

National Identity and Mentalities of War in Three EC Countries

ULF HEDETOFT

The European Research Unit, Aalborg University

It is a basic assumption of this article that the history, symbolism and mentality of war – e.g. in the form of heroism – constitute central elements in the make-up of national identities, also in the European Community, despite the fact that the EC is more commonly thought of as a peace movement. The contribution and significance of 'war mentality' may differ from one country to the next, however. The article examines the link between national identity and the mentality of war in Great Britain, (West) Germany and Denmark, as three EC countries representing different national histories, structures and ambitions. The approach is comparative and intercultural. The author argues (1) that the mentality of war is radically different in the three countries: one of proud and unifying civic heroism in Britain, of traumatic negative presence in Germany and of symbolic moral strength based on historical defeats in Denmark; (2) that these differences are mainly rooted in (the outcome of) World War II and conform with general patterns of political culture in the three countries concerning the link between nationalism and internationalism; and (3) that this makes for very different attitudes to closer political cooperation in a 'European Union', particularly as regards integration in the areas of common security and defence policies. Attitudes to the Gulf War are used as a concrete case to demonstrate some of the salient points. The article concludes by pointing out the difficulties in unifying European nationalisms so dissimilar in this decisive area of national identity, and in permanently keeping the military option out of intra-European national competition.

1. Introduction

Une nation est donc une grande solidarité, constituée par le sentiment des sacrifices qu'on a fait et de ceux qu'on est disposé à faire encore.¹ (Joseph Ernest Renan, 1882)

In the discourse surrounding national identity, death, suffering and sacrifice in the service of one's country occupy a central position. Renan captured this point well in his 1882 Sorbonne lecture, 'Qu'est qu'une nation?' (Renan, 1887): The individual's willingness to transcend himself and face the prospect of dying for 'the big solidarity' is the ultimate touchstone of patriotism and national identity. This in turn becomes a (if not *the*) constituent element in any convincing definition of a nation – less in terms of the actual deaths and sacrifices rendered up, more in terms of their consequences for the historical consciousness of any given nation, for national mythologies of war, death and victory. As Benedict Anderson has poignantly noted: 'No more arresting emblems of the modern cult of nationalism exist, than

the cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers' (Anderson, 1983, p. 17). In this sense, the mentality of nations bears more than a passing resemblance to ancient cults of death.

Images of noble sacrifice enter into *all* self-respecting nations' historical memory and are central to their self-perception. All nations in their historical process towards national awareness and national sovereignty have been engaged in martial combat with like-minded entities and have built up a legacy of pride, honour, will-power, etc. – often tempered by memories of shame and defeat as well. And, precisely because national histories *differ* in this respect, the general point made above concerning all nations calls for modification, since – for want of a more precise term – the mentality of war looks very differently into different national identities. In Britain, for example, feelings of national pride are rooted in the fact that Britain has not lost a war, or been invaded, in donkey's years; hence it is war which really 'turns (this) nation on' (Worshtorne, 1982). In (West) Germany, national

identity and pride have, until recently at least, been harnessed by the military and moral defeat in World War II (WWII). And Denmark's international self-confidence has been severely affected by countless defeats or humiliations in war, not least by the failure to resist the German occupation army in 1940.

The objective of this article is to examine the link between national identity and the mentality of war in Great Britain (UK), (West) Germany (FRG) and Denmark, as three EC countries representing very different national histories, structures and ambitions: the UK as an island (multi)nation with a long history as a great power and no immediate threats at its borders; FRG as a much younger, rather heterogeneous nation, with a precarious but also important position in the 'middle of Europe', nurturing ambitions of greatness and with far less secure borders than the UK; and Denmark, landlocked only with Germany, once a medium-sized European power which has undergone several stages of political, territorial and military diminution, to the point where its international influence has dwindled into relative insignificance. The approach will be comparative and intercultural in order to 'gauge' the three mentalities and political cultures against each other, but also in order to highlight the contribution that, say, Germany has made towards the shaping of this element of Danish nationalism. The main thesis postulates (a) that the mentality of war is radically different in the three countries; (b) that these differences are rooted mainly, though not exclusively, in the outcome of WWII and conform with modulations concerning nationalism vs inter-nationalism in each of the three countries which also, in part at least, derive from the aftermath of WWII; and (c) that this makes for very different attitudes to closer political cooperation in the upcoming 'European Union', particularly as regards integration in the areas of common security and defence policies. The conclusion will contain some comments on the relevance of the question of nationalism and war mentalities in a Europe seemingly guided by supranational aspirations.

2. *Concepts and Definitions*

There are three conceptual issues that are best dealt with at this early stage in order to make the presentation as lucid as possible. They are: (1) unity of state and people; (2) relations between mentalities of war and notions of sovereignty; and (3) approaches to heroism. Obviously, these issues cannot be treated in depth; the following remarks mainly have a clarifying function in view of the presentation that follows.

2.1 *Unity of State and People*

In spite of the wealth of theoretical disagreement about the most adequate definition of a nation-state, there is one point which most theorists seem to agree on: that a genuine nation-state presupposes a convergence of state and people (or 'nation'), if not in any objectivist sense, then certainly on the level of subjectivity, imagination and identification. Any notion of a national 'We' is predicated on a real or at least a hoped-for unity between these two elements. War sacrifices and their attendant symbolism and mentality must be assessed against this backdrop: they seem to bear witness to the radical unity of state and nation. In situations of war, petty internal bickering stops in favour of unified support for a common cause. The nation-state seems to prove itself as a 'Schicksalsgemeinschaft' ('community of destiny'), people willingly sacrificing themselves for the eternal life of the nation, in a righteous cause.

2.2 *War Mentality and Sovereignty*

A basic notion inextricably linked with the nation-state is that of sovereignty – the idea that within territorially secure borders a given nation/state wields absolute power and authority (however fictive this may be in actual fact), based in most places on a constitution, written or unwritten. The 'war component' of national identities relates to this issue in two interesting ways: first, in the sense that martial encounters and national war memories are narratives about the ultimate defence of 'our sovereign existence', giving them moral legitimacy as 'just wars' (cf. e.g. Elshtain, 1992); second, the *result* of national warfare in turn works back on

the strength of notions of sovereignty: for instance, a record of won wars adds impetus to desires for the preservation of intact or 'undivided' sovereignty (e.g. the UK), whereas lost wars or a less clean sheet make it morally harder to stand up for absolute sovereignty (e.g. FRG).

2.3 Heroism

A significant part of national imagery consists of myths and symbols related to war or warlike situations. National anthems, more often than not, are quite martial. Flags often have a real or mythical warlike history. Archetypal national figures, 'fathers of nations', are almost without exception mythicized figures of war, sacrifice and bloodshed – in romanticized form, of course: fighters, crusaders, liberators, etc. A list of these would comprise, inter alia, Holger Danske and Tordenskjold (Denmark), Ivanhoe, Nelson and Churchill (UK), Marianne and de Gaulle (France), Cuchulain and Wolfe Tone (Ireland), Germania and Barbarossa (FRG) (on the subject, see e.g. Smith, 1986). Such figures and the narrative myths surrounding them are condensed symbols of national pride and unity. The underlying denominator is that they are all *heroes*, emblems of heroism, the most abstract embodiment of which is 'the Unknown Soldier' (cf. Hedetoft, 1990a, ch. III; Mosse, 1990, part II). This status removes these figures from the level of 'real life' and propels them into a universe of national, symbolic significance, somewhere between fatality and immortality. A 'hero' is a cluster of national meaning, in the sense that meaning is imputed to particular persons in order to serve as figures of national bravery, sacrifice and unity. But a hero is also someone who is seen to fulfil his/her innermost identity, through personal sacrifice and almost religious devotion to a worthy, noble cause, thus simultaneously realizing and conquering himself in the service of the 'horizontal comradeship' (Anderson, 1983). Heroes are socio-cultural constructs, paradoxically more useful to the cult of nationalism dead than alive. They fight against metaphorical crooks on the enemy side, successfully transforming the

'passive' postulate of national identity into action. Heroes are the true, practical existentialists within the national creed.

3. *The Teleology of War and Death*

The main objective behind this section is to sketch the discrete 'ideal-type' variations that the subject under review assumes in each of the three countries. Its basic teleology, one might call it, whilst hopefully avoiding the pitfall of a static, universalistic description: this is not how it has always been, nor how it will go on forever. Since the sketch offered is a snapshot of a historical condition produced by the confluence of a number of elements constituting this chunk of the nations' political cultures, the introduction of new elements might of course produce an altered picture in the future. The major historical intervention which signifies particularly strongly in this context – apparent in what follows – is WWII and its impact on the mental, cultural and political climates in each of the three countries: the main source of war myths, whether positive or negative, and a determining factor in the state and development of national identity in the postwar epoch.

3.1 *Britain: A Cult of Civic Heroism*

In 1982 the UK fought its last 'sovereign war', that over the Falklands. This war brought back a few home truths that had been almost forgotten. First, that it was relatively easy to mobilize the British people for a war they saw as just and moral. Second, that everyday conflicts and social rifts were easily put aside and everybody – or nearly everybody – was willing to contribute, materially or morally, towards the war effort. Third, that this sudden upsurge of national unity soon spilt over into regular jingoism and the 'spectatorial passion' (Hobson, 1901) of siding with 'our boys'. Fourth, that the public raptures were almost never-ending when the UK had come out on top.

This formed the background for Margaret Thatcher's triumphant Victory Speech at Cheltenham on 3 July 1982, in which she raised a number of points relevant to this

article. Having initially presented the victory in terms of getting the better of Immortality Incarnate (and of asserting UK sovereignty), she soon turned to *domestic* matters: the Falklands victory marked the end of Britain's 'decline'. It proved that Britons were still in possession of those 'sterling qualities which shine through our history'. And she went on: 'When the demands of war and the dangers to our own people call us to arms – then we British are as we have always been – competent, courageous and resolute'. But that was also the heart of the problem:

Yet why does it need a war to bring out our qualities and reassert our pride? Why do we have to be invaded before we throw aside our selfish aims and begin to work together as only we can work and achieve as only we can achieve. . . . We have to see that the spirit of the South Atlantic – the real spirit of Britain – is kindled not only by war but can now be fired by peace. . . . Achievements like that, if made in peacetime, could establish us as aeroplane makers to the world. (Thatcher, 1982)

Why indeed?

Two years later, the Thatcher Government was embroiled in another kind of war – the protracted labour-market showdown with the miners' union, whose members had some difficulty in learning the lesson and rallying round the national interest in the same unselfish way. The wartime unity between state and nation was by then a thing of the past, at least as seen from the miners' perspective. And, as Thatcher's rhetoric indicates, what we see here is more like a pattern than an exception. What does it mean?

On the face of it, this symptom of British political culture can be diagnosed under the heading 'Unity in war, divisions in peacetime', or, perhaps, epigrammatically, 'peace in war, war in peace'. In peacetime, it is the domain of civil society that is culturally predominant, in war the political virtues of self-sacrifice and national unity. It can be argued that it is in 'the school of war' that the virtues of political citizenship have been implanted in the 'Brit' more than anywhere else,² and that the dialectic between unconditional nationalism in war and conditional peacetime loyalty is in large measure constitutive for the political culture of the UK.

The immediate conclusion would seem to be that this national war mentality is the reverse of 'civic', military rather than civilian, authoritarian rather than individualizing, regimented rather than free; or that the culture is constantly oscillating between the two extremes of the pendulum: sometimes at one extreme, sometimes at the opposite. But this would be to overlook the unique quality of the British war mentality. It may be war that really turns the nation on (cf. the reference p. 285), but this does not imply that the prevalent attitude to war is autocratic, state-oriented and anti-civilian. Quite the opposite. As a small example, listen to what this Englishman, aged 40, has to say about the impact of WWII on his upbringing:

I was a child during the 1950s and 60s. I wouldn't say that the war was important at home or at school but it was important in the media and I read many books about it and saw many TV programmes and films. It affected my views of Britain and of Germany as a child. I viewed my country as being heroic and the saviour of Europe and my countrymen as being brave and ingenious while being casual and modest. We won the war with a little help from the Americans and various resistance movements. The Soviet Union hardly played a part at all. The Germans I viewed as being authoritarian and aggressive whose organisation, bravery, fanaticism and military power would have won the war if it wasn't for the fact that they were unimaginative and made the fatal mistake of underestimating Britain.³

This contrast between the British and the Germans, filtered through the lenses of personal memory, both of them 'brave', but one nation 'ingenious, casual and modest', the other 'authoritarian, aggressive, fanatic', encapsulates the British war attitude. War and its concomitant symbolism do not remove the British from a realm of civilian virtue and morality, on the contrary they bring these home to them. It is in war and warlike circumstances that the 'home fires' really start to burn, that the British appreciate national togetherness. 'Brits' become not only true citizens in wartime, but true civilians too. In war they find, as Churchill once said, a 'vindication of the civilised and decent way of living' (Cannadine, 1990, p. 216). For the British, war unity is at bottom a civic unity, and war is where civic heroism

is created. The ideal British soldier is a civilian in uniform, the 'citizen-soldier'.⁴ Or, as in WWII, wives battling courageously on the home front. Modern heroes of war are more the plain-clothes statesman than the uniformed general.⁵ And the ultimate purpose of fighting is to preserve the British way of life. So, even where the state is most present for the British citizen – in a war where he/she is asked to sacrifice his/her life for it – it is most absent, too, the battlefield being one of civilian morality and righteous purpose. If, as the proverb has it, the Englishman's home is his castle, so his castle – here signifying his military establishment – is his home.

It is remarkable how persistently references to, or images of, civilian life enter the discourse of war in the UK. The overarching point of reference, of course, is WWII as a moral paradigm – the first all-out 'People's War' in British military history, involving soldiers and civilians, men and women, old and young alike (cf. e.g. Briggs, 1975; Fussell, 1991). Churchill's perception of the Londoners he met during the Blitz, as well as the attitude of the people he perceived, captures this:

I felt encompassed by an exaltation of spirit in the people which seemed to lift mankind and its troubles above the level of material facts into that joyous serenity we think belongs to a better world than this. Of their kindness to me I cannot speak, because I never have sought it or dreamed of it. . . . This ordeal by fire has . . . exhilarated the manhood and womanhood of Britain. . . . All are proud to be under the fire of the enemy (BBC Speech, 27 April 1941, in Cannadine, 1990, pp. 215–16).

The moral righteousness of the overall purpose made these Londoners react to each other and their leaders not with bitterness or defeatism, but with *kindness*. Further evidence of this spirit of communal, war-inspired solidarity is numerous. J. B. Priestley, in one of his famous radio-transmitted 'Postscripts', celebrated the heroism of the women at home rather than the men at front (Priestley, 1940, pp. 76–80); Humphrey Jennings, the film producer, in a number of war documentaries, idealized the spirit of civic heroism and 'now-we-are-all-sticking-it-out-together'; Orwell, in a

1942 radio broadcast, almost propagandistically eulogized the beneficial effects of war:

It is bringing about in the English people a more creative attitude towards their amusements. . . . We have learned now that money is valueless in itself. . . . We are rediscovering the simple pleasures . . . which we had half forgotten in the wasteful years before the war (Orwell, 1985, pp. 72–73).

And the film director John Boorman, in 1990, recalled the Blitz as 'sublime', 'exhilarating', and assessed the war as 'very releasing': 'these bombs set people free, particularly the women. It was as if these constraints, particularly of class, were smashed open by the bombs and people were running free' (*Newsweek*, 20 August 1990; cf. on this theme also Elshtain, 1987).

Throughout these examples, war is not assessed in terms of itself or its inherent atrocities, but as a thing by civilians, for civilians and having ultimately a civilian rationale. This particular 'military culture' presupposes a national identity and a political culture based not only on a series of successful military confrontations with external powers, and not merely the geopolitical insularity of the UK, but on a large measure of harmony and handed-down homogeneity between state and people: a deeply felt identification with the British way of life on the part of the British citizen. Hence, there is little difference between the symbolism of the citizen-soldier reluctantly taking 'arms against a sea of trouble' and that other ingrained symbol of British national identity, the unarmed Bobby. In the same way as this representative of state power is symbolically divested of the ultimate means of exercising it – the implication being that the self-restraint and common sense of the people render arms superfluous – by the same token people are willing to risk all in the righteous defence of their country, their way of life, and the overarching symbol of it all, the Royal Family. As the Bobby (or for that matter the heroic fireman single-handedly rescuing people from a house ablaze)⁶ is thus no more than a civilian in uniform, so the soldier is at bottom a civic volunteer longing for the common pleasures of this 'green and pleasant land'.

This is in no way to diminish the import-

ance of war and military confrontations as shaping forces of the British nation and the modern mentality of the UK. The point is the particular *spirit* in which such endeavours have been performed as well as the prevailing *attitude* to them. It is true, as Correlli Barnett points out, that 'the course of British history . . . has been shaped by war and by military institutions' (1970, pp. xvii-xviii). But it is just as true that 'the history of the British army is the history of the institution that the British have always been reluctant to accept that they needed', and that 'in the twentieth century the very survival of the British nation has twice depended on mass armies the British never meant to raise' (ibid.). So much the greater the heroics that emanate from war efforts conducted on this basis, and the victories they eventually produce, though with historical hindsight it must be added that in an island imperial nation they are – militarily as well as morally – premised on the existence of that other and much more permanent military establishment in Britain, the Navy, waging its battles off the shores of Britain and frequently very far from home (the Falklands War encapsulated this aspect of the Brits' spectatorial passion perfectly). In this sense, the British may well be characterized as rather *militant* (certainly when they feel threatened), but it would be a gross mistake to think of them as a *military* nation. The cult of civic heroism presupposes a continuous interchange between the comforts of home and the almost spine-shivering pleasure of putting your life on the line for a righteous cause.⁷

Returning to Thatcher's Cheltenham Speech, the Falklands Factor can be described as an attempt to instill in the British a communal war spirit in times of peace. Its undoubted success – in spite of, or perhaps partly due to, the showdown with the miners – must be ascribed to the cult of civic heroism. Throughout the 1980s, the Thatcherites and the New Right tried to keep the people in a state of putative, war-like emergency, by constantly projecting images of enemies ('within' as well as 'without'), thus strengthening the symbolic putty that keeps the British together more than any-

thing else (Hedetoft & Niss, 1991, ch. V). But in a political culture like the British one this kind of success is bound to be relative and temporary. It may be true that it is war and heroism that 'turn on' the nation, but once the British have engaged in warfare they start thinking compulsively about returning to normalcy.⁸ The two sides are mentally and culturally predicated on each other. The British mentality is decent and radical, moralistic and ruthless at the same time. National sacrifice is alright (if it is morally justified), but even that must have an end. The civilian never completely exchanges his plain clothes for his military attire. Even Thatcher was not able to pose as the Iron Lady or the present-day successor to Churchill consistently, but had to blend it with the Caring-Housewife-cum-Small-Shopkeeper posture. This is one of the reasons why a military dictatorship or a fascist regime seem unthinkable in the UK.

Some would no doubt argue that this British war mentality is currently being undermined, indeed that Thatcherism helped this tendency along because of its internally divisive nature and its willingness to play second fiddle to US military adventures (e.g. the bombing of Libya in 1986). Also, the wholly professional armed forces in the UK and the difficulty of finding space for personal heroism in the orbit of 'clean', high-tech warfare could point towards the same conclusion. However, there seems to be little evidence that the basic frame of mind – pride in the moral war successes of the past and the belief that the common Brit has genuine grit – is being seriously eroded. A survey I am currently carrying out seems to confirm this. Even very 'international' Brits who generally rated both nationalism and Thatcherism very low, were emotionally affected by memories and symbols of WWII, almost uniformly rejected the idea of a joint European army and referred, inter alia, to 'British regimental traditions', 'military parades', 'honour' and 'glory' as elements that might, on rare occasions, trigger their sense of national identity (other respondents observed more neutrally that it was shamefully easy to mobilize the British for war). Myths and symbols of war still

loom large in the national imagination. On the other hand, the main source of war imagery, WWII, is also lined with a certain feeling of misgiving: 'We won the war' (cf. above, p. 288), but in many ways lost the peace, relatively at least. Hence the point of comparison the British cannot forget, the country with the opposite dialectic: Germany.

3.2 *The Federal Republic of Germany: a Plethora of Death, a Deficit of Heroes*

If the UK is (or rather sees itself as) a non-military nation constantly pushed into military showdowns and taking pride in the heroism and success achieved, Germany can historically be described as a military nation that for most of the postwar period has been precluded from the pride of heroism and has thus been cut off from using and referring to the ultimate touchstone of national identity in any positive way. If the historical archetype of the UK is the citizen-soldier, that of Germany is the professional soldier on the one hand, the civilian on the other, reflecting the political-cultural division between 'Staat' and 'Gesellschaft', and, within the orbit of the state, the power-struggle between politicians and the military establishment (often, as in the run-up to WWI, to the detriment of the former). If the UK is a nation with a long history of continuity, stability and pragmatism, Germany's is one of disruption and hiatuses, grandiose ideas and often less than grandiose implementations, of abortive revolution rather than evolution. And if 'war' and 'heroism' belong together within the British signifying system, the national morality and the national memory of Germany make a clear-cut distinction: lots of war and death in German history, but little cause for pride and heroism. 'Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland' ('Death is a German expert'), as Paul Célan scorchingly states in his poem 'Todesfuge' ('Death Fugue') from 1945. And the German historian, Gerhard Herdegen, in 1987 supplemented this by tersely observing that 'Deutschland (wir sprechen von Deutschland-West) ist ein Land ohne Nationalhelden' ('Germany (we are speaking of West Germany) is a country without

national heroes' Herdegen, 1987, p. 187). Heroism – as pointed out above – springs from the notion of sacrifices made in a noble worthy case, and lost wars, let alone self-initiated ones, are difficult to reconstruct in this light.

Hence, WWII not only represents a national(ist) caesura for Germany in a general sense (Winkler, 1991), but in this particular context pulled the rug away from under conceptions of German identity in any way premised on the glories of war. Hence also the opening towards Europe, in an attempt to fill 'das Vakuum unserer nationalen Identität' ('The vacuum of our national identity' (Günter Gaus, 1983, p. 273)), compensate for the shame, and atone for the war crimes committed by the nation ('Wiedergutmachung' ('compensation'), 'Versöhnung' ('reconciliation')):

Ich empfinde die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus und den 2. Weltkrieg als Katastrophe und empfinde als Deutsche durchaus Scham dafür, dass Deutschland ein derartiges Verbrechen angezettelt hat. (. . .) Die Tatsache, dass Deutschland befreit werden musste und nicht aus eigener Kraft das Unrechtsregime stürzen konnte/wollte, finde ich dabei besonders bedrückend. Das kennzeichnet mein Deutschland- und Europabild.⁹

[I perceive the Nazi period and WWII as a disaster and as a German I am ashamed that Germany unleashed such a crime. . . . The fact that Germany had to be liberated and was unable/unwilling to overthrow the regime of injustice on its own is what I find particularly depressing. This is what characterizes my view of Germany and Europe.]

This is the statement of a 41-year-old German teacher (female), in 1991, and goes to show the emotional-national impact of WWII in the FRG, 46 years after its conclusion, and even for Germans with no personal memories of or responsibility for the war. A mentality which leaves little space for heroics or the celebration of national glory, but rather emphasizes peace, tolerance, democracy and good neighbourly relations with the outside world, particularly Europe.

It might appear that there is not much to be said about the subject in hand as regards the FRG: if it is really a nation 'ohne Nationalhelden', where wars and war memories play nothing but a negative role,

then surely the topic can be dispensed with easily? Not so. For although this touchstone of national identity cannot be realized in the way most nation-states would like it to be, it is still a fact that it is almost obsessively present in the German national mentality, albeit in a peculiar and inverted form (cf. Ackerman, 1990). This parameter of nationalism mainly surfaces in the form of its *negation*; the lack of pride, the guilt and shame, the death and the destruction with no attendant heroism; the self-adopted image of 'der hässliche Deutsche' ('the ugly German'; see e.g. Pinkert 1990; Trautmann, 1990), narrowminded and militaristic, the need of pride that is not wholly legitimate – and all this in a nation which, after all, aspires to greatness. This is important to the anthropomorphic notion of 'die verletzte Nation' ('the injured nation'; see Noelle-Neumann & Köcher, 1987), founded both on the historical caesura of WWII and the separation of Germany shortly after the war.

The crucial point, then, is not that war, sacrifice and death play no part in the modern history of Germany, but that they have proved abortive and therefore cannot be attributed with positive meaning, cannot fill their 'proper' function. The German mentality in the postwar era has been characterized by the tension between aspiration and reality, between the wish to be proud and the illegitimacy of it, between older heroisms and present-day ignominy. 'War identity' thus makes up a significant chapter in the modern identity of FRG by dint of the enforced caesura existing between the two parts of the collocation: 'war' on the one side, (lack of) 'identity' on the other. This is a consequence of a modern history which the political scientist Martin Greiffenhagen correctly characterizes as follows: 'Für politische Umwälzungen, auch diejenigen, welche demokratische Regime zur Folge hatten, sorgten in Deutschland nicht Revolutionen, sondern militärische Niederlagen' ('In Germany, military defeats rather than revolutions have been responsible for political changes, including those that resulted in a democratic regime'. Greiffenhagen, 1984, p. 56). A statement that could be supple-

mented with Norbert Elias's slightly elegiac, '... Heldentum, das unbeugsame Hingabe an das Vaterland, zu der man als Deutscher verpflichtet ist, (mündet) regelmässig in Niederlage und Tod' ('Heroism, the unflinching devotion to one's fatherland, to which as a German one is duty bound, routinely (results) in defeat and death'. Elias, 1989, pp. 432f.). The course of German history, also in the postwar period, has been determined from *without*, premised on the war defeats, rather than from *within*. The total lack of sovereignty in the first decade after the war, the imprint made by the victorious powers on the Basic Law (1949), and the restrictions on military independence are the obvious forms of manifestation of this fact, and point towards the lacuna in the nationalist signifying system.

In contrast to the British spirit, the German is 'historically 'military'. Not in the sense that 'there is some character trait transmitted down the generations, some national chromosome, as it were, that makes Germans not only different but dangerous' (Will, 1990). Germans are not inherently belligerent, as much of the recent debate concerning a 'Greater Germany' has either directly or indirectly suggested. Rather, 'military' should be read as a shorthand reference to German national ambitions, their politico-military forms of manifestation and their frustration in the last 120 years or so (if not for much longer), the only substantial success being the victory in the Franco-German War of 1870–71. Thereafter, the history of Germany, until 1945, is one of military ambitions, military spirit – and military defeats. Life in Germany was inspired by a politicization and a militarization of the national consensus, a clear-cut division into 'state' on the one hand, and 'civilian life' on the other, a celebration of soldierly virtues (obedience, self-restraint, honour, sacrifice, heroism) and visions of national greatness achieved through wars and (territorial) expansion (cf. e.g. Craig, 1982, pp. 239ff.). Unlike Britain, the domain of civilian life was consensually accepted as subordinate to the life of – and in – the State, and the military seen as the prime vehicle, and hence symbol, of

national greatness. As Thomas Mann has aptly put it: 'Durch Kriege entstanden, konnte das unheilige Deutsche Reich preussischer Nation immer nur ein Kriegsreich sein' ('Born from wars, the unholy German State of Prussian Nation had no alternative but to remain a nation of war'; Mann, 1945/1972).

Not least on this background, the postwar history of (West) Germany is almost demonstratively devoid of orthodox military symbolism, cultivating the notion of a 'welt-offener Patriotismus' ('patriotism open to the world') as the nation dug its feet in and reverted to the civic-economic area and European integrationism as the means par excellence of renewed international standing. Morality, a foreign policy of modesty rather than muscle, public proclamations of collective guilt and 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' ('coping with the past'; cf. e.g. Dudek, 1992) have informed the national debate in this respect. German Europeanism has discursively supplanted a mentally discredited nationalism, which has only been accepted in the cautious and rationalistic forms of 'Wirtschaftswunder' ('economic miracle'; Mommsen, 1980) and 'Verfassungspatriotismus' ('constitutional patriotism'; Habermas, 1990; Kluxen-Pyta, 1990). And if military symbolism has cropped up positively, it has done so solely within this 'internationalist' cultural framework: the Franco-German brigade as a symbol of the new-found friendship between the two arch enemies; West Germany's willingness to subordinate itself to the military strategy of NATO/the USA and its usefulness, thus, for the Western Alliance; or FRG's reluctance to get involved in the Gulf War as part of a military presence outside German borders. It would seem that the 'German Eagle' has been domesticated. And yet, signs that indicate otherwise have been discernible for some time, and are gaining momentum (Korte, 1987).

As the FRG's economic and political strength increased in the course of the postwar period, and its sovereignty grew proportionately, its self-confidence and need for a 'full' or 'normalized' national identity gradually manifested itself more overtly,

too. Norbert Elias diagnosed this, when, in 1977-78, he wrote that 'sicherlich gehört es zu den schwersten Problemen der Bundesrepublik, dass das Bewusstsein einer alle Gruppen umfassenden Schicksalsgemeinschaft zu fehlen schient' ('it certainly belongs to the gravest problems in the Federal Republic that a consciousness of a common destiny comprising all groups seems to be lacking'; Elias, 1989, p. 544). And the statement of Günter Gaus, quoted earlier, 'das Vakuum unserer nationalen Identität', continues 'kann nicht auf Dauer sein' ('the vacuum of our national identity cannot be a permanent thing'). Even Gerhard Herdegen's 'Deutschland . . . ist ein Land ohne Nationalhelden' has a distinct note of regret to it. All these examples go to show that a situation with a powerful nation - the most powerful in Europe - where national pride, symbols and identity are, in a sense, illegitimate, is untenable. The mental-cultural lacuna demands to be filled.

The 1980s in FRG history is, read in a certain light, the decade attempting to fill it, trying to give back to the Germans a sense of 'Schicksalsgemeinschaft' ('community of destiny') - and symbols and memories of war belong here: 'Patriot sein, da heisst auch, an seinem Vaterland leiden. Treue bewährt sich erst im Leiden', as Manfred Hättich dared to write in 1988 ('To be a patriot also means to suffer for your fatherland. Loyalty is really put to the test in the act of suffering'; Weigelt, 1988, p. 128). The Bitburg incident of 1985 must be seen not just as part of international 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' and public expiation, but also as a symbolic attempt to build bridges across the national hiatus that Nazism and its dead soldiers represent, by, if no more, at least neutralizing pervasive feelings of guilt in recognizing the sacrifices of these misguided but still German SS soldiers (Funke, 1988; Presse- und Informationsamt, 1985). And the latest boost to this new-found German self-confidence is of course the unification of the two Germanies, seen to unite, once again, 'state' and 'nation' into one organic whole - and, inversely, giving rise to all manner of hostile images of Ger-

man intentions abroad. After the healing of *this* wound, national identity and pride are once more legitimate, pointing towards the ideological recapturing of German history and continuity: it may be that *West* Germany is a country without national heroes, but this does not apply to *Germany*. This is compounded by the fact that what has happened is a one-off 'successful revolution', peaceful at that, a 'victory' for the first time in more than 100 years (notwithstanding the present economic and intercultural problems it is giving rise to).

It is not to join the chorus of anti-German alarmists to argue that this will necessarily imply the freeing of images of sacrifice, death and heroism in the national cause, a tendency which, as the presentation might have shown and as the examples below illustrate, was already evident well before the actual unification took place. Articles on war and war monuments are now frequently found in the national press (e.g. Alings, 1990; *Das Parlament*, April 1990). The reburial of Frederick the Great throws another symbolic angle on the subject. Interest in the Bismarckian period is seeing a revival. Leftists like Wolf Biermann openly supported the Gulf War and advocated German military involvement. Helmut Kohl, perhaps in one of his maladroit moments, but substantially in line with German political consensus, questioned Poland's western border, reinvoking memories of earlier German expansionism (though 'Revanchismus' was not his intention). Soldierly virtues are being applauded more openly than before (cf. Conclusion). And the many symptoms of anti-alien nationalism on the right may not be *representative* of German public opinion, nor are they more pronounced than in many other European countries; still, the ferocity of their manifestations bears witness to an 'identity climate' radically different from before (on another level, they are evidence of deepening social and economic inequalities). The German post-WWII political culture is in a state of flux, showing the flimsiness of the legacy of 'Wiedergutmachung' and 'Verfassungspatriotismus' (Grass, 1992).

Some might deny the pattern in such examples, and stress rather the individual significance and justification of each (e.g. that Biermann with his Jewish background wished to defend the Jewish State and was therefore in accordance with German post-WWII 'moralism'; or that Kohl expressed legal rather than political reservations in his statements on the Polish border question). Others might refer to the fact that not all are expressive of mass phenomena and mass sentiments. The peculiarity of these examples, however, and the reason they constitute a pattern is (a) that one would not have to go back very far to realize that they would have been unimaginable then, and (b) that they are symbols of a changing identity climate in which statements such as Biermann's and Kohl's are not only possible but legitimate. It should be noted that this is not a process which, once again, defines Germany as the odd-one-out in European history, but in fact indicates Germany's present road towards nation-state 'normalcy'.

This is not to argue that German 'Europeanism' will vanish: after all, it has contributed positively towards Germany's rise from the ashes of the War and its present international recognition. And it has had a number of substantial economic and political consequences, having placed the FRG well and truly at the centre of EC power (cf. H. Kohl, in *The Economist*, 1991). What I do argue is that current developments will lead to a state of affairs where the supra-national ideals that the FRG has been cultivating – quite pragmatically – *in lieu of* national identity, will no longer have this vicarious, substitutional function. The important question today is whether a fully sovereign FRG will succeed in creating a confident national identity without recourse to the most important pillar in the construction of orthodox nationalism, the contrastive parameter of 'war mentality'; whether 'European peacefulness' has outstayed its welcome; or whether we are in for novel combinations of the two. The French-German 'army' in the offing (see section 4) might suggest this last solution, based on common hegemonic ambitions.

3.3 Denmark: Defeat as Moral Strength in a Small Nation-State

There is no doubt about it: the Danes are not a heroic people. They do not have a glorious history. War memories and ultimate sacrifices do not form the very core of their national identity. Danes would not even like them to. Denmark is a small nation-state that makes the most of its modest size and the all-out or partial defeats that have characterized a number of its international 'engagements' in the last two centuries. The moral victory that seems to emerge from this all the same – based on the 19th-century motto 'Hvad udad tabtes skal indad vindes' ('What we lost externally, we shall gain internally') – is that Denmark has, after all, survived as a sovereign nation-state in times of adversity. The remaining Danes – some five million of them – take pride in their common-sense and good-humoured Danishness, their middle-of-the-road attitude to the vicissitudes of life, and in their self-moderation and low-key version of bourgeois equality. Danes are a happy-go-lucky people, sceptical, abhorring extremes, and Denmark is a country where lying low and knowing one's limitations are civic virtues, where amateurishness is in high esteem, and self-irony pervasive. Danes see themselves as peaceful and harmless, make little formal distinction between high and low, refuse in principle to recognize any difference between people and state ('the state is all of us!'), are ardent fans of their Royal Family exactly because it embodies these egalitarian principles, and have adapted to a situation of international insignificance to the extent where they have been able to turn it into a moral virtue (on Danish identity, see e.g. Bistrup & Winge, 1985; Borish, 1991; Feldbæk, 1991).

All very unheroic and non-militant. Correspondingly, the traditional notion of the typical Danish soldier is that of an honest but blundering, upright but harmless fellow, an anti-hero donning his uniform for as brief a time as possible, subsequently to boast about the combination between ridiculous hardships and his personal ability to evade them. Life in the Danish army has been made the source of innumerable rollicking

film comedies, and very few tragedies. Somehow, soldierly virtues do not agree with the Danish attitude to life, which an outsider once described as 'Epicurean' (Joesten, 1939). In the same vein, the Vikings are paraded as tourist attractions but do not at all square with Danes' image of their national identity. The archetypal warrior figure of 'Holger Danske', whose statue can be found at Kronborg Castle in Elsinore, is commonly said to have dropped off to sleep (though the legend has it that he will come to life if and when Denmark comes under mortal pressure from the outside). And even 'Gøngehøvdingen', a legendary figure said to have put up brave resistance against Swedish invaders in the mid-17th century (a Danish Robin Hood), was recently made the theme of a TV series that had more affinity with Danish slapstick 'folk comedy' than with attempts to immortalize a Danish hero – an attempt doomed to fail, anyway, in a country seeing smallness as an indication of greatness.

Although this sounds far removed from 'war and sacrifice', memories and symbols of war nonetheless do enter into the 'national consciousness' of modern Denmark, though in a peculiar way. Denmark's position in, history since, and attitudes to WWII make up the core elements of this consciousness, as indicated by right-wing journalist Ulrik Høy who, with reference to the German occupation of Denmark (9 April 1940), on 19 May 1989 wrote in the Danish weekly *Weekendavisen*: 'Norway fought on the 9th of April, Denmark capitulated. . . . Hence Norwegian national identity stands on solid ground, whereas the Danish is homeless'. A country which was 'neutral', yet both occupied and belonging to the Allied side; both humiliated and victorious; both passively coming to terms with occupation and (later) actively resisting it; politically surrendering whilst economically a survivor, the economy being predominantly intact by the end of the War; suffering from wartime restraints, rationing and other discomforts, but perceiving itself to be spiritually free and morally in the right, as small nations run over by bigger ones always are. Debates in Denmark on

the issue have moved within this circumference. Some praise the Danish politicians for their realistic attitude at the beginning of the war, since putting up any serious resistance would have been suicidal. Others – like Ulrik Høy – see it as a humiliating experience that has left an indelible smudge on the national character: after this, real pride is impossible. Much the same people castigate the Danes for their opportunism when really getting involved in the civil resistance movement from August 1943 onwards: at that point they saw which way the tide was turning in the war. Whereas others praise the heroics of the resistance, particularly since it saved Denmark's honour: 'We' were not just liberated from the outside, but liberated ourselves. Collaborators were defamed and suspicion of having in any way aided and abetted the Germans can still ruin a Dane's reputation for good.¹⁰ And nearly all are agreed that – in the lines of a well-known Danish cultural personality, Poul Henningsen – 'de binder os på mund og hånd, men de kan aldrig binde ånd' ('though they tie our hands and gag our mouths, they will never quench our spirit'; from a song popular during the occupation). Danes are always for a free, sovereign Denmark, and *qua* their symbolic resistance moral victors.

Denmark is proof that defeats in war must not necessarily lead to national traumas or a German-type identity vacuum. In fact, rather the reverse: political defeats in war-(like) situations have regularly been used to boost the country's cultural nationalism and the reputed 'homogeneity' between state and people. This anomaly is based on three distinctive criteria: Denmark is small; Denmark is not the aggressor; Denmark has survived. The combination of these three – based on the inward-looking culturalism of the Danish 19th-century folk high-school tradition and the success of Denmark's peaceful 20th-century modernization (see e.g. Borish, 1991) – has engendered a moral righteousness of defeat, yet far removed from defeatism, the national spirit thriving in the face of adversity (real or imagined). The strength of Danish cultural identity exists not in spite, but because of the foreign (read: German) onslaughts on Denmark,

whose nationalism rests more on the perceived immorality of *other* nationalisms than war and death as touchstones of its own.

This 'inverted' strength of Danish nationalism, oblivious of all historical nastiness and wrapping itself in cosy self-sufficiency, is very much the result of Denmark's geopolitical situation. A half-way house between the European continent and the rest of Scandinavia, between an archipelago (like the British Isles) and a landlocked country (like Germany), Denmark has developed an inclination for political and cultural neutrality, looking inwards rather than towards the outside world (which anyway has often seemed to consist solely of Germany, being the country whose interests and developments have more than anything else determined the course of Danish history). This neutralist and highly pragmatic tendency, apparent even in the international organizations Denmark is part of (e.g. NATO and the EC, both from the outset marriages of convenience), has been strengthened by the *form* that Danish (war) defeats have taken in terms of their impact on civic life. Apart from the German occupation of Denmark in WWII (which did not seriously affect either the economy or the territory, though it left deep scars in the national mentality – cf. below), international showdowns have tended to encroach only on outlying (border) areas, particularly South Jutland (Schleswig-Holstein), the main object of the 19th-century disputes between Denmark and Germany, leading to the national nadir of 1864, when two-fifths of Danish territory had to be ceded to Prussia. Hence, a 'martial' version of Danishness, feeding off memories of war and noble sacrifice, is extant in this part of Denmark. The rest of the country, surrounded by water, has only been marginally hit by war. The conflicts that Danish armed forces have engaged in have mainly been sea battles (hence, Danish heroes are often naval officers). The diminution of the former greater (Scandinavian) Kingdom of Denmark affected the area of politics more than the ordinary Dane. Former colonies were abandoned or – in the pragmatic Danish vein – sold off. All these

radical changes have hardly left a smudge on Danish identity; history to the average Dane seems to be a rather peaceful, age-old and continuous series of events, where all's well provided you do not seriously meddle with the outside world, which can be a frightening and ill-advised thing to do, seeing that it is replete with non-Danes. Amongst these, Germans loom very large indeed, as these statements (in my translation) will illustrate:

Having a 'mother country' is a privilege, even one that I love deeply! I have been affected by the ups and downs of history, identify with the painful defeats; my mother's father was a soldier in 1864. – I, we, experienced the 9th of April [1940]; . . . A neighbouring country that once again turned into an enemy. Those 5 years were a lesson in appreciating one's own country, independence, freedom! . . . After the war, a camp for German refugees was set up in our parish, until 1949. There were very mixed feelings towards them. . . . it is a difficult lesson to learn to 'love your enemies'. Enemy images die pretty hard.¹¹

For me it is natural to be Danish. I belong to the generation that grew up after the war, and through my parents, in the talks touching on WWII. I probably gained an appreciation of being Danish. . . . WWII was incredibly important, consciously or unconsciously. . . . Our Danish teacher in primary school came from South Jutland and sometimes told of her impressions from the war. . . . Deep down I feel that Germans are as Germans have been all along.¹²

For us, the war has meant that we are negative towards Germans, because we have heard so many bad things about them and the war. . . . Those who dared resist during the war were really heroes then, and I see them as heroes today, too. . . . I don't know why, but I am scared of a new Greater Germany . . . [they] will try to assume power, as in WWII.¹³

[About German tourists on Danish beaches] They build parapets in order to protect themselves against outsiders, they are diligent and accurate. . . . Ordnung muss sein. . . . Germans are somewhat more militant than Danes. . . . Germans speak extremely loudly. . . . It will take some time before I no longer regard the Germans as a danger.¹⁴

These quotes cover Danes from age group 15 up to 80. They illustrate the impact of Germany on Danish history and mentality in the last 130 years: the deep-seated enemy image, the anti-German, big-brother mythology that Danes still cherish in spite of well-meaning attempts to believe that 'they' have improved; a mythology founded on

war and defeat, and yet also a mythology that obviously strengthens prevailing notions of Danishness, often akin to feelings of love and affection. Hence it is not military strength that counts in Denmark, nor grand feats of prowess, nor any other foolhardy heroism. It is being Danish and maintaining Danishness despite the winds of evil that keep blowing from the south, spreading 'Ugræs' (weeds, a Danish coinage expressing the destructiveness of Germany) in the Danish countryside. 'They' might go on trying to dominate us, they might even do so – quite a number of Danes feel that this is the ultimate rationale of the EC, and have hence transferred hostile images of Germany to the Community (Hedetoft, 1990b) – but our spirit will never be quenched. The Danish NO to the Maastricht Treaty, in June 1992, however narrow, demonstrated amongst other things that this type of symbolic resistance to being dominated by the European 'Other' is far from extinct. The mixture of Germany, defence cooperation and loss of sovereignty is a potent, sometimes explosive one in Denmark.

4. War Mentality and Internationalism in the Three Nations

The differences between the contribution of war mentality to national identity formation in the three countries corresponds with the basic modulations of 'internationalism'. This term is here used to refer to the systematic relations between nationalism in its 'sovereign', self-contained sense, and prevailing attitudes to international and supranational cooperation. Elsewhere, I have argued that this 'dialectic', seen from a political-cultural and mentality point of view, evinces distinct differences in the three nations (Hedetoft, 1990c), differences that, in the shorthand version, can be dubbed 'internationalism-as-nationalism' (UK), 'nationalism-as-internationalism' (FRG), and 'nationalism-as-nationalism' (Denmark).

This implies that in both the UK and the FRG, there is a lack of convergence between national discourse and international orientation, whilst Denmark has traditionally been characterized by a nationalist dis-

course quite in keeping with its inward-looking national orientation and a general reluctance to enter into international cooperation, unless this is seen to be and can be presented as pragmatically inevitable or clearly in the national interest. In the other two countries, either the national interest is wrapped in international discourse (FRG), or internationalist, even global, ambitions hide behind the cloak of an overt nationalist discourse, contrastive images of 'the Other', and insular 'Little Englandism' (UK). It is important to note that this does not alter the fact that all nation-states naturally think and act optimally in keeping with their notion of the national interest, but applies solely to the specific forms that the dialectic between 'national' and 'international' assumes, based on historical experiences, political cultures, national identities and interpretations/degrees of internationally recognized sovereignty.¹⁵

The war mentalities that have been outlined slot into this problematique, both as reflective mirrors and as independent contributors. The occasionally rabid nationalism of the UK in the postwar era, epitomized in Thatcherite discourse, rests on a peculiar combination between the confidence of the nation's colonial past, war victories in WWI and WWII, and a deep-seated suspicion of 'Europe'. Interestingly, all three are premised on and rooted in war history and contribute towards an 'insularity' and 'sovereignty' discourse which is the cultural-historical vehicle of international, almost hegemonic interests and frames of mind. The UK's cultivation of its heroic myths is the historical deposit of an all but inward-looking nationalism, since it both symbolizes the all-important instrument underlying the UK's former greatness, but also – as a symbolic reminder of the past – the painful dichotomy between 20th-century successes in wars and peacetime decline. It further indicates British reluctance to enter forms of international cooperation that do not rest on *British* internationalism, interests and power, as e.g. the EC clearly does not. The cult of civic heroism represents the confident, culturally stable and internationally superior status of the UK. In

this sense, it stands for a nationalism always willing to translate into internationalism, but only on its own terms, and failing to find the necessary conditions of growth in the contemporary European world.

The German case is the opposite. Here, a wartime loser, with limited sovereignty for most of the postwar period, and having to accept tight restrictions on military performance, was forced to search for means to regain national strength elsewhere than in nationalist, exclusive, self-contained strategies, and thus pushed into 'Europeanism' as official rhetoric and a cultural-national prop. Unlike Britain, the FRG had to come to terms with direct, unconditional military subordination, whereas the UK was a founder member of NATO, became a nuclear power and was still present on German soil as an occupation force. The FRG had no choice but to translate its national aspirations into a peaceful, international and contrite morality. On the other hand, this was part and parcel of both national-economic and superpower policies that gradually allowed the FRG to regain its full sovereignty as well as to take the centre stage in Europe. The FRG's national interest may thus once again be brought into alignment with national identity and national discourse – but so far its internationality has stood it in good stead, and clearly matches the contemporary European 'spiritual climate' far better than the British modulation. In the FRG, 'supranationalism' may not always be taken very seriously, but still the term carries positive associations. In the UK, 'supra' is less than super, and 'Union' a word of abuse.

This also applies to Denmark, which unlike the UK has had no consistent international dimension or attitude since the 1860s. The Danish war mentality is mostly an aggregation of images of foreign immorality, and squares with the mythology of antediluvian smallness and fairy-tale harmlessness outlined in section 3.3 above. Danes are overt, proud patriots, who make the most of their peaceful attitudes, perceive military systems abroad as dangerous, and their own forces as slightly ludicrous – or at best as symbolic of their *will to*

resist. However, it is important to stress that Danes are peaceful *nationalists*, not peaceful *internationalists*. Although changes *are* coming about at present – there are signs of a more aggressive, internationally participatory attitude in sections of Danish society – it is still valid to say that Danes like to act, feel and think as Danes, in an inward-looking, self-sufficient manner, which is anything but international, and rarely even pretends to be. EC economic cooperation is now accepted because it is pragmatically correct, has proved not to endanger Danish identity (rather the reverse), and can be used to contain German ambitions. But this does not extend to the political, let alone cultural area. The ‘internationalism’ of Denmark is best illustrated by reference to an area analogous to war: sport. The UK has its violent, racist ‘hooligans’; the FRG its often intimidating ‘Schlachtenbummler’ (soccer rowdies); but Denmark takes pride in its ‘roligans’, i.e. ‘peaceful supporters’, and laps up the international praise it can collect on that account. There is nothing a Dane enjoys so much as foreigners praising his culture and identity, i.e. confirming his own views.¹⁶ The Danish mentality – even in international affairs – is quite consistently national(ist). In the same vein, ‘war’ indicates all the unnecessary sacrifices the belligerent ‘Other’ has imposed on ‘Us’. Denmark is a country of surprising innocence. Many Danish respondents in the survey referred to above were hard put to it to understand the import of a question asking them if they would be willing to sustain sacrifices for Denmark, if such a situation should occur – whereas the UK group grasped it immediately. And to the extent that war *is* present in Danish mentality, it is so as a deplorable, exogenous fact, proof that Danish nationalism is superior since it would never resort to such methods. Thus, Danish war efforts today are invariably of a humanitarian type, or take the form of peace-keeping initiatives under UN auspices. The Danish frigate in the Gulf War was sent out on strict orders not to get involved in battle. And Denmark became (in)famous in NATO in the 1970s and 1980s for its footdragging footnote policies, mani-

festing a political, but also cultural, reluctance to ‘go the whole hog’. Lastly, the upcoming European Union was defeated in the Danish referendum on the Maastricht Treaty (2 June 1992), largely on the issue of closer future cooperation in security and defence matters – and in spite of overwhelming support in the Danish Parliament.¹⁷

If these two ‘tests’ are applied to the UK and the FRG – attitudes to the Gulf War and closer defence cooperation in the EC – on the basis of their war mentalities, the analysis so far would seem to apply. The UK – at least its officialdom – reacted positively to the Gulf War; was highly present in the war zone; made the most of the UK’s indispensable contribution to the outcome; and welcomed ‘our boys’ back as war heroes. It was not concealed that this was a joint effort under US control, but precisely this transatlantic touch – Anglo-Saxons on both sides of the ocean fighting immorality – made it fairly easy to pass the war off to the public as a righteous cause.¹⁸ Concurrently, quite a lot of ‘French’ and ‘German’ bashing was taking place: in the tabloids, the French were presented as cowards not doing a proper job, and trying to keep out of harm’s way; and the Germans were castigated across the board for refusing to take an active part in the Gulf, and for nonetheless producing arms – for both sides in the conflict (‘make arms not war’, as an *Economist* headline wryly described the German attitude).

The UK thus again preferred the special US–UK relationship to European unity. This should not be taken to imply that the UK would not take part in the construction of a European security and defence policy, since this could be a springboard to greater influence in Europe; since the WEU is an organization enjoying the support of the UK; and since the UK has a tradition of acting internationally precisely in the area of defence. However, on the basis of this same tradition and the contribution of war mentality to British national identity, it is clear that the UK would have more than superficial problems in accepting both joint actions led – most likely – by a French–German

coalition, and even more so with a joint (federal?) army.

The FRG, in keeping with the official aversion to war efforts, particularly outside Europe, refused to send military personnel to the Gulf, but offered to help out by contributing financially to the war effort of the nations involved. Of course, this was seen as hypocrisy and weakness abroad (but was still in line with the demands the international community had so far imposed on the FRG). Internally, such attitudes might, paradoxically, have a long-term political impact in helping along incipient German desires for more international freedom of action and a full-fledged identity divorced from the painful legacy of 'Wiedergutmachung'.

At the same time, this is still premised on European cooperation. In the same way that German reunification and full sovereignty were possible only in the context of the EC, any independent German military potential would have to fit into the framework of a common European security and defence policy, in order to prove that the FRG no longer harboured any ill intent vis-a-vis their historical enemies. Though the architects of such policies are no doubt of French extraction, the FRG has to concur with this token supranationalism. It was therefore no surprise to learn, in May 1992, that France and the FRG had decided to set up a joint 'army' of 35,000 men, a 'Euro-Corps' fit for combat, and allegedly a forerunner of a future European army. What this proves, more than the coming of a European Superstate, is that armed forces and mentalities of war can be deployed for purposes of mutual control and competition in other ways than in open combat. In this case as in others, internationalism is nothing but a form of nationalism.¹⁹

5. Conclusion

On the basis of the discussion so far, the following brief conclusions regarding the relations between national identity and mentalities of war in contemporary Europe are warranted:

1. Europe today is not what it was 60-70

years ago; nor is the nation-state and its nationalism the same. Wars *within* the EC are less likely in the foreseeable future. But this does not imply the withering away of the nation-states, of their national identities, or of memories of war (Hedetoft, 1990a,c). Nor does it preclude war efforts, and though these will no doubt mainly take place within larger alliances (NATO, WEU, UN . . .), this will not prevent – and has not prevented – each participant nation from giving such wars their own national interpretation, such as uniformly happened in the Gulf War. Most European nations, on national red-letter days, regularly celebrate the heroes of WWI and WWII. Even the FRG no longer solely pounds on the issues of moral guilt and the need for expiation, but openly admonishes its army not to look askance at soldierly virtues and old-fashioned patriotism. For instance, Helmut Kohl, in a speech on the 50th Anniversary of the outbreak of WWII, 1 September 1989, applauded 'virtues like valour, loyalty and readiness for sacrifices' (Kohl, 1989, p. 44). It should be clear that the (relative) peacefulness of contemporary EC-Europe is far from implying the death of the idea of noble sacrifice within its national universes.

2. Rather the obverse. For the snippets of 'domestic' sovereignty that the member states, willy-nilly, have to cede in the EC and the imposed limitations on their military options, naturally imply that each nation will tend to value its (remaining) sphere of sovereignty more than ever and to retain a strong interest in receiving real or symbolic proof of its citizens' continued loyalty, national identity and historical consciousness. And since there is no better evidence of this than the readiness/respect for national sacrifice, martial imagery and heroic discourse are still in high esteem – though it is true that the 'myth of the fallen soldier' has undergone a weakening (Mosse, 1990, p. 224) – and the education systems, media, political and scholarly representatives of the national cultures do their best to instill a corresponding frame of mind in the younger generations. Concurrently, each country keeps its own military potential and

traditions intact and in good working order, just in case.

3. From the start, the EC saw itself as a peace movement. True enough, the postwar period has seen no wars between EC countries (though quite an impressive array of military showdowns involving member-states and nations *outside* the EC). In the Community, competition, wrangling, disagreements, etc., have mainly been relocated to the economic or political sphere, to such an extent that the amount of war *rhetoric* in these areas has fully compensated for the lack of actual wars.²⁰ This is just one out of many manifestations of a Community where the discourse of supranationalism is proving itself to be the flimsy wrapping round a bundle of distinct, though intertwined national interests and identities. With the collapse of the Eastern regimes and thus of the containment of European nationalism provided by the superpower confrontation, it will take more than goodwill and Maastricht to keep the 'military option' permanently out of intra-European competition. Meanwhile, European statesmen concern themselves with the possibilities of creating a common defence and security policy, perhaps a joint army, in order for Europe to play an active superpower role in the world. However, in view of the serious diversity of interests, identities and war mentalities; of the fact that here we are dealing with nothing less than the ultimate touchstone of national sovereignty; and finally of the powerlessness and lack of agreement shown by the Community in the face of the (ex-)Yugoslavian tragedy, it is probably both symbolic and portentous that this question, in the Maastricht Treaty, is envisaged as being decided on later . . . round about 1996. For the European federalists, this is *the* lynchpin of Europe's peaceful and powerful future, and most likely a losing battle. For the intergovernmentalists, it is the point beyond which it is impossible to move without injuring national sovereignty irreparably, and therefore a permanent eyesore. Hence, it would seem, the future of war (mentalities) in Europe is less a question of the survival or death of

nationalism than of whether or not the European nations will be able to construct a kind of national identity which is truly 'open to the world' and independent of the imagery of sacrifice and heroism.

NOTES

1. 'A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future.'
2. The implication of this is that it is mainly war and war symbolism that act as the main factor of cohesion, the adhesive tape, of British as opposed to English, Scottish, etc., identity.
3. From a qualitative survey I am currently carrying out in Denmark, the FRG and the UK, based on extensive questionnaires and interviews, investigating the 'condition' of the national identity, the European 'other', and the integration of Europe in the three countries; in the following referred to as SURVEY. This research does not aim to present statistically reliable and quantitatively representative 'average opinions', but rather to supplement the already vast number of such surveys by investigating in depth underlying national assumptions and tendencies as far as identities and mentalities are concerned: attitudes, values, discourses, emotionality, etc., i.e. the ways and modes in which the national imagined communities make themselves felt in the hearts and minds of the roughly 50 'cases' involved. However, though not statistically representative, patterns of recurrent argumentation and imagery in this corpus render conclusions as to likely national differences and modalities cognitively and 'qualitatively' valid. The examples used in this article all conform with this assumption.
4. This notion came into being during the last decades of the 19th century in relation to the then prevailing ideas of manliness and soldierly virtues as a panacea for 'racial degeneration'. The victory at Mafeking during the Boer War and the resultant Scout Movement reinforced the notion significantly.
5. Compare the cigar-smoking, civilian-looking Churchill with the solemn-looking and uniformed de Gaulle, later to become President of France. Montgomery would have been hard put to it to become Prime Minister of Britain.
6. See my analysis of one such example in Hedetoft 1990a, pp. 27 ff.
7. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 58.
8. Rupert Brooke's 'The Soldier' (1915) is a literary example of this: this greater part of this 'war poem' deals with the peace of England, with 'laughter', 'friends' and 'gentleness' - all that the persona misses in the trenches. See *ibid.*, p. 59. For the significance of WWI as a source of symbolism and memories of war today, see especially Fussell (1975) and Vondung (1980).
9. From SURVEY.

10. Even a group of 16-year-old schoolchildren, interviewed by the Danish regional daily *Aalborg Stiftstidende* (1 April 1990), agreed that 'they wouldn't talk about it if there was a traitor in the family. It is still seen as a disgrace, and it would be a let-down of the person who had sided with the Germans.'
11. From SURVEY. Respondent aged 79.
12. From SURVEY. Respondent aged 50.
13. Two schoolchildren, aged 15, in an article in the daily *Politiken*, 9 April 1990.
14. From SURVEY. Respondent aged 54.
15. It has been argued that one of the key concepts in a valid definition of sovereignty today is precisely the question of international recognition of a given nation-state. See e.g. James (1991) and Clarke (1992). For an interesting and stimulating discussion of sovereignty in a context of 'modernity' and 'postmodernity', see also Camilleri & Falk (1992).
16. The most recent example is the publicity given to a book on Denmark by former British ambassador to Denmark, Sir James Mellon (*Og Gamle Danmark* ... 1992). It sings the praises of this inventive and rational 'tribe' and was hence made the basis of no less than four 20-minute TV programmes (May 1992).
17. Interestingly, those parts of Denmark (south and west Jutland) with the most extensive and least pleasant historical contact with Germany were in favour of the Maastricht Draft Treaty (cf. Belgium and Holland), though enthusiasm for European co-operation had abated also in these areas as compared with, for example, the referendum on the Single European Act in 1986. After the Danish referendum, the debate concerning Maastricht in the FRG and the UK would seem to confirm the reading presented above: with the German government still in favour of speedy ratification, polls indicate increasing scepticism and resistance among the German population, with large sections no longer willing to foot the bill of European integration in view of internal problems, and with a rise in extreme forms of nationalism, particularly amongst the young, as its attendant phenomenon; and in the UK 'Maastricht' is beginning to weigh like a millstone round John Major's neck, in the face of popular resistance, intra-Conservative unrest, and the humiliation of the pound sterling having to leave the ERM - while he tries to stem the tide by playing for time. And on top of the mutual dissatisfaction this has given rise to in the FRG and the UK, old WWII memories have once again helped to drive a wedge between the two countries (celebrating Peenemünde in Germany, Bomber Harris in Britain etc.)!
18. On the other hand, the Gulf War was seen by many Britons with non-Tory sympathies as an immoral, unjustified cause, where Britain had once again been made to act as an instrument of US world hegemonic ambitions. My SURVEY indicates a deep-seated resentment of US foreign policy, verging on open hostility.
19. Since this article was originally written, the situation in former Yugoslavia has highlighted the internal EC differences as far as defence and security politics are concerned. In spite of opposition from many other EC countries (including France), Germany rushed to recognize Slovenia and Croatia, thus manifesting a new-found national confidence in foreign affairs whilst risking a 'balkanisation' of EC foreign politics. Britain has been uneasily poised between advocating all-out military intervention (NATO/UN) and turning its back on this unsavoury continental affair, whilst Britons (Lord Carrington, David (Lord) Owen) have been diplomatically active as peacemakers. And Denmark has been through a heated debate concerning the legitimacy of sending some 150 Danish professional soldiers into the battle zone, in typically Danish fashion resulting in giving the chosen soldiers the possibility of opting out of this assignment (many did).
20. Consonant with de Gaulle's cynical statement, 'There's no such thing as peace. In war you fight your enemies, in peace you fight your friends.' It is worth adding that though wars have not taken place since 1945 between member-states, this is not true if by 'the Community' one means the total area within the outer limits of the EC, where the conflict in Northern Ireland is still going on, a conflict most aptly described as a war.

REFERENCES

- Ackerman, Volker, 1990. *Nationale Totenfeiern in Deutschland. Von Wilhelm I. bis Franz Josef Strauss*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Agger, Gunhild; Barbara Gentikow & Ulf Hedetoft, eds, 1990. *Stereotyper i Europa*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, Center for Cultural Research.
- Alings, Reinhard, 1990. 'Die Standhafte Else - die Siegesssäule in Berlin', *Die Zeit*, 12 March.
- Anderson, Benedict, 1983. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Barnett, Correlli, 1970. *Britain and Her Army 1509-1970*. London: Allen Lane.
- Bistrup, Annette & Mette Winge, eds, 1985. *Danskere - Hvem er vi?* Copenhagen: Gyldendal.
- Borish, Steven, 1991. *The Land of the Living. Danish Folk High Schools and Denmark's Non-Violent Path to Modernisation*. Nevada City, NV: Blue Dolphin.
- Briggs, Susan, 1975. *Keep Smiling Through*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Camilleri, Joseph A. & Jim Falk, 1992. *The End of Sovereignty. The Politics of a Shrinking and Fragmenting World*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.
- Cannadine, David, ed., 1990. *The Speeches of Winston Churchill*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Clarke, Michael, 1992. *British External Policy-Making in the 1990s*. London: Macmillan.
- Craig, Gordon, 1982. *The Germans*. Toronto: Putnam.
- Dudek, Peter, 1992. "'Vergangenheitsbewältigung": Zur Problematik eines umstrittenen Begriffs', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 3 January, pp. 44-53.

- Economist*, The, 1991. 'A German Idea of Europe', 27 July.
- Elias, Norbert, 1989. *Studien über die Deutschen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Elshain, Jean Bethke, 1987. *Women and War*. New York: Basic Books.
- Elshain, Jean Bethke, ed., 1992. *Just War Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Feldbæk, Ole et al., 1991. *Dansk Identitetshistorie*, vols. I-IV. Copenhagen: Reitzel.
- Funke, Hajo, 1988. 'Bergen-Belsen, Bitburg, Hambach. Bericht über eine negative Katharsis', pp. 20-34 in Hajo Funke, ed., *Von der Gnade der geschenkten Nation*. Berlin: Rotbuch.
- Fussell, Paul, 1975. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fussell, Paul, 1991. *Wartime: Understanding and Behaviour in the Second World War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gaus, Günter, 1983. *Wo Deutschland Liegt*. Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe.
- Grass, Günter, 1992. *Eine Rede über Verlust*. Göttingen: Steidl.
- Greiffenhagen, Martin, 1984. 'Vom Obrigkeitsstaat zur Demokratie', pp. 52-76 in Peter Reichelt, ed., *Politische Kultur in Westeuropa*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus.
- Habermas, Jürgen, 1990. 'DM-Nationalismus', *Die Zeit*, 30 March.
- Hedetoft, Ulf, 1990a. 'War and Death as Touchstones of National Identity'. *Papers on Languages and Intercultural Studies* no. 14, Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies, Aalborg University.
- Hedetoft, Ulf, 1990b. 'Det nationale fremmedbillede som kulturelt tegn', pp. 29-57 in Agger et al. (1990).
- Hedetoft, Ulf, 1990c. 'Euronationalism'. *European Studies* no. 1, European Research Programme, Aalborg University. Shorter version in *History of European Ideas*, vol. 15, nos. 1-3, 1992, pp. 271-277.
- Hedetoft, Ulf & Hanne Niss, 1991. *Taking Stock of Thatcherism*. Aalborg: Aalborg University Press.
- Herdegen, Gerhard, 1987. 'Demoskopische Anmerkungen zum Geschichtsbewusstsein der Deutschen (West) im Kontext der deutschen Frage', pp. 187-292 in Weidenfeld (1987).
- Hobson, John A., 1901. *The Psychology of Jingoism*. London: Grant Richards.
- James, Alan, 1991. 'Sovereignty in Eastern Europe', *Millennium*, vol. 20, no. 1, Spring, pp. 81-89.
- Joesten, Joachim, 1939. *Denmark's Day of Doom. On the Political, Economic and Military Situation of Denmark*. London: Victor Gollancz.
- Kluxen-Pyta, Donata, 1990. 'Verfassungspatriotismus und nationale Identität', *Zeitschrift für Politik*, vol. 37, no. 2, June, pp. 117-133.
- Kohl, Helmut, 1989. *Regierungserklärung vom 1. September 1989. Zum 50. Jahrestag des Beginns des Zweiten Weltkriegs*. Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung.
- Korte, Karl-Rudolf, 1987. 'Erinnerungsspuren. Das Neue Gesellschaftsbewusstsein', pp. 65-82 in Weidenfeld (1987).
- Mann, Thomas, 1945. 'Deutschland und die Deutschen', pp. 225-244 in Dieter Hildebrandt & Siegfried Unseld, eds, *Deutsches Mosaik. Ein Lesebuch für Zeitgenossen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972.
- Mellon, (Sir) James, 1992. *Og Gamle Danmark . . . en Beskrivelse af Danmark i det Herrens År 1992*. Gylling: Narayana Press.
- Mommsen, Wolfgang, 1980. '"Wir sind wieder wer." Wandlungen im politischen Bewusstsein der Deutschen', pp. 185-209 in Jürgen Habermas, ed., *Stichwörter zur geistigen Situation der Zeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Mosse, George L., 1990. *Fallen Soldiers, Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Orwell, George, 1985. *The War Broadcasts* (edited by W. J. West). London: Duckworth/BBC.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth & Renate Köcher, 1987. *Die Verletzte Nation*. Stuttgart: Deutsches Verlags Anstalt.
- Pinkert, Ernst-Ulrich, 1990. '"Den Grimme Tysker"', pp. 59-79 in Agger et al. (1990).
- Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 1985. *Erinnerung, Trauer und Versöhnung. Ansprachen und Erklärungen zum vierzigsten Jahrestag des Kriegsendes*. Bonn.
- Priestley, John B., 1940. *Postscripts*. London: Heinemann.
- Renan, Joseph Ernest, 1887. *Discours et Conférences*. Paris: Calman-Lévy.
- Smith, Anthony D., 1986. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Thatcher, Margaret, 1982. 'Text of the Prime Minister's Speech at Cheltenham Rally, 3 July 1982'. London: Conservative Political Centre.
- Trautmann, Günter, ed., 1990. *Die hässlichen Deutschen*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Vondung, Klaus, ed., 1980. *Kriegserlebnis*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Weidenfeld, Werner, ed., 1987. *Geschichtsbewusstsein der Deutschen*. Cologne: Wissenschaft und Politik.
- Weigelt, Klaus, ed., 1988. *Patriotismus in Europa*. Bonn: Bouvier.
- Will, George, 1990. 'Europe's Furred Banners', *Newsweek*, 5 March.
- Winkler, Heinrich August, 1991. 'Nationalismus, Nationalstaat und nationale Frage in Deutschland seit 1945', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 27 September, pp. 12-24.
- Worsthorne, Peregrine, 1982. Editorial, *The Sunday Telegraph*, 27 June.

ULF HEDETOFT, b. 1946. Cand. phil. in English, Copenhagen University, 1970. Associate Professor of British Cultural and Social Studies, Aalborg University (1976-88); professor of British and European Studies (1988-), and associated with the University's European Research Unit. Visiting Scholar at the Center for European Studies, Harvard University (1993-94). Member of the Executive Committee of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas. Research interests: Nationalism, regionalism and supranationality in Europe as cultural and political phenomena. The author of a number of books and articles within this field.