten days after that, he more or less combined his different arguments in a letter to General Halleck. "This movement is not purely military or strategic," he now said, "but it will illustrate the vulnerability of the South." Only when Sherman's armies arrived and "fences and corn and hogs and sheep" vanished would "the rich planters of the Oconee and Savannah" know "what war means." He spoke more tersely to his subordinates. "I want to prepare for my big raid," he explained on October 19 to a colonel in charge of supply, and with that Sherman arranged to send his impedimenta to the rear.²⁸

With plans set, more or less, Sherman explained to Gen. George Thomas, who would be left to deal with Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood's army, "I propose to demonstrate the vulnerability of the South, and make its inhabitants feel that war and individual ruin are synonymous terms." Delays ensued and Sherman decided to remain in place until after election day. On the twelfth, he cut his telegraph lines and the confusing explanations of the campaign ceased pouring out of Georgia.²⁹

Sherman did not attempt the "utter destruction" of Georgia's "people." He did not really attack noncombatants directly or make any serious attempt to destroy "the economic capacity of the south to wage war," as one historian has described his purpose. After capturing Atlanta, for example, Sherman moved to capture Savannah and then attacked the symbolic capital of secession, South Carolina. He did not attack Augusta, Georgia, which he knew to contain "the only powder mills and factories remaining in the South."³⁰ Though he did systematically destroy railroad lines, Sherman otherwise had little conception of eliminating essential industries. Indeed, there were few to eliminate, for the South, in comparison with the North, was a premodern, underdeveloped, agrarian region where determined men with rifles were the real problem—not the ability of the area's industries to manufacture high-technology weapons. Despite scorching a sixty-mile-wide swath through the Confederacy,

²⁷ OR 39, pt. 2:412.

²⁸ Ibid., pt. 3:162, 358.

²⁹ Ibid., 378.

³⁰ Ibid., pt. 2:412.

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Sherman was never going to starve this agrarian economy into submission, either. He had remarked in the past on how well fed and even shod the Confederate armies were despite their backward economy.³¹

What Sherman was doing embodied traditional geopolitical objectives in a civil war: convincing the enemy's people and the world that the Confederate government and upper classes were too weak to maintain nationhood. He did this with a "big raid." "If we can march a well-appointed army right through his [Jefferson Davis's] territory," Sherman told Grant on November 6, 1864, "it is a demonstration to the world, foreign and domestic, that we have a power which Davis cannot resist." In *Battle Cry of Freedom* this statement is followed by ellipsis marks and the statement, "I can make the march, and make Georgia howl!" But that appears to be a misquotation. In fact, Sherman went on to say something much less vivid and scorching:

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This may not be war, but rather statesmanship, nevertheless it is overwhelming to my mind that there are thousands of people abroad and in the South who will reason thus: If the North can march an army right through the south, it is proof positive that the North can prevail in this contest, leaving only open the question of its willingness to use that power.

Now, Mr. Lincoln's election, which is assured, coupled with the conclusion just reached, makes a complete, logical whole.

And Mr. Lincoln himself endorsed the view. In his letter congratulating Sherman on his Christmas capture of Savannah, the president counted the campaign "a great success" not only in affording "the obvious and immediate military advantages" but also "in showing to the world that your army could be divided, putting the stronger part to an important new service, and yet leaving enough to vanquish the old opposing force of the whole—Hood's army." This, Lincoln, said, "brings those who sat in darkness, to see a great light." Neither Sherman nor Lincoln put the emphasis on the role of sheer destructiveness or economic deprivation.³²

If Sherman had his politic moments, there was hardly a more politically astute general in the Northern armies than his military superior and friend, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. To depict Grant as an advocate of total war is to take him at his word when he spoke in temporary anger and frustration, and, more important, to make him appear a clumsy and brutal slugger, whereas he was really a deftly political puncher.

Of course, the doctrine of total war has its political side, but the point here is that no general as politic as Grant was going to embark

³¹ Thorndike, 185.

³² *OR* 39, pt. 3:660; Basler et al., vol. 8, 181-82; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 808.

on a singleminded strategy for the war that was certain to offend Victorian sensibilities throughout the world and make permanent enemies of all persons in the South. Grant, therefore, did not make as many "mad" remarks as Sherman did about killing "millions." He was a more reticent man. Nevertheless, the logic of military conscription and the frustrations of guerrilla or partisan warfare could drive even Grant to make statements well beyond the accepted bounds of warfare in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The ultimate limits of Southern manpower figured ever larger in Grant's strategic thinking by 1864. Manpower shortages in the underpopulated Confederate states had led their Congress to embrace conscription even before the North did. On April 16, 1862, Southern males eighteen to thirty-five were made liable to draft, and two years later the age limits had been expanded to seventeen and fifty. In defense of Confederate conscription, even Robert E. Lee could sound like a total warrior. According to one of his staff officers, Lee "thought that every other consideration should be regarded as subordinate to the great end of the public safety, and that since the whole duty of the nation would be war until independence should be secured, the whole nation should for the time be converted into an army, the producers to feed and the soldiers to fight." Grant realized as early as the summer of 1863 that the Confederates were conscripting everyone they could lay their hands on. Every mobilizable male had become a proto-combatant. The categories of noncombatants shrunk accordingly. When guerrilla or partisan warfare further exasperated him, Grant proposed radical measures. In August 1864, to stop the pesky Confederate cavalry leader John Singleton Mosby, Grant suggested a blistering raid by Gen. Philip Sheridan:

If you can possibly spare a Division of Cavalry send them through Loudo[u]n County to destroy and carry off the crops, animals, negroes, and all men under fifty years of age capable of bearing arms. In this way you will get many of Mosby's men. All Male Citizens under fifty can farely be held as prisoners of war and not as citizen prisoners. If not already soldiers they will be made so the moment the rebel army gets hold of them.

Mosby provoked another savage order from Grant to Sheridan at the same time:

The families of most of Moseby's men are know[n] and can be collected. I think they should be taken and kept at Fort McHenry or some secure place as hostages for good conduct of Mosby and his men. When any of them are caught with nothing to designate what they are hang them without trial.

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Grant seemed to be acquiring an unwholesome taste for summary execution, a policy he had rejected in his early days of command in Missouri at the beginning of the war.³³

The partisan cavalry under Mosby had troubled Union authorities for months. Sheridan willingly testified in his *Memoirs* to their effectiveness in depleting his "line-of-battle" strength by forcing him to provide large escorts for his supply train. Nevertheless, Sheridan was at first too busy campaigning in the Shenandoah Valley to order the special operation against Mosby that Grant desired. When the Confederate partisans subsequently killed Sheridan's chief quartermaster and his medical inspector, he decided to turn his attention to them after the campaign slowed in the late autumn. His orders of November 27 to cavalry commander Wesley Merritt embodied the scorched-earth aspects of Grant's suggestions, but the wholesale rounding up of civilian population seems not to have been attempted.

This section has been the hot-bed of lawless bands, who have, from time to time, depredated upon small parties on the line of army communications, on safe guards left at houses, and on all small parties of our troops. Their real object is plunder and highway robbery. To clear the country of these parties that are bringing destruction upon the innocent as well as their guilty supporters by their cowardly acts, you will consume and destroy all forage and subsistence, burn all barns and mills and their contents, and drive off all stock in the region. . . . This order must be literally executed, bearing in mind, however, that no dwellings are to be burned and that no personal violence be offered to the citizens. The ultimate result of the guerrilla system of warfare is the total destruction of private rights in the country occupied by such parties.

In this instance, the ordinarily fierce Sheridan retained more sense of distinction between guilty and innocent civilian populations than Grant, but the logic of military events was driving him to similarly ruthless-sounding conclusions. More than likely, Sheridan spared the civilians less out of considerations of conscience than practical military necessity. Thousands of civilian prisoners in tow would hardly have made the Union cavalry's task of rounding up Mosby's men easier. After all, the partisans were, as Merritt ruefully reported, "mounted on fleet horses and thoroughly conversant with the country."³⁴

In the end, both Grant and Sheridan stopped well short of obliterating the distinction between noncombatants and soldiers even while fighting

³³ J. F. C. Fuller, *Grant & Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1957), 252; Simon, vol. 12 (1984), 15, 13.

³⁴ Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1888), vol. 2, 99-100; *OR* 43, pt. 2:679; *OR* 32, pt. 1:671.

the aggravating Mosby, and few arrests were made.³⁵ Union authorities talked tough about Mosby, even to each other, but their actions fit the traditional standards of civilized warfare.

It required the extreme provocation of the frustrating campaigns of the summer of 1864, knowledge of the relentlessness of Confederate conscription, and the embarrassing irritations of partisan cavalry to drive Grant to declare that essentially all white Southern males between the ages of seventeen and fifty be treated as combatants. And afterward no one really acted on the new declaration. The Union armies never gathered all white males, seventeen to fifty, from any area, let alone the whole South, as military prisoners. Sheridan, who was specifically told to do so in his area, did not.

Wholesale military arrests of citizens never came about, in fact, for the war was fought mostly by practical men like Ulysses S. Grant who tailored their actions to accommodate day-to-day realities. Even in its most extreme formulation, in his letters to Sheridan, for example, Grant included only draft-age males and the known relatives of guerrillas in his new broad definition of belligerent population, not women, children, or the aged. Within days, as new information came to him, he was forced to modify his own drastic orders to suit the political realities in the field. "I am informed by the Asst. Sec. of War," Grant told Sheridan, "that Loudo[u]n County has a large population of Quakers who are all favorably disposed to the Union. These people may be exempted from arrest." He qualified the order again two weeks later, instructing Sheridan to exercise his own judgment "as to who should be exempt from arrest and . . . who should receive pay for their stock grain &c. It is our interest that that County should not be capable of subsisting a hostile Army and at the same time we want to inflict as little hardship upon Union men as possible."³⁶

Ulysses S. Grant never applied a unitary military philosophy to the South, not total war or any other doctrine. Rounding up civilians and destroying the crops and livestock by which a local army could live—these were strategies Grant ordered only in bitterly disloyal areas infested with guerrillas. Where the political complexion of the local populace appeared different, Grant's orders took a different tone. After Vicksburg's fall in 1863, for example, he issued a general order counseling restraint on the part of U.S. forces, which now controlled the western third of Mississippi. He called upon the people of the state "to pursue their peaceful avocations in obedience to the laws of the United States," and assured them that if they did so the occupying forces would be "prohibited

³⁵ Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991), 80-81.

³⁶ Simon, vol. 12, 63, 127.

from molesting in any way the citizens of the country." "In all cases," he added, "where it becomes necessary to take private property for public use a detail will be made, under a Commissioned officer, to take specified property, and none other. A staff officer of the Quartermaster or Subsistence Dept. will . . . give receipts for all property taken, to be paid at the end of the war, on proof of loyalty or on proper adjustment of claim under any regulation hereafter established." Even proof of loyalty was not always necessary to receive humane treatment from Grant's armies. For Warren County, which had been "laid waste by the long presence of contending Armies," he made provision to "issue articles of prime necessity to all destitute families" who called on the Union armies for them. The local generals could make "such restrictions for the protection of Government as they may deem expedient," but for his part, Grant did not stipulate proof of loyalty as a requisite for receiving U.S. aid.³⁷

Political judgment, more than humanitarian sentiment, dictated Grant's differing policies. Where the potential for reconstructing civilian loyalty appeared high, he treated the local populace gently. Grant told Halleck that Mississippi and Louisiana "would be more easily governed now than Kentucky or Missouri if armed rebels from other states could be kept out." Later, Loudoun county, Virginia, the logistical base for John Singleton Mosby, seemed to merit different treatment, but Grant did not grow steadily harsher as the war wore on. In 1864, for example, after he was given overall command of the Union armies, he learned from an old general, Henry Price, that Gen. Eleazer A. Paine, whom Grant had known in Missouri, was oppressing the people of Kentucky. Price protested "in the name of God and of all my countrymen who respect the rights of mankind." Grant ordered Paine removed from command in Paducah:

He is not fit to have a command where there is a solitary family within his reach favorable to the Government. His administration will result in large and just claims against the Government for destruction of private property taken from our friends. He will do to put in an intensely disloyal district to scourge the people but even then it is doubtful whether it comes within the bounds of civilized warfare to use him.

Paine was later court-martialed and reprimanded.³⁸

Grant was not growing soft; he always believed that commanders ought to be tailored for the districts commanded. Thus, he thought

³⁷ Ibid., vol. 9 (1984), 133-34.

³⁸ Ibid., 173-74; vol. 12, 124, 125n.; E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1926), 221-22.

Benjamin F. Butler worthless as a soldier, but in "taking charge of a Dept. mt where there are no great battles to be fought, but a dissatisfied element to controll no one could manage it better than he." As late as the summer of 1864, Grant contemplated a restructuring of military districts that would put Butler in command of Kentucky or Missouri. These areas Grant had seen himself, and he regarded them as more difficult to control than Mississippi. Butler, whose notorious treatment of civilians in occupied New Orleans earned him the nickname "beast" and made him an outlaw in the Confederacy, seemed to Grant ideal for the intractable western border states. General Grant adapted his policies to the situation at hand, but he remained always "within the bounds of civilized warfare."³⁹

For his part, Philip H. Sheridan consciously grasped the economic part of the modern idea of total war. In his *Memoirs* he stated clearly:

... I do not hold war to mean simply that lines of men shall engage each other in battle, and material interests be ignored. This is but a duel, in which one combatant seeks the other's life; war means much more, and is far worse than this. Those who rest at home in peace and plenty see but little of the horrors attending such a duel, and even grow indifferent to them as the struggle goes on, contenting themselves with encouraging all who are able-bodied to enlist in the cause. . . . It is another matter, however, when deprivation and suffering are brought to their own doors. Then the case appears much graver, for the loss of property weighs heavy with the most of mankind; heavier often, than the sacrifices made on the field of battle. Death is popularly considered the maximum of punishment in war, but it is not; reduction to poverty brings prayers for peace more surely and more quickly than does the destruction of human life, as the selfishness of man has demonstrated in more than one great conflict.⁴⁰

Of course, he did not embrace the doctrine of making war on noncombatants.

Ultimately, what is most interesting about Sheridan's statement is its contrast with the memoirs of Sherman and Grant, neither of whom proclaimed discovery of a new form of warfare approaching the modern idea of total war. Sherman's memoirs are, in fact, terribly disappointing in that regard. Not only does he repeatedly express his belief in "the rules and laws of war" but he also fails to lay claim to any broad originality as a commander. Chapter 25, for example, is entitled "Conclusions—Military Lessons of the War." There he enumerates some nineteen lessons, mostly logistical, but covering such details as mail service to the troops, the use of judge advocates, and the necessity not

³⁹ Simon, vol. 11, 155.

⁴⁰ P. H. Sheridan, vol. 1, 487-88.

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to neglect the dead. But there is nothing about noncombatants, the enemy's economy, science, psychology, or any of the other ideas usually associated with total war. And he definitely chose in his *Memoirs* to downplay any originality in the conception of the most famous campaign of his career:

I only regarded the march from Atlanta to Savannah as a "shift of base," as the transfer of a strong army, which had no opponent, and had finished its then work, from the interior to a point on the sea-coast, from which it could achieve other important results. I considered this march as a means to an end, and not as an essential act of war. Still, then, as now, the march to the sea was generally regarded as something extraordinary, something anomalous, something out of the usual order of events; whereas, in fact, I simply moved from Atlanta to Savannah, as one step in the direction of Richmond, a movement that had to be met and defeated, or the war was necessarily at an end.⁴¹

In fact, no Northerner at any time in the nineteenth century embraced as his own the cold-blooded ideas now associated with total war. If one seeks the earliest application of the idea (rather than the actual term) to the Civil War, it lies perhaps in the following document, written in the midst of the Civil War itself:

... they [the U.S.] have repudiated the foolish conceit that the inhabitants of this confederacy are still citizens of the United States, for they are waging an indiscriminate war upon them all, with a savage ferocity unknown to modern civilization. In this war, rapine is the rule: private residences, in peaceful rural retreats, are bombarded and burnt: Grain crops in the field are consumed by the torch: and when the torch is not convenient, careful labor is bestowed to render complete the destruction of every article of use or ornament remaining in private dwellings, after their inhabitants have fled from the outrages of a brutal soldiery.

Mankind will shudder to hear of the tales of outrages committed on defenceless females by soldiers of the United States now invading our homes: yet these outrages are prompted by inflamed passions and madness of intoxication.

The source of the idea was, of course, Confederate, and it was a high Confederate source indeed: Jefferson Davis.

It may sound as though Davis was describing Sherman's March through Georgia or perhaps Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley—most probably in a late speech, in 1864 or 1865. In fact, President Davis made the statement in 1861, in his Message to Congress of July 20. Davis not only described total war three years before Sherman entered Georgia;

⁴¹ Sherman, vol. 2, 220-21.

he described total war before the First Battle of Bull Run had been fought! It was fought the day *after* Davis delivered his message to Congress.⁴²

The first application of the *idea* to the Civil War came, then, in Confederate propaganda. Though it may not be a sectional interpretation now, it was an entirely sectional idea in the beginning.

Its origins give perhaps the best clue to the usefulness of the idea in describing the Civil War. Total war may describe certain isolated and uncharacteristic aspects of the Civil War, but is at most a partial view.

The point is not merely semantic. The use of the idea of total war prevents historians from understanding the era properly. Taking the notion, for example, that total war hitches science to the military cause, one can see the inappropriateness of applying this idea to the Civil War. As Robert V. Bruce notes in *The Launching of American Science, 1846-1876*, there was no Civil War Manhattan Project. The war, in fact, mainly hampered science by killing young men who might have become scientists later. Neither Yankee ingenuity nor Confederate desperation, as Bruce shrewdly reveals, caused technological breakthroughs of significance for the battlefield. And the great symbol of American science in the era, the Smithsonian Institution, flew no national flag during the Civil War. Science remained neutral, though individual scientists enlisted as their sectional preferences dictated.⁴³

Likewise, the economic aspect of total war is misleading when used to describe characteristics of the Civil War reputedly more forward-looking than naval blockades. The ideas of economic planning and control from World War II cannot be applied to the Civil War. Hardly anyone then thought in such macro-economic terms. Abraham Lincoln did calculate the total daily cost of the war, but he did not do so to aid long-range economic planning for the Union war effort. Instead, he used the figure to show how relatively inexpensive it would be for the U.S. government to purchase the freedom of all the slaves in the border states through compensated emancipation. At \$400 a head, the \$2 million daily war expenditure would buy every slave in Delaware at "less than one half-day's cost," and "less than eighty seven days cost of this war would, at the same price, pay for all in Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Kentucky, and Missouri."⁴⁴

From the Confederate perspective, the economic insight seems ironically somewhat more appropriate. The blockade induced scarcities on

⁴² Jefferson Davis, *Message of the President* ([Richmond, Va.]: Ritchie & Dunnivant, [1861]), 3-4.

⁴³ Robert V. Bruce, *The Launching of American Science, 1840-1876* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 279-80, 299-300, 306.

⁴⁴ Basler et al., vol. 5, 160.

which almost all Confederate civilian diarists commented—coffee, shoe leather, and needles were sorely missed. The Confederate government's attempts to supply scarce war necessities led some historians to call the resulting system "state socialism" or a "revolutionary experience." Yet these were the outcome less of deliberate Northern military strategy (the blockade aside) than of the circumstance that the South was agrarian and the North more industrialized.⁴⁵

For its part, the North did little to mobilize its resources—little, that is, that would resemble the centralized planning and state intervention typical of twentieth-century economies in war. There was no rationing, North or South, and the Yankees' society knew only the sacrifice of men, not of materials. As Phillip Paludan has shown, agriculture thrived, and other parts of Northern society suffered only modestly; college enrollments fell, except at the University of Michigan, but young men still continued to go to college in substantial numbers. Inflation and a graduated income tax did little to trouble the claims made by most Republicans of surprising prosperity in the midst of war. The Republican president stated in his annual message to the United States Congress in December 1864:

It is of noteworthy interest that the steady expansion of population, improvement and governmental institutions over the new and unoccupied portions of our country have scarcely been checked, much less impeded or destroyed, by our great civil war, which at first glance would seem to have absorbed almost the entire energies of the nation.

... It is not material to inquire *how* the increase has been produced, or to show that it would have been *greater* but for the war. . . . The important fact remains demonstrated, that we have *more* men *now* than we had when the war *began*. . . . This as to men. Material resources are now more complete and abundant than ever.

The national resources, then, are unexhausted, and, as we believe, inexhaustible.

Democrats generally conceded prosperity by their silence and focused instead on race and civil liberties as campaign issues.⁴⁶

The *essential* aspect of any definition of total war asserts that it breaks down the distinction between soldiers and civilians, combatants and noncombatants, and this no one in the Civil War did systematically, including William T. Sherman. He and his fellow generals waged war

⁴⁵ Louise B. Hill, *State Socialism in the Confederate States of America* (Charlottesville, Va.: Historical Publishing Co., 1936); Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*. Hill deals mainly with foreign trade and finance. See also Charles W. Ramsdell, *Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1944), 42–82.

⁴⁶ Basler et al., vol. 8, 145, 151; Paludan, esp. 133, 151–69.

the same way most Victorian gentlemen did, and other Victorian gentlemen in the world knew it. That is one reason why British, French, and Prussian observers failed to comment on any startling developments seen in the American war: there was little new to report.⁴⁷ The conservative monarchies of the old world surely would have seized with delight on any evidence that warfare in the New World was degenerating to the level of starving and killing civilians. Their observers encountered no such spectacle. It required airplanes and tanks and heartless twentieth-century ideas born in the hopeless trenches of World War I to break down distinctions adhered to in practice by almost all Civil War generals. Their war did little to usher in the shock of the new in the twentieth century.

⁴⁷ Jay Luvaas, *The Military Legacy of the Civil War* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1959); Viscount Wolseley, *The American Civil War: An English View*, ed. James A. Rawley (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1964), xix, xxxiii-xxxiv.

Professor John Y. Simon, editor of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, and Professor William E. Gienapp, of Harvard University, carefully read this article in draft, criticized it, and offered useful suggestions for improvement. They helped me a great deal, but they do not necessarily agree with my arguments.

