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Chimène Keitner, *The Paradoxes of Nationalism: The French Revolution and Its Meaning for Contemporary Nation Building*. SUNY Series in National Identities. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2007. x + 233 pp. Appendix, bibliography, notes and index. \$21.95 U.S. (pb); ISBN: 978-0-79146-958-3.

Review by D.M.G. Sutherland, University of Maryland.

It's not often that a book compares St. Just and George W. Bush—and compares them, not only on the same page, but in adjacent sentences (p. 158). Jarring as this pairing is, it fits Chimène Keitner's purpose to compare French and American liberal, transformational nationalism.

Her argument is that the nation-state as a political form has its particular foreign policy, namely its desire to create a world of states based on national self-determination. After exploring the concept of the nation—its origins as a rhetorical device by the *parlements* in the eighteenth century in the power struggle with the monarchy, its application by the abbé Sièyes, the new definition as a voluntary association of free people, the attempt to homogenize the nation through the use of the French language in the proposals of the abbé Grégoire—she asserts that the revolutionaries made the concept of national self-determination universal. This made nationalism bellicose and was thus a major, if not the major, cause of the wars that began in 1792. Yet, this expansion created a backlash among the conquered peoples, partly because the French armies pillaged, but mainly because people experience liberation as conquest.

Keitner then advances from historical examples to a chapter that is classic poli-sci. She no longer discusses the French experience as a nation-state but nation-states as phenomena in general. She argues that nation-states have inherent strengths and weaknesses, like their tendency to exclude non-members of the national group, or their xenophobia. While most of these generalizations seem unexceptional, they are no longer historical but presentist.

The concluding chapter draws parallels between the French revolutionary experience and the Bush administration's justifications for the Iraq War and the aftermath of the invasion. She intends to draw parallels, not causal links. Indeed, she chides the Bush administration for not learning the lessons of occupation from the end of the eighteenth century.

She may be right, but exploring more aspects of the genesis of the French revolutionary wars and the experience of occupation might have highlighted differences with the present or strengthened her parallels. The first step would be to move beyond 1793 and encompass the entire period down to 1815. Before 1795, French occupation was ephemeral, but afterwards, in the case of the Low Countries, it was permanent. Extending the time horizon would make a better set of case studies. Moreover, French occupation policy was not aimed at creating nation-states so much as revolutionizing neighbors to make them look like France. The transformation in administration, taxation, the courts, the Church, and so on, was thus justified as a benefit to the conquered peoples and as promoting French national security. The best example would be the perimeters of *la grande nation* as specified in the treaties of Campo-

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Formio (1797) and Lunéville (1801) with their annexations and string of sister republics, all of which included the revolutionary transformation of these territories.

But Keitner is not interested in experiences after 1793. This is a pity because it is after 1795 that the nature of the resistance to the French became clear. Foreigners did not dislike the French only because they were French or because their armies pillaged, as Keitner says. That was true of Old Regime armies, too. Instead, the French brought with them demands for heavy reparations, conscription, and occupation costs that were unprecedented in their weight, if only because their armies' needs were so ravenous. On top of this, revolutionary transformation implied drastic real or imagined changes in the Church and religious life that provoked resistance almost everywhere: Milan within a week of the "liberation" in May 1796; the Veronese Easter in 1797; the *Viva Maria* processions in Tuscany and the *Sanfedisti* rebellions in the Papal States and Naples in 1799; the anti-conscription, religious rebellion in Belgium and the Sarre in 1798; Spain, of course; and France itself, off and on throughout the entire period. One aspect of this resistance, a topic that really deserves attention, are the rebellions that broke out against imperial rule in 1813 from Hamburg west along the coast to Rotterdam and the outskirts of Brussels.

A topic on such resistance demands another book. But this one could have used a deeper exploration of the origins of the war in 1792. One of the arguments the Girondins used for war was preemption, a theme Keitner omits from her discussion of the war of 1792. But then, who would have expected that Jacques-Pierre Brissot and Donald Rumsfeld would ever appear in the same sentence?

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