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Pierre Serna, Antonino De Francesco, and Judith A. Miller, eds. *Republics at War, 1776-1840: Revolutions, Conflicts, and Geopolitics in Europe and the Atlantic World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. xvi, 291. ISBN 978-1-137-32881-6.

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The somewhat daunting title of this work promises historical analysis on a broad canvas, topically, geographically, and chronologically. Its contributors, from five countries,¹ present ideas and arguments across a broad spectrum of subjects. As in any collaborative anthology of this sort, the inclusion of potentially competitive ideas could have posed problems for the project. But editors Pierre Serna (Pantheon-Sorbonne Univ.), Antonino De Francesco (Univ. of Milan) and Judith A. Miller (Emory Univ.) establish a practical common goal: “to understand how, in asserting the independence of new territories organized by new constitutions, the revolutions were able, not by accident but by design, to come to terms with and indeed embrace the risk of war while at the same time working to create new forms of diplomacy” (18).

To achieve this end, the work is divided into three sections based on subject matter. In the first part, “Calling for ‘Republican’ War,” four chapters address the links between war, politics, and diplomacy in the context of the French Revolution. In chapter 1, “The American Origins of the French Revolutionary War,” De Francesco examines how the American Revolution provided an ideological foundation for the establishment of a French “new order.” He discusses in detail the debates on war and peace between Jacques Pierre Brissot and Maximilien de Robespierre in late 1791 and early 1792. He contends that Brissot “won” the contest by juxtaposing the shifting ideas of liberty, revolution, and counterrevolution using the American Revolution as an archetype.

Virginie Martin (Pantheon-Sorbonne Univ.), in chapter 2, “In Search of the ‘Glorious Peace’? Republican Diplomats at War, 1792-1799,” investigates the problematic revolutionary principles that undermined France’s diplomatic relations with other nations. She emphasizes that the revolutionary zealotry of the French diplomats abroad, particularly in Italy, alienated many foreign leaders. In this atmosphere, the French resorted to military action to achieve what would traditionally have been diplomatic goals.

In chapter 3, “Can a Powerful Republic Be Peaceful? The Debate in the Year IV on the Place of France in the European Order,” Marc Belissa (Paris West Univ. Nanterre) shows how France’s unique revolutionary perspective in the mid-1790s influenced its decisions regarding matters of war and peace and hindered a consistent application of policy. Conservative republicans believed that a moderate Republic could exist successfully within a European structure, while more radical revolutionaries believed the imperative to export republicanism necessitated a permanent state of war against traditional European nations.

In chapter 4, “Tone and the French Expeditions to Ireland, 1796-98: Total War, or Liberation?” Sylvie Kleinman (Trinity College, Dublin) combines ideas expressed in the previous chapters in a brief case study of the French expeditions to Ireland in the late 1790s. Assessing French involvement in Ireland through the eyes of the Irish revolutionary Theobald Wolfe Tone, she attributes France’s “heroic failure” (84) to conflicting ideas of partisan warfare, ideology, and politics.

The book’s second section, “Citizenship and ‘Republican’ War,” turns from the political to the social influences that shaped the relationships between republics and war. Chapter 5, “A ‘Black Declaration of Independence’? War, Republic, and Race in the United States of America, 1775-1787,” by Marie-Jeanne Rossignol (Univ. Paris Diderot), considers the treatment and perceptions of non-white populations (in this case, slaves and free blacks) during the American Revolution. The author highlights the importance of ideas of

1. Seven from France, two from Italy, and one each from Ireland, the United States, and Spain. Translations of essays into English are the work of Daniel Gascón, Sylvie Kleinman, Godfrey Rodgers, and Stuart Wilson.

citizenship to the foundations of revolution and conflict. The arming of blacks by both sides in the war added an intriguing dimension to the idea of republicanism and the criteria of eligibility for citizenship.

Annie Crépin (Artois Univ.), in chapter 6, “The Army of the Republic: New Warfare and a New Army,” surveys the composition of the revolutionary army: how did the new concepts of inclusiveness and citizenship change an army’s personnel, training, and leadership? Crépin stresses the strengthened interrelations of militarism, nationalism, and republicanism during the Revolutionary period and their effects on tactical and operational changes. To her credit, she considers both sides of the “military revolution” argument that allowed new military theory to emerge and flourish.

Chapter 7, “A Patriotic School: The Recruitment of the Italian Legion in France, 1799–1800,” by Katia Visconti (Univ. of Insubria) concerns the potential for exporting the new military model in her evaluation of the Italian Legion in France in the late eighteenth century. She exposes the contradictions posed by factors like national identity, organizational realities, and military professionalism, which caused both “breaks [and] continuities” (150) with previous models of conflict.

In chapter 8, “From Individual to Collective Emancipation: War and the Republic in the Caribbean during the French Revolution,” Frédéric Régent (Pantheon-Sorbonne Univ.) analyzes the formation and performance of insurgent armed forces during the Caribbean uprisings at the turn of the eighteenth century. Given the demography of the Caribbean region at the time, it is no surprise that colored troops gained a significant new influence there by their military service. However, Régent notes, by the end of the revolutionary period, colonial attitudes and imperatives and limits on emancipation augured a troubled and violent future in the region.

The final section of the volume, “Rejecting ‘Republican’ War,” takes up the broader, long-term effects of violence and warfare on society and national identity. Chapter 9, “Fratricide: Tragic Brothers, Masculine Violence, and the Republic on the French Stage, 1799,” by Judith Miller, elucidates the significance of select, war-related theatrical productions reflecting public and private opinions on the French Revolution. Although, as Miller admits, her critiques of a rather small sample of plays may seem a curious addition to *Republics at War*, she convincingly demonstrates how contemporary dramas representing revolutionary actions helped undermine a lawful and stable governmental structure.

Bernard Gainot (Pantheon-Sorbonne Univ.) in chapter 10, “War and Citizenship,” and Mario Tosti (Univ. of Perugia) in chapter 11, “Force of Arms, Force of Opinions: Counterrevolution in the Papal States, 1790–1799,” consider the social and military consequences of the French revolutionary government in northern Italy and the Papal States. Gainot shows that French involvement in northern Italy was the catalyst for the republican ideas that would affect future developments in the region. Tosti looks at the Papal States, where the overriding influence of the Roman Catholic Church, even if inconsistently perceived and applied, shaped revolutionary actions both within the military and among the local civilian populations.

The book’s last chapter, “International War, National War, Civil War: Spain and Counterrevolution (1793–1840),” by Pedro Rújula (Univ. of Zaragoza), clarifies the relations between politics and society in Spain during the half-century following the French Revolution. The Peninsular War figures most importantly, with a heavy emphasis on its popular dimension, whether seen as revolutionary, counterrevolutionary, nationalist, or civil. As the only contribution that moves beyond the traditional revolutionary epoch, Rújula’s essay anticipates some of the effects of new ideas of peace and war on more modern political attitudes.

As Serna perceptively argues in his long introduction to *Republics at War*,

if two contradictory dimensions—republican war and monarchical war—functioned at the same time, it was the discourse of the hoped-for peace that triumphed when politics came to be recast in the late 1780s. Into the turbulent *fin de siècle* context there came a third term, adding a further layer of complexity to the already subtle relationship between war and republic: the word was “revolution,” and when transformed into actuality it would redefine the forms of that relationship. (6)

It becomes clear in reading this book that the phrase “that relationship” is misleading: in fact, *many* relationships among many constituencies and ideas existed at various stages of ebb and flow during the revolu-

tionary era. The authors locate the period of greatest change in the last decade of the eighteenth century—the period of the Directory—when, as they persuasively show, those factors that influenced the regime came not solely from within Paris, or even France, but had a genesis that transcended geographic, religious, social, and racial boundaries. The essays help us discern at least a fragile development of national identity in various forms, primarily in conjunction with the multinational upheavals triggered by the French Revolution. Novel ideas of republicanism and popular liberation, like the new republican governments themselves, were almost entirely born in war.

Another reason for the success of this anthology in achieving its stated goal is the care the contributors take to sketch the historiographical background of the questions they evaluate and seek to answer. *Republics at War* is a fascinating, scholarly book that will lead serious readers to reflect on complex and conflicting sociopolitical relationships in new ways and open many fresh lines of inquiry.