

A NATION
AMONG NATIONS

AMERICA'S PLACE IN

WORLD HISTORY



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Massachusetts, wrote to his wife: "I do feel that the liberty of the world is placed in our hands to defend." For another common soldier the stakes of failure were far larger than the future of the United States. Failure, he worried, would mean that "the onward march of Liberty in the Old World, will be retarded at least a century, and Monarchs, Kings, and Aristocrats will be more powerful against their subjects than ever."¹² When Lincoln, Sumner, and ordinary soldiers thus invoke the larger international liberal movement of their time, they draw our attention to a vital and illuminating element of the history of the Civil War not usually captured in the conventions of Civil War historiography but of fundamental importance.¹³ Neither the causes, meanings, nor results of the Civil War can be understood adequately outside the international context of liberal ideas of nationality and freedom that were so passionately held—and fought for—in the middle of the nineteenth century. However particular and central slavery and emancipation were to the Civil War and to American history, part of the cause of this central American event came from outside American history, from a larger history of ideas and conflicts over nationalism and freedom and about the proper balance of central and local authority.

1848

If 1848 was the year of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, it was remarkable as well for Euro-American liberal and nationalist movements. Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, prompted by the sequence of European revolutions that began in February 1848, organized the Seneca Falls Convention that summer. This convention is remembered as one of the initiating events of the modern American and international women's rights movement, and it was recognized at the time by female leaders of the Paris revolution of 1848, one of whom, Jeanne Deroin, a socialist and feminist, wrote to the Americans from a Paris prison to lend her support for subsequent conventions.¹⁴ International movements favoring abolitionism and temperance, among other reforms, were also emerging.

What was called the springtime of nations succeeded the collapse of the French monarchy in February 1848, followed by the proclamation of a republic. Americans watched European developments sympathetically

and even organized "monster meetings" in several cities to celebrate them, for they understood that their own republic was an inspiration to the revolutionaries.¹⁵ Europe, it was said, was finally choosing liberty over despotism, and the United States was the first nation to recognize the new French republic. Various other self-identified national peoples claimed entitlement to independent unified states and fundamental civil rights.¹⁶ In Vienna, Prince Metternich, chief architect of post-Napoleonic Europe, and then chancellor of the Habsburg Empire, resigned in the face of liberal nationalist uprisings and fled into exile. The Hungarians under the leadership of Lajos Kossuth claimed administrative independence from Austria and established a parliamentary government. Nationalism and liberal dreams were rampant in Bohemia, Poland, Croatia, and Serbia. Italy became partially united as a liberal constitutional monarchy under the king of Piedmont, and liberals from various German states with visions of a German parliamentary democracy met in Frankfurt as a National Assembly. The established order was shaken; some thought it might crumble, and Marx and Engels were prompted to publish *The Communist Manifesto*.

These European revolutions may have prompted the insurrection against the emperor in 1848 at Pernambuco, Brazil, while opponents of the Rosas dictatorship in Argentina, which fell in 1852, closely followed the ideas and developments of 1848, whether they were at home or in exile.¹⁷ In both Europe and Latin America the U.S. Constitution, *The Federalist Papers*, and other documents of the making of the American republic were often consulted during these heady days.

The results were meager, unfortunately, at least in the short run. But despite the disappointments of the moment, over the course of three decades, from 1848 to 1875, the progress of nationalism, constitutional governments, and new freedoms, as well as the consolidation of capitalism at the center of the international economy, defined the era.¹⁸ It was also an age of emancipation: not only were four million African-Americans liberated from slavery in the United States, but nearly forty million serfs were emancipated in the Habsburg and Russian empires.¹⁹ The American Civil War cannot be separated from these larger movements.

In "The National Idea," a lecture of 1860, Senator Seward identified the Republican Party's nationalism with the contemporary aspirations of

European liberals.²⁰ And during the Civil War, Richard Cobden, a leader among English liberals, assured the radical Republican Charles Sumner, "You are fighting the battle of liberalism in Europe as well as the battle of freedom in America."²¹ The Russian ambassador to the United States recognized these connections when he observed that "the only important difference between the nationality problems in America and in Europe is that in the first case it is complicated by the Negro element."²²

The liberal Italian Giuseppe Mazzini believed that the long toleration of slavery in the United States limited its significance as a model, but with the Union victory he believed it advanced the liberal cause. He wrote to the American Moncure Conway, a part of the Concord transcendentalist group, that the United States stood "higher and nearer to the ideal than any nation existing." The military hero of Italian unification, Giuseppe Garibaldi, to whom Lincoln had offered a command in the Union army, declined the commission but embraced the northern cause as his own, though he insisted the liberal ideals of "universal freedom" demanded that the war be fought on behalf of the "enfranchisement of the slaves." At the end of the war, Victor Hugo, using a metaphor that suggested endurance, celebrated the United States as "the guide among the nations . . . , the nation pointing out to its sister nations the granite way to liberty." Also after the war, Mazzini wrote that the war and its result is part of "mankind's progress," our "great battle—to which all local battles are episodes—fought on both continents and everywhere, between liberty and tyranny, equality and privilege, . . . justice and arbitrary rule."²³ This close association with European liberal and nationalist aspirations warrants emphasis and elaboration.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1848 was crushed by Russian intervention on behalf of Austria, and in 1850 Kossuth fled to Turkey. When Russia and Austria put pressure on the sultan to turn him over, Americans came to the rescue. In 1851, Secretary of State Daniel Webster offered to extricate Kossuth, a gesture much welcomed both by Kossuth and by the Turks. An American naval vessel took him first to England (where at the American consulate he met Mazzini, his Italian counterpart) and then to the United States. Soon after his arrival in the United States, Abraham Lincoln, as a member of a local committee in Springfield, Illinois, drafted a resolution in support of Kossuth and the Hungarians. The statement affirmed the right of the Hungarians to throw off "their exist-

ing form of government" to achieve their "national independence." While the statement did not endorse material assistance, which Kossuth wanted, Lincoln's text praised Kossuth as "the most worthy and distinguished representative of the cause of civil and religious liberty on the continent of Europe." He and his "nation," Lincoln assured the public, were supported by "friends of freedom everywhere." The resolution also lent support to the nationalist struggles of the Irish and Germans.²⁴

Like many Americans Lincoln sympathized with these nationalist aspirations, and he affirmed the right to revolution in Congress, a month before the uprisings actually broke out in Europe. In phrasing that strikingly connects the Declaration of Independence to ideas circulating in Europe in 1848, he acknowledged that "any people anywhere have the right to rise up, and shake off the existing government." Moreover, "any people that *can*, may revolutionize, and make their *own*, of so much of the territory as they inhabit."²⁵ Here and in other statements he made, the central European analogue might have predicted his support for an independent—revolutionary—South.²⁶ But Lincoln as president was to reject this way of framing the conflict—as did the white South, which fought a reactionary, not a revolutionary, war.

What was the broader meaning of the revolutions of 1848 for Lincoln and other liberals? The core issue, Lincoln insisted, was "freedom" or "slavery," and he rejected enslavement to either a plantation master or a monarch claiming sovereignty.²⁷ Stephen A. Douglas accepted the same binary, though with a revealing difference in terminology: "republicanism or absolutism."²⁸

Thus nationalism, as understood then, was inherently democratic. The presumption was that sovereignty was possessed by a given national people, not by a monarch or the state as distinct from the people. Freedom and independence were paired, and they were put in contrast with another pair, slavery and dependence. Freedom, equality, and progressive change were associated with republican nations, while hierarchy, despotism, and stasis were associated with monarchies.²⁹ Liberal nationalism was a progressive movement, with a sense that enlightenment would banish benighted social and political forms. Salmon P. Chase, a member of Lincoln's cabinet and later a Supreme Court justice, understood a liberal nation as one marked by "freedom not serfdom; freeholds not tenancy; democracy not despotism; education not ignorance." For John Stuart

Mill, the American Civil War was central in liberal aspirations. In his *Autobiography*, composed during the war, which he said engaged his "strongest feelings," this paragon of nineteenth-century liberalism wrote that it was "destined to be a turning point, for good or evil, of the course of human affairs for an infinite duration." A southern victory, he was certain, "would give courage to the enemies of progress and damp the spirits of its friends all over the civilized world."³⁰

It was easy enough to identify the parallels between the liberal side of the binary and the North American free labor ideology; likewise, the family resemblance of the monarchical-aristocratic side with the proslavery, paternalistic claims of the planter class of the American South. Lincoln fully recognized this isomorphic relation, declaring that the American Civil War concerns "more than the fate of these United States"; it addresses the "whole family of man."³¹ For Lincoln and those who joined him in the Republican Party, the antislavery crusade was part of a worldwide movement from "absolutism to democracy, aristocracy to equality, backwardness to modernity."³²

Early-nineteenth-century nationalism was romantic and idealistic, and Americans were particularly susceptible to its appeal.³³ Local difference, the genius of the place, was important to the romantic sensibility, whose concern for distinctiveness fused with notions of national identity. The fame of Walter Scott's novels throughout the Atlantic world, for example, derived in part from his extraordinary capacity to evoke the distinctiveness of Scotland. For romantic nationalists, the cultural nation—whether defined by its way of life or in more formal histories, literature, and music—was properly identical with the political nation.³⁴ And it was assumed that the nation was the natural "bulwark of freedom."³⁵ Almost as if everyone accepted a widely dispersed, commonsense version of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (1830), it was assumed that a people realized themselves in the establishment of a national state.

At the risk of introducing jargon, I would say that the ambition of the various nationalist movements was that their "space of decision" be identical with their "space of culture."³⁶ The point was made by contemporary scholars. Writing in 1862, with Hungary in mind, Lord Acton, the widely admired English liberal and historian, made the case with great economy: "The state and nation must be co-extensive." He marshaled additional support from Mill's similar observation in *Considerations on Repre-*

sentative Government (1861) that "boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities."³⁷

Liberal nationalism had a second criterion for the nation: it should be constitutional, with representative institutions. "The theory of nationality," Lord Acton insisted, "is involved in the democratic theory of sovereignty."³⁸ This was one of the great themes of the Frankfurt National Assembly, the other being one that would soon divide Lincoln and Douglas: the balance between "national citizenship" and the right of local self-government.³⁹ For both questions the men at Frankfurt kept close at hand *The Federalist Papers* and the U.S. Constitution.⁴⁰ The constitutional forms proposed varied from place to place, yet everywhere a clear affinity fused liberalism with nationalism, to the point where they seemed to be almost indistinguishable. From a comparative perspective one might fairly argue that Lincoln's fusion of freedom and nation over the course of his presidency strengthened the connection between liberalism and nationalism, while Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's illiberal unification of Germany in 1871 subverted it.⁴¹

For Americans and for most of the Atlantic world, Lajos Kossuth incarnated the general spirit of 1848, and through him we can further explore the relation of the United States to these broader movements for national unity and freedom. In Kossuth one also discovers important ambiguities and tensions inherent in liberal nationalism that help to explain some of the limits of reform in the United States and elsewhere.

Americans were fascinated with the charismatic and eloquent Kossuth, and press coverage of his time in America was extensive. Between his arrival in December 1851 and his departure six months later, *The New York Times* ran more than six hundred stories about him, along with stenographic reports of his speeches, often extending over several columns, and the menus and toasts at the many banquets in his honor. Kossuth's arrival in New York had been preceded by the publication there of a short book that introduced him, reprinting several speeches he had delivered in England, all of which anticipated his journey to the United States. While interned in Turkey, Kossuth had learned English, and, like Lincoln, he took the Bible and Shakespeare as his teachers. One of the speeches in the little book was obviously directed to Americans, but no less true to his liberal nationalism for that: "Hungary will and wishes to be a free and independent republic; but a republic founded in the rule of law, security to

person and property, and the moral development as well as the material welfare of the people—in a word, a republic like that of the United States.⁴² These words could have come from Lincoln, Seward, or any number of American liberals.

For Kossuth as for Lincoln and most Americans, the world was divided between "republicanism" and "absolutism," and that distinction shaped his campaign against Austria's domination of Hungary.⁴³ In the United States, Kossuth won the support of democracy's advocates, but not that of the anti-egalitarian senator John C. Calhoun, who insisted that no good was likely to come of the European revolutions.⁴⁴ But the meaning of Kossuth's liberal nationalism was sufficiently complex to invite support from both white southerners and northerners, though for different reasons. When he arrived in Washington in 1852, he was welcomed and celebrated by Daniel Webster, whose oratorical defense of the Union was already legend. Webster toasted Hungarian independence and the Hungarian people's claim "as a distinct nationality among the nations of Europe," while southern nationalists embraced Kossuth and his cause because they identified with the oppressed Hungarians. They thought of their distinctiveness and unease in the Union as part of the larger struggle of the time, akin to Hungary and other central European people's for national recognition and self-rule.⁴⁵

Some northerners embraced the radical potential of the Paris revolution, including Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of Central Park. His studies of the southern states, written when he was a correspondent for *The New York Times* in the 1850s, offered observational and ideological foundations for the Republican Party's interpretation of the South as a slave society. Prompted by the exciting events in Paris as well as challenges set by both the slave South and the burgeoning northern cities, Olmsted declared himself a "Socialist Democrat." His sympathy with the radical parties in Paris was unusual in the North, but it was entirely absent in the South, where spokesmen made clear their distance from the French radicalism of 1848. Defending southern nationalism, the *Richmond Daily Enquirer* declared that "there is nothing whatever in this movement of a revolutionary or Red Republican character."⁴⁶

Although no new nations emerged from the Habsburg Empire in the wake of the revolutions, the liberal ideas of the time and place, as endorsed and acted upon by the enlightened emperor Joseph II, did bring

to an end coerced labor and bondage to the soil across the Habsburg domains.⁴⁷ Abolitionists in the United States anticipated that Kossuth would support them; William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* had celebrated the Hungarian struggle for freedom. But when New York abolitionists asked Kossuth for a public statement against slavery, he declined to respond for fear that any statement would alienate some part of the American public he was courting. Garrison thereupon condemned his silence as "dishonorable" and vilified him as "demented," like the "renowned Don Quixote" who could not distinguish between giants and windmills.⁴⁸ Frederick Douglass and other abolitionists tried without success to dissuade Kossuth from extending his lecture tour to the South, but he made a southern swing.⁴⁹

Kossuth was surprisingly well attuned to the politics of regional difference. Though he gave pretty much the same lecture wherever he went, he made small but important regional adjustments: in the North he emphasized the integrity or autonomy of the nation (complaining of Russian intervention in Hungary), freedom, and progress; in the South he was more likely to accent the evils of centralization (Austrian), the right to determine one's own local institutions, and independence.⁵⁰

The illiberal elements of Kossuth's nationalism were little considered by Americans, who did not attend to the fact that he opposed the nationalist aspirations of Croats, Romanians, Slovaks, and other non-Magyar minorities in Hungary, a position that strengthened his nationalism but weakened his liberalism. When Francis Bowen, editor of Boston's august *North American Review*, attacked him for speaking the language of freedom while suppressing the freedom of linguistic minorities in Hungary, few grasped the significance of his criticism, and on account of it Bowen apparently lost his widely anticipated appointment to the Harvard faculty.⁵¹

Kossuth's Magyar nationalism was one, indivisible, and intolerant.⁵² To Croats the great Hungarian liberal was a tyrant, though he might defend himself, as Lincoln did, by arguing that he was defending his nation against disruptive elements aiming to subvert it.⁵³ In the United States, too, nationalism had a double edge: it encouraged Republicans to make freedom as extensive as the national territory; but later, after the war and Reconstruction, a racialized nationalism undermined the democratic logic of the liberalism that had sustained the Radical Republicans. This nationalism enabled, even encouraged, the abandonment of the promise

of full citizenship for freedmen, as well as the exclusion and near extermination of Native Americans in the late nineteenth century.

THE BIRTH OF NEW NATIONS

After the crisis of the American Civil War, the United States became a distinctly national society, with a national economy headquartered in New York. New York also became the capital of communications and cultural production more generally; the art market became concentrated there, as did the business of publishing books, music, and lithographs.⁵⁴ The Associated Press, established in New York City to take advantage of the newly invented telegraph, helped to shape a news environment that operated nationally and simultaneously. Washington became a national political capital rather than a meeting place of regional leaders, and its physical expansion between 1860 and 1870 expressed the dimensions of its growing centrality to American politics and administration.⁵⁵ All of this was part of a larger nineteenth-century global history.⁵⁶

Social scientists argue over many competing explanations for the emergence of modern, centralized, and development-oriented nation-states in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. For my purpose here, a general theory is unnecessary, but it is helpful to consider the cultural and institutional aspects of nineteenth-century nationalism and nation-making.

Cultural nationalism refers to the sense of belonging together to an "imagined community," partly defined by the circulation of a national literature and news among readers in a territorial entity.⁵⁷ National affiliations had other sources as well, of course. Increased population (Europe's population doubled between 1750 and 1900) and new levels of mobility left people bereft of older forms of identity and social security.⁵⁸ Throughout Europe and the Americas the nation became an ever more important locus of identification and affiliation. In the United States the war itself had promoted a sense of national belonging: as often happens in war, soldiers meet fellow recruits from other parts of the nation, and since this war was fought on national territory, they got to know that American national space, giving an experiential dimension to their feelings of national identity.

The nation-state's offer of citizenship promised new forms of security, even as it made new demands—especially military service. The balance of benefits tended to favor the state rather than the individual in all too many cases, and national state interest frequently compromised the rights promised by liberalism. Still, the institutions of the nation-state and their proffer of a sense of belonging promised welcome security in a world of social turmoil and uncertainty.⁵⁹ Indeed, by the time of the Civil War, such attachment seemed a human necessity. It was in the midst of the Civil War that Edward Everett Hale wrote his enormously popular story *The Man Without a Country*, which, he later explained, was intended to show what a "terrible thing it would be if we had not a country."⁶⁰

A second aspect of the new nations was their institutional elaboration: an undeniable historical pattern links the ideology of nationalism to the concentration and centralization of modern state power. This coupling legitimated state capacity and enhanced its effective deployment for economic and other state purposes, including the mobilization of its own citizens for war and development.⁶¹ Industrialization came to have an important connection, though difficult to specify, with nationalism,⁶² as the nation-state was increasingly accepted as the "natural unit" in which to promote economic development—and, to a degree, cultural distinction.⁶³

In 1848 it was not at all clear that the nation-state—as opposed to empires or confederations—would define the political organization of Europe and the Americas. Over the course of the next decades, however, the globe was reorganized around nation-states, as the many international fairs and exhibitions, beginning with London's Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1851, made clear. The fairs were entertainments, prompts to tourism, and theaters of consumerism, but they also modeled a world of international competition, or competitive nationalism.

The making of these new nation-states was associated with the ideology of freedom, but the process was also marked by unprecedented violence, by civil and interstate wars that achieved new levels of intensity and deadliness. Most of these wars were associated in one way or another with the transformation of eighteenth-century empires or the making or remaking of nations. By one count 177 such wars occurred in the era of the American Civil War.⁶⁴

Although it is commonplace to talk about the extraordinary level of violence and death in the American Civil War, it was not unique. Mili-

tary technologies of the time made high levels of casualties typical rather than exceptional. The Taiping Rebellion in China (1850-64) resulted in twenty-three million deaths, equal to about two-thirds of the population of the United States in 1860. The War of the Triple Alliance (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay) against Paraguay (1864-70), which was related to the national unifications of Brazil and Argentina, was fatal to unimaginable numbers of Paraguayans and nearly annihilated their nation. Estimates vary, but this small country, with a population of 525,000 at the onset of war, may have lost half of its population, leaving as few as 28,000 adult males.⁶⁵

Consider a very different case, the Paris Commune of 1871. For seventy-three days Paris was in rebellion against the centralizing policies of the French government and carried on as an autonomous municipality. The Communards, including representatives from several other major French cities, challenged what they considered "arbitrary centralization," issuing a "Declaration to the French People" that proposed "absolute autonomy" to localities and a federation of communes on the principle of "free association." The national government established at Versailles following the fall of Napoleon III sent 130,000 troops to restore national authority, and these troops killed 20,000-25,000 Parisians and arrested 40,000 more.⁶⁶ How does this terrible violence compare with that of the Civil War, in which 618,000 died? The ratios of deaths to population (of the city and the nation, respectively) were similar, profoundly affecting subsequent social and family life. So the Third Republic of France, no less than the new American nation that emerged from the Civil War, was born in blood. The oft-repeated American claim that the Civil War has the dubious honor of being the world's bloodiest before the twentieth century cannot be sustained, but my point here is that whatever the differences in ratios of victims to survivors, the United States shared with many other societies the violent process of nation-making.

That the American war and the Haitian Revolution were at heart struggles to end slavery make them distinctive. While the making of a modern nation-state often coincided with the emancipation of slaves or serfs, only in Haiti and the United States did state-sponsored emancipation require a war. In Brazil, by contrast, the planter class eventually acceded to the inevitability and ultimate rightness of emancipation; one finds there no literature of justification such as was produced in the

American South.⁶⁷ The United States was both a late and a peculiarly hesitant participant in the emancipatory movement. In Latin America emancipation of slaves began in Chile in 1810. By the time of the American Civil War, all republics in the Americas had abolished slavery; Brazil, still an empire, ended slavery in the course of becoming a republic in 1889. Otherwise only European colonies in the Americas continued to rely on enslaved workers: Dutch Guiana, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Slavery or serfdom had been eliminated in the British Empire in 1833, in the French Empire in 1848, in the Habsburg Empire in 1848, in Portugal in 1858, in the Dutch Empire in 1859-69, and in Russia in 1861.

Nowhere but in the American South did the landlord or planter class seriously resist emancipation in ways that went beyond ordinary political means, let alone resort to violence to prevent it. This resistance not only led to war but gave a distinctive character to the postwar Reconstruction, which imposed reorganization of the American South's social and economic life from the national center. By contrast, the Russian landlords, however unhappy they were about the Tsar's emancipation decree in 1861, did not challenge it, partly because to question his divine authority would generally undermine their own aristocratic rights. As a result, they were prepared to cooperate in (and allowed) the organizing of a new order. They participated—as did the serfs to a lesser degree—in defining the terms of free labor established by emancipation.⁶⁸ Lincoln repeatedly invited a constructive response from the southern planters—including compensation, as was the case in Russia—but he found no takers.

THE FEDERATIVE CRISIS

No two sets of precipitating conditions that created modern nation-states were the same, nor were any two resolutions, yet several common themes can be identified. The most important was a desire for more effective administration, for stronger armed forces, and for positive powers of state intervention on behalf of development and modernization (often meaning the advance of industrialism). One might refer to these struggles as contests over degrees and forms of centralization; to describe them as constitutional debates would be correct, too, but it would also obscure the larger interests involved. Both Jefferson Davis, president of the Confeder-

leaders of the recently established Republic of Brazil a scare in 1896-97. Euclides da Cunha, a reporter and witness who wrote a classic of Brazilian literature on the siege of Canudos by ten thousand government troops, presented the rebellion as a challenge to the secular normality of the new republic. Because it was still fragile and its capacity to hold Brazil's far-flung states together untested, the new government responded with excessive force. This "war of the end of the world," as the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa has called it in a novel of that title, was only partly about centralization and republicanism. For the rebels, religion was more important, and the government's response may have been shaped by its notions of racial difference as well as by its concern to protect central authority and the liberal state.¹²²

The battle against the Canudos resistance has been compared with earlier conflicts between the post-Civil War government of the United States and the Native American tribes.¹²³ In both cases one can observe the violent work that was all too common in making the modern nation-state. But the general context warrants mention here: the Canudos revolt represents yet another variation on the nineteenth-century struggle to delimit and establish the maximum degree of both diversity and central power that a political culture could tolerate.

TERRITORIALITY AND LIBERAL NATIONALISM

The rulers of old dynastic empires tended to be preoccupied with temporality rather than territory—with the survival of the dynasty over time. Uniformity, even contiguity, of territory was less essential. Parcels of imperial or monarchical territory could be linked by extended dynastic families and hierarchical networks of viceroys. No single place or territorial claim was indispensable save the dynastic seat and certain religious sites (such as Mecca for the Muslim Ottomans). The aim was to maintain the center and the dynasty with which it was associated.¹²⁴ The center itself could move without disrupting political authority—as in late antiquity the capital of Christian Europe and the Levant was moved from Rome to Constantinople.

Modern nation-states, by contrast, were concerned with territorial integrity, contiguity, and clarity of boundaries. Built as they were on the

notion of popular sovereignty and the logic of universal citizenship, they wanted direct or unmediated authority across the whole of the national territory.¹²⁵ The nation-state is a spatial framework for the development of power, deployed internally but also projected outward; for the elaboration of the meaning and rights of citizenship; for the development of networks and institutions that ensure the circulation of money and information; and for the institutions of everyday life.¹²⁶ Premodern states were marked by a mosaic of different rights and responsibilities, but the logic of the modern nation-state was toward uniformity and homogeneity, with a single national economy, society, culture, and polity.

A nineteenth-century national economy, increasingly industrial, was enclosed; its territory of production was the source of livelihoods and of state power.¹²⁷ Yet the industrial economy depended on markets beyond the national boundaries; goods and capital, people and knowledge were expected to flow freely across borders, even as the latter became more important. So the national territorial project, however central to the organization of the world, was inherently international and even transnational.¹²⁸ By the end of the century that doubleness had resolved itself into a new state form—the nation-state empires that dominated the political geography of the world until World War II.

The notion of self-contained nations is usually traced to the Treaty of Westphalia, which in 1648 had ended the brutal seventeenth-century wars of religion known as the Thirty Years' War. To avoid such wars in the future, the European monarchies established rules of interstate relations. Borders were to be respected, and no interference with internal affairs was permitted. These principles were carried over into the age of the modern nation-state, which mobilized its population and the resources within its territory (including colonies) for national defense and collective prosperity, and which worked to form citizens and sustain a national culture in the metropole.

An important characteristic of the new nation-state was the consolidation of a once fragmented and highly differentiated society into a uniform public realm.¹²⁹ This meant that no point within the national territory could be outside national authority, and this seemed to be connected to the tight linkage of territory and state.¹³⁰ Embedded within this new idea of public authority was a critique of the paternalistic authority (or aristocratic authority, as it was commonly phrased at the time) that a slave-

holder possessed over slaves.¹³¹ In the United States and Europe, it was believed that this older, aristocratic form of society not only violated the legacy of 1776 but ran against the logic of the emergent nation-state.¹³² Abraham Lincoln believed this, and embraced a particularly democratic version of it. In a democratic society, he argued, such mobilization of state power was to be in the interest of expanding individual opportunity and enhancing the material conditions of life. Although Lincoln was often not as inclusive as we might wish, the vision of a democratic America articulated in his message to Congress on July 4, 1861, seems to have included black Americans in a new democracy:

This is essentially a People's contest. On the side of the Union, it is a struggle for maintaining in the world, that form, and substance of government, whose leading object is, to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders—to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all—to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life. Yielding to partial and temporary departures from necessity [as existing slavery in the states], this is the leading object of the government for whose existence we contend.¹³³

It is important to distinguish America's antebellum nationalism and state capacity from the modern nation-state created after the Civil War. Though the American nation was institutionally underdeveloped in the Jacksonian era, its sense of national distinction had been strikingly ebullient. This nationalism was based not on *patria* or territory, but rather on principles, loudly proclaimed democratic ones.¹³⁴ After the consolidation of America's continental space, however, nationalism came to have a territorial cast. Continentalism itself stimulated a national "imaginary," to which remarkable transformations in communication and transportation technologies gave plausibility and even material reality. For example, the Post Office, seldom considered a historical actor, was in fact a vitally important one. If in 1800 most letters were written by merchants and sent abroad, by 1850 domestic mail accounted for a substantial majority of letters, and the Post Office also encouraged the extensive circulation of newspapers by giving them preferential rates. This circulation of books and news, along with a growing awareness of a continent-wide reader-

ship, sustained a sense of a distinctly American national literary and political community.¹³⁵ These improvements also—and importantly—facilitated an increase in state capacity, allowing administrative structures to operate on a larger, even national scale.¹³⁶

The effect of the telegraph was greater yet. Samuel F.B. Morse's invention in 1844 fundamentally changed the relation of time and space. For the first time in human history a message could travel more rapidly than a messenger. The telegraph enabled people spread across vast spaces to live contemporaneous lives. If Henry David Thoreau famously doubted that Maine had anything to communicate by telegraph to Texas, many thought otherwise. Morse expected the telegraph to make "one neighborhood of the whole country." Another commentator predicted that "we shall become more and more one people, thinking more alike, acting more alike, and having one impulse."¹³⁷

This increase in the means, modes, and volume of communication had opposite effects North and South. For the South, improved and cheaper mails brought closer the threat of northern ideas, particularly those of the abolitionists. Following David Walker's *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829), William Lloyd Garrison's publication of the first issue of *The Liberator* (1831), and Virginia's state convention in 1832 that seriously debated an end to slavery (only to reaffirm it), the South began defying slavery as a permanent institution and a positive good. Had the distance between regions not been shrunk by technology, the South might have been safer for longer from contrary ideas, but now it erected an intellectual blockade; after 1835 abolitionist literature was effectively impounded at southern post offices.¹³⁸ At about the same time, southern congressmen established a "gag rule" requiring all petitions to the U.S. Congress dealing with the slavery question to be "tabled" without being read. From the North matters looked different. John Quincy Adams was not alone in his frustration when he declared that these acts were a "violation . . . of the rights and liberties of all the free people of the United States."¹³⁹ A growing sense of national, territorial oneness made the "peculiar institution" of the South increasingly anomalous—and southern talk of expansion into the Caribbean, especially Cuba, all the more disturbing to many northerners.

The heightened sense of territoriality, of unified and uniform national territories, was evident throughout the Atlantic world—and beyond. It

helps explain the allusions to crisis in the language of Lincoln and other Republicans and the reasons why a historic difference became intolerable to them. The abolition issue was forced in part because they knew of the progress of emancipation elsewhere in the Atlantic world—fueled in part by the liberal ideas of 1848 and by the new understanding of nation and national territory.

The belief that the division of the Union into slave and free states would make for an "irrepressible conflict" was first enunciated by Senator Seward in Rochester, New York, in 1858. The "two systems" of society and politics that characterized the North and the South, he declared, were "incongruous." Indeed, "they are more than incongruous—they are incompatible." If the Union were a "confederation of states," perhaps slavery and freedom might coexist. But if "the United States constitute only one nation," that would not be possible. And the United States, he insisted, was becoming such a consolidated nation:

Increase of population, which is filling the states out to their very borders, together with a new and extended net-work of railroads and other avenues, and an internal commerce which daily becomes more intimate, is rapidly bringing the states together into a higher and more perfect social unity or consolidation. Thus, these antagonistic systems are continually coming into closer contact, and collision results . . .

The United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free-labor nation.

The direction of history, as he saw it, pointed toward the triumph of free labor, on which modern states were built. Even Russia and Turkey, in preparation for joining Europe and "modern times," were making the transition to free labor.¹⁴⁰ Put differently: Seward, like other Republicans, envisioned a modern American state (and perhaps modernity in general) as the North writ large, realizing the European ideals of 1848 and fulfilling American democracy.

The highly commercialized and ever more industrialized North was part of a North Atlantic core of nations that exchanged goods and technologies in all directions. The South, too, had important connections to Europe, especially to England, but it was a semicolonial relationship.

Like India and Egypt, the South provided raw materials for the industrial core, which included the northern states. Again like India and Egypt, the South relied on coerced labor that shared little of the profits, which went to a narrow elite.

The worry about incompatible difference and the threat of disunion was a new one for the United States at mid-century. Its founding generation of political leaders had not been especially alarmed by the possibility of separation, and maintaining territorial integrity on a continental scale was not something they considered essential to republican liberty. The Union was understood as an experiment, which might or might not be perpetual. Washington's Farewell Address included an observation that "experience" would determine the success of the Union. "It is worth a fair and full experiment," he counseled his countrymen. The Federalists at the Hartford Convention who threatened to secede during the War of 1812 also characterized the Union as "experimental." Jefferson, who supported the war that impelled them to Hartford, thought the Union was "a means rather than an end." These comments are all in the language of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Only later would romantic nationalism invest the "nation" with emotional power and the assumption of perpetuity.

So union and nation were quite different concepts. Union was a constitutional strategy contrived to bring together and strengthen a vulnerable confederacy, and it was understood to be distinct from a nation. Use of the word "nation" was specifically rejected in Philadelphia in 1787, and Madison described the work of the convention as that of writing a "federal," and not a *national* Constitution.¹⁴¹ Various leaders, including Henry Clay, a strong nationalist, later speculated without panic on the possibility of regional confederacies.¹⁴²

By mid-century, however, liberal nationalism had acquired new emotional and practical power. Since nation was now being identified with unified national space, division was understood as reduction. Without unity, there was no nation; without a nation, there was no liberty. Such thinking was a long way from Jefferson's; a unified nation had become an absolute, an end in itself.

John Marshall, the great chief justice and a staunch nationalist, challenged the Jeffersonian view from the outset. His vision of national consolidation was unusual in its time, and his decisions helped to make the

nationalism for which he spoke a reality. *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810), *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), and *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824) established the Constitution as the "supreme law of the land," making the federal government superior to, not merely a partner with, the states. In *Coburn v. Virginia* (1821), a less well known case that was decided in the wake of the controversy over the admission of Missouri to the Union, Marshall outlined his vision of national unity:

That the United States form, for many, and for most important purposes, a single nation, has not yet been denied. In war, we are one people. In making peace, we are one people. In all commercial regulations, we are one and the same people . . . America has chosen to be, in many respects, and to many purposes, a nation; and for all these purposes, her government is complete; to all these objects, it is competent. The people have declared, that in the exercise of all the powers given for these objects it is supreme . . . The constitution and laws of a State, so far as they are repugnant to the constitution and laws of the United States, are absolutely void. These States are constituent parts of the United States.

In acknowledging the states as constituent parts and a distinct realm of action, he did allow for local difference. He did not describe a consolidated state. Marshall the Virginian here provided space for slavery beyond the power of the federal government. For the sake of slavery, his nationalism had limits. But he allowed no space for a doctrine of secession. He insisted that the Constitution was made by the people and could be unmade only by "the whole body of the people; not in any sub-division of them."¹⁴²

Republicans in the 1850s were more democratic than the conservative Marshall, and they were more comfortable with a consolidated nation-state. Their ideal was one of uniformity and an equal citizenry. Whatever the universalism of rhetoric, before the Civil War the vision of equal citizenship was limited to whites (and males), just as the freedom of linguistic minorities that Kossuth championed was limited to his fellow Magyars and not extended to the smaller linguistic "nations" in Hungary. American Republicans concurred with Mazzini, who believed that "individual liberty and national self-determination" required "a unitary Re-

public."¹⁴³ In Europe and the United States ideas of sovereignty—and thus democracy—became associated with territory. Not that the land was sovereignty incarnate, but rather that the people within a bounded national space were sovereign. Territory defined citizenship and all citizens were formally equal, thus implying (though not always realizing) both democracy and uniformity of standing.

The political theory of the American Civil War was embedded in such an idea of the national state. In his book *The American Republic* (1866), the brilliant, though eccentric, American philosopher Orestes Brownson linked republicanism, territory, and nationalism. Concurring with Lincoln that the war represented a "new start in history," Brownson argued that the struggle "for national unity and integrity" had brought to the nation "a distinct recognition of itself." He insisted that the new democracy was properly associated with the territorial state. A polity such as had existed in the antebellum South relied on personal relations and was thus quasi-feudal. A "people territorially constituted" dissolved this feudal hierarchy; the Civil War established territorial democracy throughout the United States. Slavery was abolished "for reasons of state, in order to save the territorial democracy."¹⁴⁴ Brownson's argument usefully joins Lincoln's expectation of uniformity and his insistence on territorial unity. "The question," Lincoln explained in a special message to Congress soon after the war began, is "whether a constitutional republic, or a democracy—a government of the people, by the same people—can or cannot, maintain its territorial integrity, against its own domestic foes."¹⁴⁵ Or, as he had put it more sharply in 1856, well before the war, "The Union must be preserved in the purity of its principles as well as the integrity of its territorial parts."¹⁴⁶

If Lincoln's first concern was to preserve the Union, his presidency culminated in a war to emancipate the slaves. His own moral, intellectual, and political journey involved a fundamental transformation in his conception of the United States, which his changing language reveals. The United States became a singular noun. In his first inaugural he used the word "union" twenty times, without mentioning "nation." Then he used the word "union" less and less, while "nation" and "national" became more prominent. The political language in his second inaugural is striking: the South sought to dissolve the "union," while the North was fighting to preserve the "nation."¹⁴⁷ The Gettysburg Address (Novem-

ber 19, 1863) is most telling of all. There Lincoln did not mention the United States once—he was speaking to and for the whole human community—nor did he refer to the Union. Yet five times in this brief speech of only 269 words he used the word “nation.” He promised a rebirth of freedom in a *nation*, a democratic nation, and he offered it as a model for all humankind. This new strong and democratic nation was more than a central government. It was founded on a materially unified national territory, not a mystical union. In his second annual message to Congress in December 1862, a month before the Emancipation Proclamation, he had elaborated on this point:

A nation may be said to consist of its territory, its people, and its laws. The territory is the only part which is of certain durability . . . It is of the first importance to duly consider, and estimate, this enduring part. That portion of the earth's surface which is owned and inhabited by the people of the United States, is well adapted to be the home of one national family; and it is not well adapted for two, or more. Its vast extent, and its variety of climate and productions, are of advantage, in this age, for one people, whatever they might have been in former ages. Steam, telegraphs, and intelligence, have brought these, to be an advantageous combination, for a united people.¹⁴⁶

During the 1850s the controversy over the territories had prevented the organization and development of the continental domain that constituted the nation as Lincoln described it. It is often said that plans for a continental railroad gave political urgency to the task of resolving the problem of the territories. That is true, yet only part of the story. Land for farmers was more important than Americans might realize today, when farmers are fewer in number than college students. In 1860, 80 percent of the population was rural, and protecting the interest of free, white farmers was a high priority. The Republicans' commitment to homestead legislation was easily as strong as their commitment to a protective tariff for industry and subsidies for railroads.

Whether they were looking for voters in cities or voters on farms, the Republicans' core program and appeal was the ideal of free labor. That ideal was more than a matter of labor relations; it was a vision of individual opportunity. A slave society was incompatible with that national vi-

sion, and they considered the extension of slavery into the territories a direct assault on the free labor ideal. If on the other hand slavery were barred from the territories, they would become the destination of new European immigrants. As Seward described the process in a speech in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1860, these immigrants would submerge their differences into “one nation and one people only.” As one reads his speech, however, one cannot but think of the openly acknowledged goals of the immigration policy being developed in Argentina as he spoke. As noted earlier, that nation welcomed massive immigration to populate its agricultural regions so as to Europeanize or whiten the population.¹⁴⁹

For good constitutional reasons Republicans focused on the territories, not on the existing slavery in the southern states. Republicans believed that Congress had both the power and the obligation to organize the territories. The organization of the Northwest Territory, and the Missouri Compromise, were precedents indicating that prohibition of slavery in the territories was within its power. Jefferson Davis and others since him have declared it would have been easier to respect the Republicans had they proposed ending slavery everywhere in the national territory. But here we must take seriously Lincoln's repeated statements that Republicans were realists and respecters of the constitutional protection of slavery in the states. He, Seward, and other Republican leaders repeatedly said they could live with constitutionally protected slavery in the South so long as they were confident, as they believed the founders had been, that in time slavery, thus contained, would become extinct in the United States.

That confidence was shaken by the Compromise of 1850; by the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, with its scheme for popular sovereignty that removed moral censure from slavery (1854); and by the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision (1857), which not only ruled that no Negro could become a citizen or possess “rights which the white man was bound to respect” but also declared—in what Republicans claimed were mere obiter dicta—that Congress had no power to prohibit slavery in the territories.¹⁵⁰ Now Republicans feared, as Lincoln put it in his first debate with Stephen Douglas, that “there is a *tendency*, if not a conspiracy . . . to make slavery perpetual and universal in this nation.”¹⁵¹

This worrisome prospect reversed the Republicans' reading of American history.¹⁵² To their minds, the preference, tendency, and expectation of right-thinking Americans from the founders on had been of the eventual

disappearance of slavery. As Atlantic liberals, they had been cheered to see that slavery was disappearing throughout the Atlantic world, and they did not wish the United States to be an exception. Insofar as they agreed with liberal nationalists everywhere that a modern nation, which the United States was surely becoming, would be uniform, they feared what Lincoln called the "nationalization of slavery." Rather, they sought the nationalization of "free labor, free soil, free men."¹⁵³ The issue demanded resolution. In a private letter in 1855, Lincoln asked: "Can we, as a nation, continue together *permanently*—forever—half slave, half free?"¹⁵⁴ Later, when nominated to the Senate in 1858, he made his most famous statement of this Republican worry: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*. I do not expect the Union to be *disolved*—I do not expect the house to *fall*—but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided. It will become *all* one thing or *all* the other."¹⁵⁵

For the American, or Know-Nothing, Party, a briefly popular nationalist party founded in 1849 that called for the exclusion of immigrants and Catholics from public office and a twenty-one-year residence qualification for citizenship, the question of who was "in" or "out" of the nation was the stuff of politics. But for the Republicans the issue was cast differently; they focused on the question of deviance within the national territory. How far might the nation depart from the promise of freedom and equality in the Declaration of Independence? In their debates, Douglas insisted that Lincoln's House Divided speech envisioned an absolute uniformity across the whole territory of America, and "uniformity" seemed to be "the parent of despotism, the world over." The founders, according to him, recognized diversity in the large nation and accommodated it by leaving to the states the regulation of local institutions.¹⁵⁶ Lincoln responded that he fully recognized the diversities that grew from differences in soil and climate. They were a source of national strength, providing "bonds of Union" and making a "house united." But, he asked, can the "question of slavery be considered as among *these* varieties in the institutions of the country?"¹⁵⁷

In the 1850s slavery became entangled with another, even more provocative deviation from national uniformity. Polygamy among the Mormons in the Utah Territory was nearly universally condemned—by Lincoln, by Douglas, by the North, and by the South. A local problem

became a national embarrassment. The rapid growth of the Mormon population in Utah meant that soon they could seek statehood, which was more than a little worrisome. Marriage, like slavery, was a domestic institution and thus a matter reserved to the states by the Constitution. Utah, which already permitted slavery, could legalize both polygamy and slavery, thus making a mockery of national virtue. The first Republican Party platform in 1856 condemned polygamy and slavery. For Lincoln and the Republicans the issue was clear, and the Republican platform declared it the "right and duty of Congress to prohibit in the territories those twin relics of barbarism—polygamy and slavery." It was less clear for southerners. They wanted to affirm monogamous marriage and the family (which they saw as the foundation of plantation paternalism), but they did not want to endorse congressional power to regulate domestic institutions in territories or, worse, states. Douglas, with his mantra of "popular sovereignty," was in a particularly difficult situation, with little room to maneuver. Lincoln trapped him in the debates by asking whether his policy of popular sovereignty meant that the people of Utah could vote to allow polygamy.¹⁵⁸ Douglas wiggled out by proposing that the boundaries of the Utah Territory be redrawn, attaching half to Nevada, half to Colorado, thus diluting the Mormon vote.¹⁵⁹

To Republicans, polygamy was a question of freedom or, rather, unfreedom, since they assumed that under the Mormon patriarchal authority the meaningful consent of women was lacking. Justin Morrill, a Republican leader who wrote key legislation, including the Morrill Tariff and the Morrill Act that created the land-grant colleges, also wrote the Morrill Act for the Suppression of Polygamy. Given the political complexity of the issue, the bill, introduced in 1860, was not finally passed until 1862, after the war had begun. But the timing of its introduction is important, for it assumed a supervisory power over the conditions of domestic institutions in the territories, a power that had recently been rejected in the *Dred Scott* decision that Republicans excoriated.¹⁶⁰

The threat the Mormons posed to the national commitment to monogamous marriages is clear, but here I want to emphasize its challenge to a uniform national state. The Republicans fully understood this. After the war, President Ulysses S. Grant affirmed the national standard by appointing a former Union general as governor of the Utah Territory, and he named as chief justice of the Utah Supreme Court a jurist named

James McKean, who had declared that the Mormons represented an unacceptable "*imperium in imperio*." "Federal Authority," he worried, was being challenged by a "Polygamic Theodicy."¹⁶¹

Grant's successors—Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, and Chester A. Arthur—all thought that the Mormon question was important enough to include in their annual messages to Congress. At the same time, discussion of Mormon marriage was increasingly racialized—which drew an important line between those who were Americans and those who were some kind of "other." Monogamy was identified with European whites, while references to Mormon women likened them to "squaws," "Asiat-ics," "Africans," or "Mohammadians." This was part of a postwar fusion of Christian civilization, whiteness, and American nationality that paralleled the decline of the Radical Republican vision of justice for those emancipated from slavery. Utah did not gain statehood until 1896, and then only after the Mormon Church in 1890 advised its members "to refrain from contracting any marriages forbidden by the law of the land."¹⁶²

Surviving Native American tribes posed a similar problem. The Constitution gave these tribes quasi-national status and authorized the government to make treaties with them. With the emergence of a modern nation-state, the Indians, always vulnerable because of the whites' nearly unbridled quest for land, became problematic in a new way. The antebellum government had dispossessed the Indians of their land but had accepted the notion of Indian "nations," even if dependent, within the United States, negotiating with and making treaties with them. The postbellum state refused this practice. In 1871 Congress declared that "hereafter no Indian nation or tribe within the territory of the United States shall be acknowledged or recognized as an independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty."¹⁶³

With the end of the treaty system, U.S. Indian policy came under the ordinary statutory process, which meant that Native American tribes were no longer recognized as political communities. But neither were Native Americans granted citizenship; they became "wards of the nation."¹⁶⁴ Current scholarship celebrates the leaders of Radical Reconstruction for using national authority to address issues of race, education, and labor in the South directly and positively, but with respect to Indians they used this new national power in troubling ways. Not only did the Reconstruction Congress deny tribes the status of a polity, but it tried to

gather them onto reservations where they were expected to pursue a Euro-American agricultural way of life as individual farmers. It was proposed that individual ownership and monogamous marriage would prepare Native American males for citizenship, which was granted to Indians of both sexes in 1924.¹⁶⁵

At the same time, the secretary of the interior instructed Indian agents that the reservations were to be "as remote as practicable from any of the leading routes across the plains, or the usual thoroughfares of the people of the different Territories."¹⁶⁶ Indians, save for those living in the Oklahoma and Dakota territories, were dispossessed of their lands, and it was expected that these two territories would receive them. This plan was carefully designed to ensure that Indians did not impede the whites' development, though the objective also meant that the plan to convert Indians into prosperous farmers was compromised from the outset.

Not coincidentally, in the same decades President Domingo Sarmiento of Argentina, who had been Argentine ambassador to the United States during the Civil War, pursued a similar policy after the Paraguayan War.¹⁶⁷ The Indian wars and the relocation policies in the Great Plains of the United States and the Argentine "Conquest of the Desert," south of Buenos Aires, concluded the protracted wars of destruction directed against indigenous peoples and their historical ways of life throughout the Americas. These were the last wars of national consolidation, and they marked the beginning of the great agricultural export economies, which enriched Chicago, New York, and Buenos Aires.

The national consolidation accomplished in 1867 by the Meiji Restoration in Japan also brought destruction to an indigenous "other," the Ainu. These physically distinct, light-skinned aboriginal people were native to the northern frontier island of Hokkaido. Like the American Midwest, this region was well adapted to the cultivation of wheat and to cattle raising, and the government hired an American, Horace Capron, to advise it on development and on the management of the Ainu. The policy he advised and the government pursued was essentially that initiated by the United States in 1871.¹⁶⁸ The Japanese outlawed many of the traditional communal practices of the Ainu, including their language. Henceforth they were to be *heimin*, or "commoners," of the newly centralized Japanese state. A few years later, the government identified them using a remarkable neologism, *kyōdojin*, or "former native." Ainu

tribal law was refused recognition, and after 1875 many Ainu were given Japanese names on government registries—for efficiency's sake, the officials sometimes gave a whole Ainu village the same surname.¹⁶⁹ But the parallel extends further: an agricultural and technical college, based on the model of the American land-grant colleges established by the Morrill Act, was established in Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido, in 1876. In fact, the founder, William Clark, whose statue today faces the American-style brick buildings of the original quadrangle, was the former president of the University of Massachusetts, one of the earliest land-grant colleges. Capron and other American advisers, many of whom learned baseball as Civil War soldiers, also introduced the game to Japan at this time.¹⁷⁰

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

In 1854, with the Whig Party dissolving and a series of minor parties emerging, a political realignment was clearly on the horizon. In retrospect, it seems obvious that a third American two-party system was developing, and the new Republican Party would be the successor to the Whigs. At the time, however, it was not so obvious. The Whigs could easily have been replaced by the nativist Know-Nothing Party. Catholics and immigrants might have displaced black slaves as the hot topic of national politics. Certainly hostility to immigrants, especially Catholics, was commonplace. That votes for the antislavery party could have gone to a party of ethnic and religious bigotry is not implausible. After all, antislavery sentiments and racism often resided comfortably in the same mind. Moreover, there was a similarity of outlook among those who condemned slavery and those who condemned immigrants and Catholics: they were strong nationalists who each in his own fashion wanted a more uniform national society. Both plantation slavery and Catholicism evoked worries about family, gender, and sexuality. Although we readily recall that Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was a bestseller of the 1850s, we should also take notice of another bestseller: *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk* (1836, 1855, 1856), a salacious anti-Catholic novel.¹⁷¹ Tracts of the abolitionists and of the nativists shared a prurient fascination with the sexual power that men, whether slaveholders or priests, held over women in hierarchical social arrangements. The middle-class

Victorian Americans who would in time sustain the Republicans were disturbed about the corruption of families, whether in the largely unknown urban immigrant quarters, or in the equally mysterious world of southern plantations or in the Utah Territory.¹⁷² The regularizing impulse of modernizing nationalism prompted them to pay greater attention and to police more rigorously deviant patterns of sexuality, gender relations, and family arrangements.¹⁷³

Family and gender issues were not central to the political conflicts surrounding slavery, but neither were they irrelevant. Abolitionists and moderate opponents of slavery commonly talked about the dangers that slavery posed for proper family life, a point that was prominent in Stowe's famous novel, whose title character cannot maintain his house, home, or family under slavery.¹⁷⁴

Promoting marriage among emancipated slaves was a major objective of the Republicans' Reconstruction policy and central to the work of the Freedmen's Bureau, as well as an ambition of the former slaves themselves, who sought the legal marriages that had been denied them in slavery. Republican reformers, working through the Freedmen's Bureau, were also committed to establishing the African-American male as head of the household and the family breadwinner supporting his wife and family. Thus were upstanding, hardworking citizens made. William Kelley, a Republican representative from Pennsylvania and father of the notable Progressive Era reformer Florence Kelley, explained that the "freedman" would become a full participant in American life when he could "feel that he is a man with a home to call his own, and a family around him, a wife to protect, children to nurture and rear, wages to be earned and received, and a right to invest his savings in the land of the country." Republicans understood this as justice for the former slaves, but they also wanted national uniformity in family life. This is one reason why the party's reformers were hesitant to support women's rights, and why suffrage and equal rights for women were not included in the constitutional amendments passed after the Civil War. In fact, an early draft of the Thirteenth Amendment, stating that "all persons are equal before the law," was modified when it was pointed out that such language would mean that "a wife would be equal to her husband and as free as her husband before the law."

Marriage was entangled in a fundamental way with nineteenth-century liberal notions of freedom and government. The republican

government celebrated by Americans was, as John Locke insisted and Thomas Jefferson reiterated in the Declaration of Independence, based on consent, and so was a proper marriage. That is why slave marriages were an issue. Only a free person can effectively consent, which is why marriage among slaves was prohibited by planters and championed by abolitionists. Although they recognized that consent made a large difference, still many women's rights activists compared the power of the husband over his wife to that of a master over a slave. The self-possession denied to the slave was also denied to the married woman. Antoinette Brown Blackwell, an abolitionist, made this point in 1853: "The wife owes service and labor to her husband as much and as absolutely as the slave does to his master."¹⁷⁵

If there was a certain resemblance between the concerns of voters drawn to the American and Republican parties, the American Party, it seems, elicited the worst of American traditions, while the Republican Party—and especially Lincoln—sought association with the best of them, which may in part explain the success of the latter and dissolution of the former. Lincoln despised Know-Nothingism. Writing to the abolitionist Owen Lovejoy in 1855, he expressed a hope to win adherents from among supporters of the American Party, but he would have nothing of their principles. "Of their principles I think little better than I do of those of the slavery extensionists."¹⁷⁶ Similarly to Joshua Speed, with whom in 1841 he had traveled by steamboat from St. Louis to Louisville, where the sight of "ten or a dozen, slaves shackled together in irons" tormented him, he wrote:

I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can anyone who abhors the oppression of negroes be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that "all men are created equal." We now practically read it "all men are created equal, except negroes." When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners and catholics."¹⁷⁷

With unexpected speed, the American Party collapsed after the 1856 election, and the Republican Party absorbed many of its earlier adherents.

But it was a confusing moment, with voters supporting a variety of minor parties and movements in the course of realignment. In the end, Republican affirmations appealed more than Know-Nothing negations.

The Republicans wanted a bigger and better America. Lucy Larcom, a New England writer who in the 1830s had left her poor farm family to work in a Lowell, Massachusetts, textile factory, was one of those Republicans. "What is to become of our country?" she wrote to a friend in 1856. "I do not believe it can remain united long, and I don't know that we *ought* to join hands with wickedness.—So many good people are saying now, 'If only the North *could* only withdraw *peacefully* from the Union! But it is impossible.'"¹⁷⁸ Apparently, like Seward, Larcom believed that slavery was incompatible with the "greatness of nations."¹⁷⁹

Audacity appealed more than acquiescence. Republicans believed that the normal condition of life in the United States should be freedom and that this normality would be realized in time, in history. To envision a progressive realization of freedom was ambitious; to work to ensure it was a radical commitment. By embracing a party that condemned slavery without equivocation, the electorate was challenging the antebellum politics of avoidance and radically changing the rules of American party politics. The white South was not wrong to interpret the election of Lincoln as a sort of revolution.

The Republican Party was a sectional party with a nationalist vision. At one level it represented sectional interests and sought national legitimacy and favorable federal policy for those interests. But at another level was the moral grandeur in the Republican condemnation of slavery, even before Lincoln gave his great speeches. When Senator Seward spoke the language of a "higher law," he gave Republican policy a moral meaning that went beyond the conventional politics of maneuver and interest. Some things, he insisted, were beyond procedures and votes. They could imagine the nation without slavery.

More immediately, practically, and determinedly, the Republicans insisted that slavery must not expand beyond its existing borders. Republican antislavery rhetoric was framed around a modern and, they thought, liberating concept of free labor. Their commitment to free labor, as Eric Foner has brilliantly demonstrated, constituted the core of their ideology.¹⁸⁰ In 1860, speaking on "The National Idea," Seward explained the Republican creed to a Chicago audience. It is "based on the principles of

free soil, free labor, free speech, equal rights, and universal suffrage," which, he noted, were shared by the liberal and nationalist movements of Europe, and for Republicans were the "great, living, national idea of freedom."¹⁸¹ The South was the land of the unfree in an era that celebrated liberty. History, as all could see by 1861, was running against the South's "peculiar institution"; the future belonged to free labor and to the indicators of modernization that characterized the North and not the South: literacy, invention, education, urbanization, industrialization, and population growth.¹⁸²

Free labor condemned slavery, but it also had a vision of life that went well beyond the terms of labor. Though after the Civil War it was reduced to an assertion of a worker's freedom to contract for wages, at mid-century—in the United States and elsewhere—free labor principles usually included an expanded sense of individual rights.¹⁸³ The ideology included the ideas of self-possession and of not being dependent; it was, especially, a promise of the opportunity to improve one's lot in life. It was a moral vision that found expression in material improvement. Or was it a materialist notion of the meaning of human life expressed in moral terms? In fact, these two perspectives were fused. The pervasive spirit of nationalism had a similar doubleness, at times blending into the spirit of capitalism.¹⁸⁴

The ideology of free labor suggested the matrix of material incentives to work and, presumably, to rise in society. This ideology of freedom was less about eighteenth-century republican liberty than about nineteenth-century individual opportunity, as Lincoln made clear. "Improvement of condition," he argued, is the "great principle for which this government was really formed." It was a principle that for him included African-Americans: "I want every man to have the chance—and I believe the black man is entitled to it—in which he *can* better his condition."¹⁸⁵ In the slave South, by contrast, as Richard Hildreth—a historian and opponent of slavery—insisted, the "effect of the slaveholding system is to deaden in every class of society that *spirit of industry* essential to the increase of public wealth."¹⁸⁶

As these Republican spokesmen for economic expansion, modernity, and national progress condemned the South, they declined to acknowledge that its vital economic resources, which accounted for two-thirds of America's exports, fueled the dynamic northern economy that they wished to extend. Without the profits from the slave South, to say nothing

ing of the cotton sent to New England textile factories, northern commercial, financial, and industrial development would have been later and slower.¹⁸⁷

While Democrats in the North and even more so in the South were uneasy with the idea of a strong national state, with industrialization, and with modernization, Republicans spoke in their favor, and after the war made them the instruments by which the "businessman" became a civic leader, whether a local proprietor or the director of a national corporation.¹⁸⁸ They wanted the newly available positive power of government to be used to reconstruct the South and to build a national and industrial economy. It was a power never before exercised or even known in the United States. No other nation at that time had mobilized such power for internal social transformation and economic development on the scale of Reconstruction and postwar industrialization.

The Republicans' grand vision of the possibilities of economic development was presented in a program fairly characterized as "national economic activism."¹⁸⁹ During and after the war, Congress, dominated by Radical Republicans, invested in transportation, including a transcontinental railroad, symbol both of national unity and of modernity;¹⁹⁰ enacted a protective tariff to help industry and to generate revenue needed for a strong state; created a national bank and a national currency; instituted a homestead policy that made land in the territories available to farmers; and, with the creation of land-grant colleges in every state, established a national system of higher education. Except for the tariff, these were, in the 1860s, Atlantic liberal policies, and by the 1870s the agendas in other Atlantic world nations also turned to protectionism, making the Republicans in the United States no longer outliers.¹⁹¹

The Radical Republicans, rightly remembered for their commitment to extending rights to the former slaves, created both a national economy and national (male) citizenship. With the Fourteenth Amendment they established for the first time a constitutional definition of American citizenship. Even with its failures and incompleteness, the work of Reconstruction in the South was a radical deployment of the powers of the national state to reform a society and confer rights on a population previously without legal standing.

It is often and rightly remarked that the failure to provide the former slaves with land reveals the limits of the Radical Republican program. Still, the combination of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth

amendments, along with the Reconstruction Act of 1867, established the foundation for equal citizenship on which we are still building. Had the national government not later retreated from its commitment to enforce the rights affirmed in these amendments, Reconstruction's full radicalism would be more clearly evident. But that transferring property to freedmen was beyond the reach of Reconstruction still bears noting. Comparison with the emancipation of the serfs in Russia, where the serfs were allowed to gain ownership of the land they had worked, is revealing: by 1900, two-fifths of Russia's agricultural land was owned by former serfs, while in the states of the former Confederacy all but a very small fraction of the land was still owned by white planters.¹⁹² The unhappy consequences were already evident in the economic, political, and indeed personal vulnerabilities of former slaves and their children when Reconstruction came to an end in 1877, when the national government abandoned the freedmen and returned power to the white planter elites of the southern states, the so-called redeemers.

Nation-making, whether in the United States or in France and in other states, combined seemingly antagonistic but in fact complementary tendencies: a centralization of power and administration, concurrent with the individualization of the national citizenry. New state powers and new liberties emerged together.¹⁹³ Democracy expanded along with "the birth of the modern American state," including the institutional infrastructure of modern state administration.¹⁹⁴ As the Civil War ended, a writer in *The Nation* grasped the enormity of the accomplishment:

The issue of the war marks an epoch by the consolidation of nationality under democratic forms . . . This territorial, political, and historical oneness of the nation is now ratified by the blood of thousands of her sons . . . The prime issue of the war was between nationality one and indivisible, and the loose and changeable federation of independent states.¹⁹⁵

The result was a national government; no longer could one consider that the states were parallel to the national government. Now, as Woodrow Wilson put it in 1889, the state administrations and the federal one were "two parts of one and the same government."¹⁹⁶ But the war meant more; it was to be a government of the people, of citizens, a government "founded upon justice, and recognizing the equal rights of all men," as

Frederick Douglass insisted, "claiming no higher authority for its existence, or sanction for its laws, than nature, reason, and the regularly ascertained will of the people."¹⁹⁷

In their classic, once widely read history *The Rise of American Civilization* (1927), Charles and Mary Beard underplayed the significance of slavery and overstated the Republicans' economic interests in their interpretation of the Civil War, but they rightly emphasized that the war produced a new social order and a "new power in government."¹⁹⁸ And here they echoed Wilson, who in 1901 wrote: "A government which had been in its spirit federal became, almost of a sudden, national in temper and point of view."¹⁹⁹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, who had closely observed the war and its impact, also remarked on the change: "Before the war, our patriotism was a fireworks, a salute, a serenade for holidays, and summer evenings . . . Now the deaths of thousands and the determination of millions of men and women show that it is real."²⁰⁰ Emerson here grasped what geographers have more recently argued: that in the United States patriotic nationalism had preceded state formation.²⁰¹ But the crucible of the Civil War fused the nation, which is a "principle" or ethos, with the state, which is a "*réalité concrète*."²⁰² Sovereignty, citizenship, central regulation, and capitalism converged in Americans' everyday economic relations. All together it was, as the Beards phrased it, a "Second American Revolution."²⁰³

Deploying state power unimaginable a generation earlier, Congress, dominated by Radical Republicans, eradicated an institution that had been central to the national economy, a source of enormous private wealth (estimated at \$4 billion) in the South, and the cornerstone of southern social life.²⁰⁴ And they deployed this newly created state to lay the foundations of a powerful industrial economy. One thinks of initiatives ranging from the protective tariff to subsidies for railroads, from homesteads to agricultural experiment stations, but the creation of a national currency may best reveal the government's extension into everyday life. Before the war, ten thousand different bills were printed by hundreds of unregulated private banks and untold numbers of counterfeiters. Could one trust the value of a bill? The question of confidence was, as Herman Melville showed in his novel *The Confidence-Man* (1857), a daily challenge. Now the local uncertainties were removed; a strong national government produced a uniform currency and invited everyone to trust in the nation to ensure its value.²⁰⁵

Dollar bills pass so easily and quickly through our hands that we are little inclined to consider their political importance, yet the habitual, unremarkable use of money in fact sustains a "banal nationalism." Establishing a territorially exclusive currency was a fundamental aspect of the making of modern nation-states everywhere.²⁰⁶ In the United States, antebellum banknotes had been associated with local institutions and were often illustrated with local landmarks, but the new national currency displayed national icons: Washington, Franklin, the flag, and the Capitol. One newspaper commented that every time a citizen "handled" or looked at "a bill bearing the national mark," he or she would be reminded that "the union of these states is verily a personal benefit and blessing to all." No one better understood this than Senator and later Secretary of the Treasury John Sherman, brother of the famous Civil War general William Tecumseh Sherman. A key figure in formulating Republican financial policy, Sherman was attuned to the ways a national currency enhanced a "sentiment of nationality." "If we are dependent on the United States for a currency and medium of exchange," he wrote in 1863, "we shall have a broader and more generous nationality."²⁰⁷ Holders of notes backed by the Treasury would necessarily be interested in the fate of the national government.

The Civil War marked the transformation of an agricultural society into an industrial nation or, as the Beards famously argued, the triumph of the industrial North over the agricultural South. By 1873, industrial production had increased by 75 percent over its level in 1865, and the United States was second only to Great Britain as a manufacturing nation. Thirty-five thousand miles of new railroad track was laid in the eight years following the surrender at Appomattox. By 1900, the industrial power of the United States was unsurpassed, as would soon be revealed in World War I.

That this development would follow national unification was not unexpected; in fact, it had been a motive of those who worked for that unification. The new nation-states that emerged from the successful resolution of the mid-century "federative crisis" nearly all experienced impressive rates of economic development: this was the case in Germany, while the creation of the Dual Monarchy enabled the creation of the Hungarian nation-state, which produced a burst of entrepreneurial energy. Many people compared rapidly growing Budapest to the example of

American cities. In Japan, too, the consolidation of a modern state underwent rapid economic development, and with its new liberal constitution and consolidated national government Argentina prospered. Indeed, its massive immigration, agricultural productivity, and rapid industrialization nearly paralleled those of the United States; by the end of the century Argentina's was the world's sixth-largest economy. And the mid-century pattern of centralization resulted in significant, although not so dramatic, industrialization in the old land empires: Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and China (where it occurred in a complex relation with semi-colonial foreign investment).

The U.S. experience was not unique, but its development was surely among the most striking. In the spirit of the liberal values of 1848, it had undertaken, on behalf of social betterment and economic development, a nationalist program of state-supported initiatives, but the promised benefits were almost immediately compromised by the premature abandonment of Reconstruction. Although slavery was ended, free labor did not flourish in the South—and this setback had everything to do with cotton.

Cotton, as leaders in the South had often claimed, was central to the industrial economies of Europe. They hoped its indispensability made cotton "King" in the Atlantic world. In 1861, they further hoped that the European powers, desperate for cotton to sustain their factories and keep their working classes both employed and clothed, might recognize the Confederacy and perhaps support it in other ways. Certainly, there is ample evidence that the governments in Britain, France, and elsewhere gave this issue much thought. But none came to the aid of the South.

During the war, Europe's industrialized nations (and northern manufacturers in the United States) developed other and sufficient sources of cotton—in Africa, central and South Asia, and South America. In fact, as the historian Sven Beckert has shown, the war's interruption of the flow of American cotton to European factories and then the end of slavery with the northern victory effectively transformed both the geography of raw cotton production and its modes of production.²⁰⁸ Before 1860, cotton had been produced by slaves, mostly in the American South. After 1865, the proportion of cotton produced in various European empires—especially in British India, Ottoman Egypt, and also parts of Africa—increased significantly. The amount of cotton from India, Brazil, and Egypt in European factories doubled between 1860 and 1865, to 31 per-

cent of the total. These changes did not displace America's preeminence in the world cotton market, once production resumed after 1865, but they did significantly transform cotton agriculture elsewhere in the world. Large numbers of subsistence farmers began to plant cotton and to enter the world market with this cash crop. The agricultural workers were formally not slaves; they were free laborers. But nearly everywhere—in India and Mississippi, in Egypt and Pernambuco, Brazil, in Turkmenistan and West Africa—they lived and worked in a condition of peonage, trapped in an unending cycle of indebtedness to local merchants.

Russia, Britain, and other European nations looked to their imperial holdings to replace the interrupted supply of American cotton. This meant they had to establish a legal environment that would encourage and protect merchant investment in the cotton sharecroppers, supplying them with seed, equipment, and marketing services. Slavery was replaced by a particular form of nonindustrial capitalist social relations, in which impoverished farmers were ruled by the merchants' control of credit, and the state protected the credit, not the farmers. Strikingly, this structure of labor discipline evolved all over the world; in the American South poor white farmers but especially former slaves endured this new form of exploitation. In Asia and in North and West Africa, the stakes were very high, and the paradoxical effect of the emancipation of four million slaves in the United States was that Europe's nation-states strengthened and extended their control over the economies and laboring populations of their empires, while they also developed infrastructure to support the cotton economies they were encouraging and depending on. This changed the very nature of the colonial experience throughout North Africa and South Asia especially. The new railroads and communications systems helped to create a sense of national territory that would, in time, be essential to anti-imperialist nationalist movements.²⁰⁹

My main point here has been to show that the Civil War in the United States shared in larger nation-making processes, and made broader liberal commitments to free as opposed to unfree labor. But the laborers who benefited most from the Civil War were white, not just in America but in Europe. The new, highly qualified system of free labor was mostly imposed on people of color (except in the American South, where poor whites were incorporated into the new regime of cotton pro-

duction along with freedmen), and they were everywhere politically marginalized and subject to strict lien laws. Here we begin to see another way of understanding the Civil War as a global event, as a central moment in the "reconstruction of the worldwide web of cotton growing, trade, and manufacturing."

In Egypt, for example, the American Civil War is understood as a turning point in the nation's history. The expanded global demand for cotton in the 1860s enabled the Ottoman viceroy there, Sa'id Pasha, to accelerate the modernizing project begun earlier in the century by Mehmet Ali. Acreage devoted to cotton cultivation was vastly increased after 1861; by 1864 about 40 percent of the fertile land along the lower Nile had been converted to cotton. The resultant fivefold increase in cotton exports fundamentally changed the Egyptian economy.

Major economic transformations such as this one occurred on every continent, and they gave the advantage to financial capital. The banks of Europe supplied local merchants throughout the empires with capital to finance the development of cotton cultivation, and the terms of the loans involved a crop lien to protect the capital. Initially the world price of cotton rose dramatically, but soon it stabilized, especially when the United States resumed production and export after 1865, and the result for farmers was perpetual debt and pressure on the price of cotton. The social relation of master and slave was replaced by law, formally impartial but ultimately an instrument of the differential power of capital over labor. This system of extracting labor turned out to be more effective than slavery; everywhere production increased. In the United States the production of cotton in 1891 was twice what it had been thirty years earlier on the eve of the Civil War. So the war and the abolition of slavery in the American South not only increased productivity in the United States but hugely increased world production. Imperial power was now deployed far more strategically, and it shaped the world cotton market.

REMEMBERING NATIONALISM AND FORGETTING LIBERALISM

As late as the spring of 1862, Lincoln wrote—rather testily—to Horace Greeley that his "paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union,

and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave, I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves, I would do it."²¹⁰ But as the celebrated intellectual and political leader Frederick Douglass grasped—better than Greeley and perhaps even more fully than Lincoln in 1862—the war made the fusion of "Liberty and Union" practically unavoidable.²¹¹ As Lincoln invested more and more liberal meaning in what he called the "new nation" (he used this phrase in the Gettysburg Address), the ends of the war expanded. His major speeches, culminating in the one at Gettysburg, gave ever larger significance to the great struggle for freedom, and liberal nationalists in Europe could recognize their aspirations in the success of the Union armies. Giuseppe Mazzini, for example, wrote to the London agent of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, a forerunner of the American Red Cross, that the North's war for freedom and national unity had "done more for us in four years than fifty years of teaching, preaching, and writing from all your European brothers have been able to do."²¹²

If Jefferson's language of Enlightenment liberalism was analytical and declarative ("all men are created equal"), the liberal ideals of Lincoln, the romantic nationalist, were expressed in a language of historicism. With active democracy, the ideals of the Declaration of Independence would and must be realized over time. Lincoln's notion of history promised no immanent unfolding or natural progress; he demanded action—vigilance, exertion, even struggle. At Gettysburg, he spoke of "unfinished work" and the "great task remaining." He transformed Jefferson's proposition into a challenge, that "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom."²¹³ Liberal nationalism for Lincoln was thus "aspirational," demanding resolute and continuous pursuit.²¹⁴

Like Lincoln, Frederick Douglass looked to a historical dynamic in which the nation was the midwife of human progress. In a remarkable lecture, "Our Composite Nationality" (1869), Douglass affirmed the indispensability of nations, the value of what we would call multicultural nationality, and the inherently progressive work of the world of nations. Modern nations, he wrote, are "the largest and most complete divisions into which society is formed, the grandest aggregations of organized human power." They promote human improvement through "comparison and criticism." The way of nations, he hoped, would be not that of power but rather that of "comparing one nation with another . . . each competing with all." That would expose errors and turn the "wheels of civilization."²¹⁵

Unfortunately, these hopes of Lincoln, Douglass, and Mazzini, as well as the hopes of those for whom they spoke, especially the millions newly freed from slavery, were not wholly realized. Nationalism had other affinities, particularly with the celebration of "constant growth," that undermined the liberal commitment to freedom.²¹⁶ To be sure, by 1900 the new nation-state had delivered the economic development it had promised. A "titanic impulse" was given to "all enterprise in America," and the infrastructure of a national high culture was also established: universities, museums, public libraries, symphony halls, and conservatories.²¹⁷ There is ample evidence to sustain the claim of the theorist of nationalism, Ernest Gellner that there are links between industrialism, nationalism, continuous improvement in material life, and investment in cognitive growth.²¹⁸ National consolidation brought military might, too, enough for the United States to become an imperial power itself on a global scale in 1898.

In all too many cases the nationalist feelings and ambitions that had earlier advanced the cause of human freedom and dignity now worked against such aspirations. Sometimes nationalism simply overshadowed liberal commitments; in other cases specific choices favored it over liberalism. The United States was not unique in this regard. While some of the *national* ambitions of 1848 had been realized in Europe by 1900 (though not those of small minorities), *liberal* achievements had been compromised by the quest for power and profit.

The finest historian of Reconstruction calls it the "unfinished revolution."²¹⁹ That is what it is from our perspective, perhaps, and the burden is on us to finish it. But the phrase is too generous to describe the actual actions of the 1870s. While it is true that the Radical Republicans were unable to finish the revolution, the reason was not only white resistance in the South but a refusal of support in the North. White Americans, North and South, turned against the project of extending freedom across the color line in the name of the nation.

When blacks in the South demanded their rights in full, and when women and workers in the North did the same, northern leaders pulled back from their ambitious vision of the positive state. And they never even considered rights for Native Americans. Many of the original supporters of the Republican antislavery movement stayed the course, but far more abandoned the radical project of racial justice in the South before it had a fair test, and some of the leaders of the crusade to extend the do-

main of freedom in 1861 now tried to disenfranchise militant workers in the North.²²⁰ Charles Francis Adams, Jr., the son of Lincoln's ambassador to the Court of St. James's, declared in 1869 that "universal suffrage can only mean in plain English the government of ignorance and vice—it means a European, and especially Celtic proletariat on the Atlantic Coast, an African proletariat on the shores of the Gulf, and a Chinese proletariat on the Pacific." A decade later, as Reconstruction ended, the historian Francis Parkman wrote a long article published in *The North American Review* that announced "the failure of universal suffrage."²²¹ These were not lone voices; many who had once spoken the principles of 1848 had lost the vision that liberal nationalists had brought into the war.

It is often said that these social and political leaders recognized that the government had overreached its capacity. But that is not entirely clear, and surely is not the whole explanation. More evident was their growing fear of realized democracy, fear of a large number of potential voters whose empowerment and consequent capture of a strong state would substantially alter the distribution of power and social goods in American society. If they could not limit the vote, they would limit the domain of state action, taking social questions out of politics and allocating them to market resolutions.²²²

By contrast with Prussia, indeed with most modern nations to which Americans might compare themselves, the United States in the late nineteenth century was a liberal society and polity. But in comparison with the ideals Lincoln had expressed at Gettysburg, something had been lost. If in the language of 1848 the nation was the expression of the sovereignty of the people, after 1877 it seemed that the "State" had become the "antonym of the People." The liberal ideal of rights-carrying individuals was questioned, and political theorists argued that the state conferred rights on the people, rather than the people conferring legitimacy on the state. Put differently: the state presumed its own sovereignty and indeed became a barrier to the people's claims of rights.²²³ Lawyers and academic political scientists articulated a formalist understanding of the state as constituting society, but this obscured the many class, racial, gender, and ethnic aspirations and conflicts in America's actual pluralistic society. The quest for national unity and uniformity, which had once fused with the political quest for abolition and, for Radical Republicans, racial justice, had in some perverse fashion become almost its opposite.

The result is evident in the writings of John W. Burgess, founder of

the graduate Faculty of Political Science at Columbia University in 1880, which was organized to train a political elite. Burgess honored Lincoln, but he expounded at some length on Lincoln's limitations as a constitutional theorist. He corrected what he believed was Lincoln's misunderstanding of the constitutional status of secession and sketched the future implications of the new nationalism. The "nationalizing of civil liberty" under the protection of the judiciary (no mention of voters here), Burgess argued, would sustain a nation-state led by "white men, whose mission . . . duty . . . and right" is "to hold the reins of political power in [their] own hands for the civilization of the world and the welfare of mankind." This was necessary, he explained, because of "vast differences in the political capacity of the races." Thus did Burgess justify both the abandonment of Reconstruction and America's imperialist adventure in the war of 1898.²²⁴ Charles Beard and other thinkers of the Progressive Era challenged this theory of the state, but in the 1880s and '90s Burgess's idea of the nation-state's powers and responsibilities seemed to justify a profound weakening of democracy and a racist distortion of citizenship. By the end of the century, Congress and the courts had retreated from the earlier expansive definitions of federal power and individual rights. The Reconstruction amendments and legislation were emasculated. Remarkably, the Fourteenth Amendment was transformed from a basic protection of the political rights of freedmen in the states to the protection of business corporations from government regulation. Yet however limited the domestic powers of the federal government had become, the American state had acquired the capacity to project its power well beyond its territories, joining other North Atlantic nations in establishing a new age of imperialism.

In 1882, the distinguished French historian Ernest Renan asked, in a lecture, "What is a nation?" The essay of this title is a classic, and it continues to be reprinted. Renan had then recently been elected to the French Academy and was soon named president of the Collège de France. His focus, not surprisingly, was on France and Europe, yet one of his main points speaks directly to the American case. In effect, he explained how—even as it was happening—the dynamic of nationalism was undermining the deepest meaning of the Civil War: "The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things . . . Forgetting . . . is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation."²²⁵

The quest for national restoration and the reconciliation of North and South required forgetting the central meaning of the Civil War—or so writers, editors, and political leaders believed. As David W. Blight has shown in his comprehensive study of “the Civil War in American memory,” nationalism displaced the emancipatory meaning of the war, as well as the obvious truth that one side had fought on behalf of freedom and the other to maintain slavery.²²⁶ All were brave; all fought for what they believed. All the old soldiers were heroes.

After Reconstruction, monuments were erected at Gettysburg commemorating both the Confederate armies and the Union ones. There is no obvious indication of their different reasons for fighting. The distortion of the memory of Reconstruction was even greater. Nothing heroic about it was remembered in 1900 or, for that matter, for several decades into the twentieth century. Instead, Reconstruction was thought of as a misbegotten adventure, and this is how D. W. Griffith presented it in his powerful racist film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). One might call this a failure of memory, but in fact it is an example of the politics of memory: a particular political interest transforming the meaning not only of the Civil War but of the nation itself.

Frederick Douglass tried again and again to recall for Americans the full meaning of the war and Reconstruction, as did W.E.B. DuBois in the next century. Both believed that the emancipation of the slaves had been the central event not only of black history but of U.S. history.²²⁷ Speaking in 1872, Douglass insisted:

We are sometimes asked in the name of patriotism to forget the merits of this fearful struggle, and to remember with equal admiration those who struck at the nation's life, and those who struck to save it—those who fought for slavery and those who fought for liberty and justice . . . I would not repel the repentant, but . . . may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I forget the difference between the parties to that . . . bloody conflict . . . I may say if this war is to be forgotten, I ask in the name of all things sacred what shall men remember?²²⁸

But Douglass's views were little shared, and were shared even less as time passed. E. L. Godkin spoke for the greater part of the nation, North and

South, when in 1877 Reconstruction was ended in a political deal that settled the contested election of 1876. He assured readers in *The Nation*, a magazine that he and other antislavery activists founded in New York in 1865, which became the forum for the intellectual elite of the country, that “the negro will disappear from the field of national politics. Henceforth, the nation as nation, will have nothing more to do with him.”²²⁹ The future would be concerned with political reunion and the economic development it would further. Liberal nationalism had become a *Herren-volk* nationalism.²³⁰

In truth, the liberal ideals of freedom in 1848 had always been a bit flawed. The minority question continued as a divisive issue in the Austro-Hungarian Empire until its demise, and it was the reason for President Wilson's intense concern for self-determination at Versailles. In a different way, the realization of an Italian state under Cavour compromised Mazzini's liberalism, and the rights of native peoples were no more respected by liberals in Argentina than in the United States. The rights that women claimed were rarely acknowledged. Colonialism was embraced by every state that possessed the power to play the imperial game. One could go on.

In 1898 Americans consolidated their nationalism in another war. This imperial one was hardly emancipatory, and it even voided a significant movement for racial democracy in Cuba.²³¹ Its justifying rhetoric was infused with racial supremacy—the “White Man's burden,” as the British writer Rudyard Kipling helpfully put it for the Americans. John Hay, Lincoln's former secretary and biographer and secretary of state in the McKinley administration, characterized it as a “splendid little war.” Americans North and South cheered their soldiers' easy triumph in Cuba and Manila Bay, happily cementing their national reconciliation. Surprisingly, ten thousand blacks enlisted in the American army—but not the son of Frederick Douglass, who understood imperialism differently. To his mind, it was a global extension of “race hate and cruelty.”²³²