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[Michael Roberts, The Military Revolution, 1560-1660, p. 18-19]

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fact, was launched, not by highly-skilled professionals, but by conscript peasants; and experienced mercenary soldiers such as Robert Monro had to go to school again to learn the new Swedish methods.¹ And not only were the Swedish armies better than any mercenaries; they were also incomparably cheaper. There was no peculation by captains; and payment could be made in land-grants, revenue-assignments, tax-remissions, or in kind.

But conditions in Sweden were exceptional, and other European countries felt unable to follow the Swedish example. The Spanish army under Philip II did indeed contain some conscripts, as well as international mercenaries and Spanish "gentlemen-rankers", and the Prussian army of Frederick William I was a mixed army too;² but on the whole the rulers found no feasible alternative to a mercenary force: some of them, like Christian IV of Denmark and John George of Saxony, were not willing to put arms into the hands of their peasantry.³ But if mercenaries thus appeared inevitable, something at least could be done to make them less burdensome to the state. Already before the end of the sixteenth century it was realized that the practice of disbanding and paying-off regiments at the end of each campaigning season, and re-enlisting them the following spring, was an expensive way of doing business. Large sums were payable on enlistment and mustering, and (in theory at least) all arrears were paid up on disbandment. But between mustering and disbandment pay was irregular and never full, despite the so-called "full-pays" which occurred from time to time.⁴ If then a mercenary force were not disbanded in the autumn, but continued from year to year, the calls upon the exchequer were likely to be considerably lessened, and

1. As Gustavus Adolphus put it to Adolf Frederick of Mecklenburg: "Es möchten Ew. Liebden jemand einbilden wollen, als wenn des Landvolk nicht zum Kriege taugt. Lassen sich solches ja von den Grosssprechern nicht einbilden. Glauben mir, der ich täglich die Probe davon nehmen muss, dass wen sie wohl geführt und gecommendiret werden, mit ihnen mehr dan mit der irregularen Soldateske auszurichten": Styffe, p. 414. Sweden did indeed employ mercenaries in time of war to supplement her standing army of conscripts; but the permanent force, as provided for in the Form of Government of 1634, was a militia.
2. Altamira, III. 289-93; P. Schmitthenner, *Krieg und Kriegführung im Wandel der Weltgeschichte*, p. 196.
3. Rockstroh, I. 4, 6, 31, 65; G. Irmer, *Die Verhandlungen Schwedens und seiner Verbündeten mit Wallenstein und dem Kaiser von 1631 bis 1634*, (Leipzig, 1899), I. 259: in August 1632 John George told Lars Nilsson Tungel, "Ich will die bauren nicht bewehren, solte auch das land unter sich, über sich gehen".
4. For all this E. von Frauenholz, *Das Söldnertum in der Zeit des dreissigjährigen Krieges* is now the best authority.

the general nuisance of mutinous soldiery would be abated. Moreover, if the army remained embodied throughout the winter, the close season could be used for drilling and exercising, of which since the tactical revolution there was much more need than ever before. There were, moreover, special areas where winter was the best season for campaigning: it was so in the marshy regions of Poland and north-west Russia; and it was so in Hungary, for the Turkish camels could not stand the cold of the Hungarian plain, and their retirement provided the Habsburgs with the chance to recoup the losses of the preceding summer.¹ Considerations such as these led one prince after another to retain his mercenaries on the strength throughout the winter months: Rudolf II was perhaps the earliest to do so; but Maurice of Orange was not far behind. From this practice arose the modern standing army; and it is worth while emphasizing the fact that it was the result of considerations of a military and financial, and not of a political or constitutional nature. Writers such as de la Noue, Duplessis-Mornay, Wallhausen and Montecuccoli, all advocated standing armies on purely military grounds.² There is little basis for the suggestion that standing armies were called into being by artful princes in order to provide employment for their turbulent nobility;³ or that they were a sign of the inherent *Drang nach Machtentfaltung* of the monarchs;⁴ or that they were designed to support the rulers in their struggles against constitutional limitations—though they did, no doubt, prove very serviceable instruments of despotism. Where absolutism triumphed in this century, it did so because it provided the response to a genuine need; and though an army might be useful for curbing aristocratic licence, it was but an accessory factor in the general political situation which produced the eclipse of the Estates. Essentially the standing armies were the product of military logic rather than of political design. And the same is true of permanent navies: greater obligations in the way of commerce-protection, increased need for making blockades effective, the demand for trained crews and officers

1. Heischmann, pp. 105-6.
2. Wallhausen also made the point that a standing army eased the burdens of the civil population, since it avoided the excesses which usually accompanied disbandment: Wallhausen, *L'Art militaire pour l'Infanterie*, pp. 19-20; Montecuccoli, p. 64; Colin and Reboul, p. 339. In the last months of his life, Gustavus Adolphus was driven to attempt to form a standing army for the whole of protestant Germany, in the interests of discipline.
3. As suggested by A. Vagts, *A History of Militarism*, (1938), p. 46.
4. As suggested by Werner Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, I. 345—though he did add "Die Waffentechnik mag dabei mitgesprochen haben".

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