

**The Contagion of Sovereignty:
Declarations of Independence since 1776***

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The great political fact of global history in the last 500 years is the emergence of a world of states from a world of empires. That fact – more than the expansion of democracy, more than nationalism, more than the language of rights, more even than globalisation – fundamentally defines the political universe we all inhabit. States have jurisdiction over every part of the Earth's land surface, with the exception of Antarctica. The only states of exception – such as Guantánamo Bay – are the exceptions created by states.¹ At least potentially, states also have jurisdiction over every inhabitant of the planet: to be a stateless person is to wander an inhospitable world in quest of a state's protection. An increasing number of the states that make up that world have adopted democratic systems of representation and consultation, though many competing, even inconsistent, versions of democracy can exist beneath the carapace of the state.² Groups that identify themselves as nations have consistently sought to realise their identities through assertions of statehood. The inhabitants of the resulting states have increasingly made their claims to representation and consultation in the language of rights. Globalisation has made possible the proliferation of the structures of democracy and of the language of rights just as it has helped to spread statehood around the world. Yet all of these developments – democratisation, nationalism, the diffusion of rights-talk and globalisation itself – have had to contend with the stubbornness of states as the basic datum of political existence.

The creation of a world of states, though drawn out over half a millennium, has been largely the work of the last two centuries and, especially, of the last 50 years.³ It combined two broad processes: the consolidation of states out of lesser polities or territories and the dissolution of empires into states. The combination

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1. G. Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. K. Attell (Chicago, 2005).
2. J. Dunn, *Setting the People Free: A History of Democracy* (London, 2005).
3. F. Cooper, 'States, Empires, and Political Imagination', in F. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, 2005), 190.

of these processes explains the striking pattern of contraction and then expansion in the number of polities observable since the late Middle Ages. This pattern is most immediately obvious in Europe. Roughly 1 000 separate political units in the fourteenth century had become fewer than 500 by the early sixteenth century and then roughly 350 on the eve of the French Revolution.⁴ These ranged in size from the great territorial monarchies of France, Great Britain and Spain to the pocket-handkerchief principalities of the Holy Roman Empire. By 1900, Europe had only 25 nation-states at the most generous count. Those European states were not alone in the world, of course. In 1945, 50 states from every continent gathered at the San Francisco Conference to found the United Nations, though some (India, the Philippines, Byelorussia and Ukraine, for example) were still formally parts of an empire or multi-national confederation.⁵ Between 1950 and 1993, more than 100 new states were created by decolonisation, secession or dissolution. In 2005, 191 states have representatives at the rather inaptly named United Nations:⁶ ‘inaptly’ not because it is obviously far from united but rather because its members are states and not nations, of which there are potentially many hundreds, even thousands, across the globe.⁷

The majority of the states created in the last two centuries were products of the break-up of multi-national, multi-ethnic or trans-oceanic empires, in the Americas, the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. This general wreck of empires returned some polities – like Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Siam (Thailand) or Burma (Myanmar) – to an original sovereignty that had been either suppressed or subsumed by empire. But most achieved sovereignty for the first time as they emerged into independent statehood.⁸

An empire has been well defined as ‘a form of territorial organization that groups different nations or ethnic communities around a sovereign centre which possesses preponderant resources of power and/or wealth’.⁹ The same definition would fit most states, all of which are organised spatially within a particular territory,¹⁰ none of which is ethnically or nationally homogeneous and most of which still draw power and resources towards a sovereign centre. Empires can be

4. M. Greengrass, ‘Introduction: Conquest and Coalescence’, in M. Greengrass, ed., *Conquest and Coalescence: The Shaping of the State in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1991), 1-2.
5. M.A. Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York, 2001), 245, n. 24.
6. <<http://www.un.org/Overview/growth.htm>>, accessed 12 July 2005.
7. On this mismatch between states and nations, see E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (London, 1983), 2, 44-5, 139-40.
8. C.H. Alexandrowicz, ‘New and Original States: The Issue of Reversion to Sovereignty’, *International Affairs*, 45 (1969), 465-80.
9. C. Maier, ‘Empires or Nations? 1918, 1945, 1989...’, in C. Levy and M. Roseman, eds, *Three Postwar Eras in Comparison: Western Europe, 1918-1945-1989* (Basingstoke, 2002), 50; see also C. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and its Predecessors* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006), chs 1-2.
10. T. Baldwin, ‘The Territorial State’, in H. Gross and R. Harrison, eds, *Jurisprudence: Cambridge Essays* (Oxford, 1992), 207-30.

more precisely described as structures of interference which organise their component parts hierarchically; they thus represent the major conditions that statehood is designed to escape.¹¹ Statehood implies the absence of external interference in internal affairs as well as formal equality in relations with other states. Inviolability and equality are thus at the heart of the conception of external sovereignty. Yet only if all states mutually respect those requirements can any particular state be secure in its sovereignty. For this basic reason, 'sovereignty is contagious: once any community becomes a state, neighboring communities respond in kind'.¹²

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The American Revolution was the first outbreak of a contagion of sovereignty that would sweep the world in the centuries after 1776. Its influence spread first to the Low Countries and then to the Caribbean, Spanish America, the Balkans, Africa and Central Europe in the decades up to 1848. The infection then lay dormant until after the First World War when another major outbreak began in Central Europe. The next pandemic sprang up in Asia and Africa after the Second World War. Other outbreaks around the Baltic, in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe after 1989, culminating in the dissolutions of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia in 1990-3, have been followed by a period of more general remission which continues to this day. It is far from clear where the next outbreak will appear.

Declarations of independence were the primary symptoms of this contagion of sovereignty. As documents that announced the emergence of new states – or, in some cases, the re-emergence of older polities – they marked precisely the transition from empire to state wherever they appeared. The American Declaration of 1776 was the first in world history to identify sovereignty with independence: that equation would be as lastingly influential as the very form of the Declaration itself, which provided the template for an enduring genre of political writing. The American Revolution was of course not the first successful revolt, even in European history, nor was it the first successful secession of a province from an imperial monarchy: 'the Dutch revolution' of the late sixteenth century held that honour, as America's revolutionaries frequently reflected.¹³ It was the first such secessionist revolt to succeed after independence had become the touchstone of

11. E. Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge, 2002), 5-6, 97, 143-4.
12. N.G. Onuf, 'Sovereignty: Outline of a Conceptual History', *Alternatives*, 16 (1991), 430; compare T.J. Biersteker and C. Weber, eds, *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (Cambridge, 1996).
13. T. Jefferson, 'Notes of Proceedings in the Continental Congress' (8 June 1776), in J.P. Boyd *et al.*, gen. eds, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 31 vols to date (Princeton, 1950-), vol. I, 310; G.C. Gibbs, 'The Dutch Revolt and the American Revolution', in R. Oresko, G.C. Gibbs and H.M. Scott, eds, *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Ragnhild Hatton* (Cambridge, 1997), 609-37.

external sovereignty. Accordingly, when Americans declared their independence they did so in the knowledge that they were conforming to a novel but determinative norm in international affairs.¹⁴ The success of their claim to independence encouraged others to follow their example not only in claiming statehood as the alternative to empire but also in declaring independence as the mark of their external sovereignty.

The argumentative structure of the American Declaration emphasised independence – rather than simply natural rights or the statement of grievances – as its primary message. It began by announcing the emergence of a new actor (‘one people’) on the international stage:

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate & equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.¹⁵

The second paragraph stated the foundational principles of any legitimate government which, if violated, would give cause to ‘throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for ... future security’. The extensive list of 27 grievances then laid out the ‘injuries and usurpations’ inflicted by George III and that therefore justified throwing off his government. The penultimate paragraph related the unsatisfactory British response to American grievances with the conclusion that ‘necessity ... denounces our Separation’. The consequence of that separation was that Americans would, as ‘Free and Independent States, ... have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do’. The representatives of those United States pledged their lives, their fortunes and their ‘sacred Honor’ to this strict and precise definition of independence.¹⁶ By means of their Declaration, they announced that the United States had left the transnational community of the British Empire to join instead an international community of free and independent states.

The American Declaration was not the first state paper issued by the Continental Congress, nor was it even the first Congressional declaration so-called: that was the ‘Declaration ... Setting Forth the Causes and Necessity of ... Taking up Arms’ of 1775.¹⁷ Yet it was the first true declaration of independence. Two earlier

14. D. Armitage, ‘The Declaration of Independence and International Law’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 54 (2002), 39-64.

15. ‘The Declaration of Independence as Adopted by Congress’ (4 July 1776), in Boyd, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. I, 429.

16. ‘The Declaration of Independence’, in Boyd, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. I, 430, 431, 432.

17. J.H. Hutson, ed., *A Decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind: Congressional State Papers, 1774-1776*, (Washington, DC, 1975), 91-7.

declarations, from Scotland in the fourteenth century and the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, have been claimed as predecessors and even ancestors for the American Declaration. The Declaration of Arbroath (1320) was addressed in the name of Scottish earls and barons to pope John XXII, urging him to use his influence to bring the English king, Edward II, to enter peace negotiations with the Scots king, Robert Bruce. It asserted Scottish freedom on the basis of the historic continuity of the Scots *natio* and a conception of liberty drawn from the Roman historian Sallust. Its claims were therefore backward-looking and defensive and enunciated in a classical language of liberty as non-domination.¹⁸ However, the document was never called a declaration of Scottish independence before the twentieth century, though that recent pedigree did not deter the United States Senate from resolving in 1998 that the Declaration of 1776 had been modelled on that of 1320.¹⁹ The pedigree of the 1581 Dutch *Plakkaat van Verlatinge* (Act of Abjuration), by which the States General cast off their allegiance to king Philip of Spain, extended only a little further, to 1896, when it had been first termed the ‘Dutch Declaration of Independence’ in the United States.²⁰ The Dutch act had abjured the sovereignty of king Philip but sought ‘another powerful and merciful prince to protect and defend these provinces’ in his place: it was, in this sense, also a declaration of dependence upon a new sovereign, the duke of Anjou.²¹ The form of the *Plakkaat*, with its declaration of a natural right to throw off the sovereignty of a tyrannous prince and its enumeration of grievances, was close enough to that of the American Declaration for the Dutch *stadhouder*, William V, prince of Orange, to call the Declaration but ‘the parody of the proclamation issued by our forefathers against king Philip II’.²² There is at best only circumstantial evidence

18. A.A.M. Duncan, *The Nation of Scots and the Declaration of Arbroath (1320)* (London, 1970), 34-7; J.R. Philip, ‘Sallust and the Declaration of Arbroath’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 26 (1947), 75-8.
19. E.J. Cowan, *‘For Freedom Alone’: The Declaration of Arbroath, 1320* (East Linton, 2003), 5, 114; [Burns Federation,] *Declaration of Independence 1320* (n.d., n.p.); [Scots Secretariat,] *Scotland’s Scrap of Paper: Full Text of Treaty of Union of 1707, with Notes, Declaration of Independence, Radical Rising 1820, Policy of Scottish Nationalism* (Penicuik, 1975).
20. ‘Edict of the States General of the United Netherlands by which they Declare that the King of Spain has Forfeited the Sovereignty and Government of the Afore-said Netherlands’ (26 July 1581), in E.H. Kossmann and A.F. Mellink, eds, *Texts Concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands*, (Cambridge, 1974), 216-28; ‘The Dutch Declaration of Independence’, *Old South Leaflets*, 72 (Boston, 1896).
21. ‘Edict of the States General’, in Kossmann and Mellink, *Texts Concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands*, 224.
22. ‘*Het is de parodie van het stuk, dat onze voorzaeten deden uitgeeven tegens koning Philips de tweede*’: William V, prince of Orange, to H. Fagel, 20 Aug. 1776, in F.J.L. Krämer, ed., *Archives ou correspondance inédite de la maison d’Orange-Nassau*, 5th series, 3 vols (Leiden, 1910-15), vol. I, 449, cit. J.M. Schulte Nordholt, *The Dutch Republic and American Independence*, trans. H.H. Rowen (Chapel Hill, 1982), 221.

that it provided a model for the American Declaration of 1776;²³ even if it had, the defining claim to independence could not be found in the earlier declaration.

The definition of statehood as international independence was still relatively novel in 1776. Indeed, it had been less than two decades earlier that the Swiss jurist Emer de Vattel had made independence central to the definition of statehood in his influential compendium of the law of nations, *Le Droit des Gens* (1758). Vattel followed his seventeenth-century predecessors in the tradition of natural law, Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf, when he compared states in an international state of nature to individuals in an interpersonal state of nature: ‘Nations being composed of people naturally free and independent [*hommes naturellement libres & indépendans*] and who, before the establishment of civil societies, lived together in a state of nature, nations, or sovereign states [*Etats souverains*], must be considered as if they were free persons who co-exist in the state of nature’. From this fact, Vattel derived two overarching laws imposed upon all states: that they should contribute to the happiness and perfection of all other states and that, because as states they are mutually free and independent (*‘libres & indépendantes les unes des autres’*), they must leave each other in the peaceful enjoyment of their liberty. He argued that, because states are free, independent and equal (*‘libres, indépendantes, égales’*), there must be a perfect equality of rights among them. Such rights could not trump the laws of nations: all states might be free and independent (*‘libres & indépendantes’*), but they were still bound to observe the laws of society that nature had established among them.²⁴ No writer on the law of nations before Vattel had so consistently – and persistently – emphasised both independence and interdependence as the condition of states in their relations with one another. Vattel’s insistence that states were free and independent would be the conception of their condition adopted by the authors of the American Declaration and then transmitted around the world as the Declaration travelled and was translated.

The relation between Vattel’s and the American Declaration’s conceptions of sovereignty as independence was genealogical rather than coincidental. The Continental Congress had been doing many of the ‘Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do’ for some months before 1776: making war; negotiating with British representatives; appointing agents to represent its interests abroad; corresponding with foreign powers; seeking military aid and other kinds

23. J.P.A. Coopmans, ‘Het Plakkaat van Verlatinge (1581) en de Declaration of Independence (1776)’, *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 98 (1983), 540-67; S.E. Lucas, ‘The “Plakkaat van Verlatinge”: A Neglected Model for the American Declaration of Independence’, in R. Hoeffte, J.C. Kardux and H. Bak, eds, *Connecting Cultures: The Netherlands in Five Centuries of Transatlantic Exchange* (Amsterdam, 1994), 187-207.

24. E. de Vattel, *Le Droit des Gens, ou Principes de la Loi Naturelle*, ed. C.G.F. Dumas, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1775), vol. I, 2, 6, 7, 8 (my translations). Vattel does not distinguish conceptually or formally between ‘les Nations, ou les Etats souverains’: *Droit des Gens*, vol. I, 2.

of assistance.²⁵ This *de facto* independence had inspired Benjamin Franklin to seek out the latest edition of Vattel's work because 'the circumstances of a rising state make it frequently necessary to consult the law of nations'. Franklin presented copies of the book to the Library Company of Philadelphia, to the Harvard College library and to the Continental Congress itself: as he informed the work's editor, C.G.F. Dumas, in December 1775, it 'has been continually in the hands of our congress, now sitting'.²⁶ The debt to Vattel's conception of '*libres & indépendantes*' states under the law of nature in the Declaration's vision of 'Free and Independent States' assuming the 'station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them' proved that Franklin's words were not idle flattery.

Prevailing European conceptions of statehood compelled Congress to reach for Vattel to help them declare independence. Congress's ultimate intention was to 'levy war' and 'contract alliances' against Great Britain. To become legitimate belligerents outside the British Empire rather than to remain rebels within it, the Americans had to transform themselves into bodies recognisable within the current norms of the law of nations. Only then could they declare war and enter into agreements with other independent sovereign states. The need for this transformation became more pressing once George III had declared the colonists to be rebels in August 1775. Two months later, John Adams worried that American representatives would be turned away from foreign courts: 'Would not our Proposals and Agents be treated with Contempt?'.²⁷ In January 1776, Thomas Paine, in the closing pages of his pamphlet *Common Sense*, had presented the most complete case for independence according to the 'custom of Nations'. Only independence would permit a mediator to negotiate peace between the United States and Great Britain. Foreign alliances could not be secured without it. Charges of rebellion would persist if it were not declared. Moreover, it was essential for a 'manifesto to be published, and despatched to foreign Courts'; until it was, 'the custom of all Courts is against us, and will be so, until by an Independance, we take rank with other Nations'.²⁸

When a Congressional resolution to declare independence arrived, it spoke the contemporary Vattelian language of sovereignty as independence. The motion's author, Richard Henry Lee, had concurred with Paine when he noted in April 1776 that 'no state in Europe will either Treat or Trade with us for so long as we consider ourselves subjects of G[reat]. B[ritain]. Honor, dignity, and the customs

25. J.G. Marston, *King and Congress: The Transfer of Political Legitimacy, 1774-1776* (Princeton, 1987), 206-23.
26. Franklin to Dumas, 9 Dec. 1775, in L.W. Labaree *et al.*, gen. eds, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 37 vols. to date (New Haven, 1959-), vol. XXII, 287. Congress's copy cannot now be found; the other copies remain in the Library Company of Philadelphia (call-number Rare E Vatt 303. Q) and the Houghton Library, Harvard University (call-number *AC7 F8545 Zz775v).
27. Adams to James Warren, 7 Oct. 1775, in W.C. Ford, ed., *The Warren-Adams Letters: Being Chiefly a Correspondence among John Adams, Samuel Adams, and James Warren*, 2 vols (Boston, 1917-25), vol. I, 127-8.
28. T. Paine, *Common Sense* (Philadelphia, 1776), 77-8.

of states forbid them until we rank as an independant people'.²⁹ On 7 June 1776, Lee tabled a motion to declare '[t]hat these United American Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States', and accompanied it with further resolutions '[t]hat it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming alliances' and '[t]hat a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective Colonies'.³⁰ His resolution led to the creation of three interlocking committees which shared both personnel and purposes: one to write a declaration of independence, another to draft a model treaty and a third to draw up articles of confederation. Each document was designed as an expression of sovereignty as independence. The Declaration of Independence defined it; the model treaty would enact it,³¹ and the Articles of Confederation safeguarded it for each of the thirteen states in Article II ('Each State retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence'), but confined its international expression to Congress alone (in Articles VI and IX, which gave Congress 'the sole and exclusive right and power of determining on peace and war').³²

When the long-sought ally, France, did eventually enter into alliance with the United States in February 1778, it affirmed the prevailing understanding of sovereignty by contracting among other things 'to maintain effectually the liberty, Sovereignty and independence absolute and unlimited of the said United States' (*'la liberté, la souveraineté, et l'indépendance absolue et illimité des dis Etats unis'*).³³ Five years later, when Britain recognised that sovereignty and independence at the end of the war in 1783, the seal was set on the emergence of a wholly new power in international affairs. The momentousness of that event was not lost on Edmund Burke:

A great revolution has happened – a revolution made, not by chopping and changing of power in any one of the existing states, but by the appearance of a new state, of a new species, in a new part of the globe. It has made as great a change in all the relations, and balances, and gravitation of power, as the appearance of a new planet would in the system of the solar world.³⁴

29. Lee to Patrick Henry, 20 Apr. 1776, in J.C. Ballagh, ed., *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*, 2 vols (New York, 1911-14), vol. I, 178.
30. W.C. Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, 5 vols (Washington, DC, 1904-6), vol. V, 425-6.
31. The treaty was modelled in part on examples found in H. Edmunds and W. Harris, eds, *A Compleat Collection of All the Articles and Clauses which Relate to the Marine, in the Several Treaties Now Subsisting Between Great Britain and Other Kingdoms and States* (London, 1760), Houghton Library (call-number *EC7 Ed596 741 ed).
32. M. Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation: An Interpretation of the Social-Constitutional History of the American Revolution, 1774-1781*, new edn. (Madison, 1970), 175-6, 263, 264-5, 266.
33. Treaty of Alliance (6 Feb. 1778), Article II, in G. Chinard, ed., *The Treaties of 1778 and Allied Documents* (Baltimore, 1928), 52.
34. Charles William, earl Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Bourke, eds, *The Works and Correspondence of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, 2nd edn., 7 vols. (London, 1852), vol. II, 453.

For almost 50 years after this ‘great revolution’, the Declaration’s meaning for Americans lay in its opening and closing paragraphs, not in the more recently celebrated ‘self-evident’ truths that ‘all men are created equal’ with unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. John Adams, writing in 1781, called the Declaration ‘that memorable Act, by which [the United States] assumed an equal Station among the Nations’.³⁵ John C. Calhoun agreed a generation later: ‘The act was, in fact, but a formal and solemn announcement to the world, that the colonies had ceased to be dependent communities, and had become free and independent States’.³⁶ Even Abraham Lincoln, speaking in 1857, saw the Declaration’s self-evident truths as having been strictly surplus to requirements in 1776: ‘The assertion that “all men are created equal” was of no practical use in effecting our separation from Great Britain; and it was placed in the Declaration, not for that, but for future use’.³⁷ After the French Revolution, the second paragraph’s claims to natural rights and to the right of resistance sounded suspiciously jacobinical and were also tainted with Jeffersonian Republicanism in an age of partisan strife. Only after the War of 1812 could the suspicion be removed that the Declaration was anti-British, pro-French and an incitement to general insurrection.³⁸ In 1831, Sándor Bölöni Farkas, an aristocratic Hungarian traveller in the United States, encapsulated this dramatic change in the meaning of the document for Americans when he affirmed that ‘[t]he language of the Declaration is not the language of diplomacy but the language of natural law’.³⁹

The general understanding outside the United States in the decades after 1776 was that the Declaration had spoken the language of diplomacy, precisely because its central message was an assertion of independence. The Declaration’s assertions of natural rights elicited almost no comment among the handful of contemporary authors who replied to its claims.⁴⁰ Even when later writers did allude to the individual rights laid out in ‘that noble declaration which proclaimed American Independence’, they might do so to pronounce them so self-evident that discussion of them ‘must ever be uncalled for in a community so purely British as to have no thought even of the possibility of here withholding the practical enjoyment of those

35. [John Adams,] *A Collection of State-Papers, Relative to the Acknowledgement of the Sovereignty [sic] of the United States of America* (The Hague, 1782), 4.
36. J.C. Calhoun, *A Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States*, in R.M. Lence, ed., *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun* (Indianapolis, 1992), 90.
37. A. Lincoln, ‘Speech at Springfield, Illinois’ (26 June 1857), in R.P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ, 1953-5), vol. II, 406.
38. P.F. Detweiler, ‘The Changing Reputation of the Declaration of Independence: The First Fifty Years’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 19 (1962), 557-74; P. Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York, 1997), 170-89.
39. S.B. Farkas, *Journey in North America, 1831*, trans. and ed. A. Kadarkay (Santa Barbara, 1978), 113.
40. The main exceptions were [J. Lind and J. Bentham,] *An Answer to the Declaration of the American Congress* (London, 1776), 119-22; [T. Hutchinson,] *Strictures upon the Declaration of the Congress at Philadelphia* (London, 1776), 9-10.

rights from their brethren of any race or colour' (as Richard Windeyer, an early nineteenth-century Australian critic of Aboriginal rights, put it).⁴¹ Alternatively, they might argue, as the British foreign secretary, Arthur Balfour, did during the debate on the racial equality clause at the Versailles peace conference in 1919, that

the proposition taken from the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal ... was an eighteenth century proposition which he did not believe was true. He believed it was true in a certain sense that all men of a particular nation were created equal, but not that a man in Central Africa was created equal to a European.⁴²

Amid such expressions of imperial complacency and hierarchical racialism, the Declaration's claims of human equality and natural rights remained essentially contestable.

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The contagion of sovereignty that spread after 1776 could be identified by the imitations the American Declaration spawned around the Atlantic world and beyond. These early imitations set the pattern for most later ones by taking the opening and closing sentences of the Declaration as their template while overlooking the self-evident truths of the second paragraph. This would be true even during the course of the American Revolution itself. In January 1777, the inhabitants of the New Hampshire Grants declared their independence of Great Britain and of the state of New York to form their own 'separate, free and independent jurisdiction or state', called at first New Connecticut but from June 1777 better known as Vermont. Vermont remained independent both of Britain and of the United States until 1791, when it became the first independent republic to join the American union.⁴³

The first imitation of the Declaration of 1776 outside North America did not appear until after the beginning of the French Revolution. It, too, drew solely on the Declaration's closing paragraphs. This was the *Manifeste de la Province de Flandre* issued by the Flemish Estates in 1790 to declare their independence of the Austrian monarchy of emperor Joseph II. That same year, a history in French of the American Revolution, accompanied by translations of the state constitutions and of the Declaration of Independence, appeared in Ghent.⁴⁴ The French version of the

41. [R. Windeyer,] 'On the Rights of the Aborigines of Australia' (c. 1842), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, MS zA1400, fols. 188v-189r.

42. D.H. Miller, *The Drafting of the Covenant*, 2 vols (New York, 1928), vol. I, 183-4.

43. E.P. Walton, ed., *Records of the Council of Safety and Governor and Council of the State of Vermont*, 8 vols (Montpelier, Vt., 1873-80), vol. I, 40-4 (15 Jan. 1777); P.S. Onuf, 'State-Making in Revolutionary America: Independent Vermont as a Case-Study', *Journal of American History*, 67 (1981), 797-815.

44. J.-N. Démeunier, *L'Amérique Indépendante, Ou les différentes Constitutions des treize provinces ... d'États-Unis de l'Amérique*, 3 vols (Ghent, 1790).

Declaration returned the assertions of the closing paragraph to their original Vattelien vocabulary: ‘... *appellant au Juge suprême de l’Univers ... Nous publions & déclarons solennellement ... Que ces Colonies sont & ont droit d’être des “Etats libres & indépendans”*: *Qu’elles sont dégagées de toute obéissance envers la Couronne de la Grande-Bretagne*’.⁴⁵ It was from this version that the Flemish rebels drew their final declaration, ‘*appellant au Juge suprême de l’Univers ... que cette Province EST & a droit d’être un “Etat libre & indépendant” ... dégagée de toute obéissance envers “l’Empereur Joseph second”*’.⁴⁶ The bulk of the *Manifeste* dealt with historical claims to traditional rights, much like those that had comprised the body of the Dutch *Plakkaat van Verlatinge* two centuries earlier. The *Manifeste* thus combined the structure of a prior genre of political protest with the American Declaration’s distinctive assertion of statehood as independence.

The next declaration of independence – the Haitian declaration of 1 January 1804 – raised the question of recognition acutely for the United States itself. The Haitian document paralleled the American Declaration (and indeed the Flemish *Manifeste*) in condemning former masters and announcing the freedom and independence of what became the first independent black republic. The first draft of the declaration had been written by ‘an admirer of the work of Jefferson’ and modeled on the American document; however, it was felt to be too passionless to serve its inspirational purpose. ‘To draw up the act of independence’, wrote Louis Boisronnd Tonnerre, the creole author of the revised Haitian declaration, ‘we need the skin of a white man for parchment, his skull for an inkwell, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for a pen!’ . Tonnerre’s new declaration proclaimed, ‘Independence or Death!’⁴⁷ No immediate recognition of that independence came from the first American republic (whose President was the American Declaration’s prime architect, Thomas Jefferson), for fear of encouraging further slave-revolts in the United States.⁴⁸ This American failure to recognise an independent Haiti foreshadowed later occasions, such as the declaration of independence of the Philippines in 1898,⁴⁹ when domestic interests would override the United States’s desire to reproduce and multiply independent sovereignties in its own hemisphere and beyond.

45. *Ibid.*, vol. I, 37.

46. J.F. Rohaert, *Manifeste de la Province de Flandre* (4 Jan. 1790) (Ghent, 1790), 23; T.K. Gorman, *America and Belgium: A Study of the Influence of the United States upon the Belgian Revolution of 1789-1790* (London, 1925), 156-7.

47. ‘The Haitian Declaration of Independence’ (1 Jan. 1804), in M. Ghachem, *The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804* (Providence, RI, 2004), 28-30; T. Madiou, *Histoire d’Haïti* (1847-8), 8 vols (Port-au-Prince, 1989-91), vol. III, 145; L. Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), 298-9.

48. D.R. Hickey, ‘America’s Response to the Slave Revolt in Haiti, 1791-1806’, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 2 (1982), 361-79; T. Matthewson, ‘Jefferson and the Nonrecognition of Haiti’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 140 (1996), 22-48.

49. ‘Act of the Proclamation of the Independence of the Filipino People’ (12 June 1898), in J.R.M. Taylor, ed., *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States: A Compilation of Documents*, 5 vols. (Pasay City, 1971), vol. III, 102-6.

Nevertheless, the American Declaration provided the primary model for the first great wave of declarations of independence which swept the trans-Atlantic world in the first half of the nineteenth century. Though the Spanish-American authorities had tried to prevent the spread of independence by banning the circulation of the Declaration, it was widely transmitted and translated, for example by the Venezuelan Manuel García de Sena, by the Colombian Miguel de Pombo, by the Ecuadorian Vicente Rocafuerte and by the New Englanders Richard Cleveland and William Shaler, who distributed translations of the Declaration and the United States Constitution among creoles in Chile and Indians in Mexico in 1821.⁵⁰ The Declaration also reached Portuguese America, initially by way of the Brazilian medical student 'Vendek' (José Joaquim Maia e Barbalho), who had met secretly with Thomas Jefferson in Nîmes in 1786.⁵¹

Some of the fruits of spreading the Declaration came in the series of imitative declarations issued by the various Latin American republics after 1811.⁵² Thus, the Venezuelan Congress proclaimed on 5 July 1811 (having just missed the anniversary of the American Declaration by a day) that the United Provinces of Venezuela were now assuming 'to take among the powers of the earth [*tomar entre las potencias de la tierra*] the place of equality which the Supreme Being and Nature assign to us' as 'Free, Sovereign, and Independent States' [*Estados libres, soberanos e independientes*].⁵³ Declarations of independence followed thereafter in New Granada (1811), Argentina (1816), Chile (1818), Costa Rica (1821), El Salvador (1821), Guatemala (1821), Honduras (1821), Mexico (1821), Nicaragua (1821), Peru (1821), Bolivia (1825), Uruguay (1825), Ecuador (1830), Colombia (1831), Paraguay (1842) and the Dominican Republic (1844).⁵⁴ Brazil would be doubly anomalous in its reception of the contagion of independence, in that its declaration (in 1822) was oral rather than written and that it came after elements

50. M.G. de Sena, trans., *La independencia de la Costa Firme justificada por Thomas Paine treinta años ha* (Philadelphia, 1811), 185-9; M. de Pombo, *La constitución de los Estados-Unidos de America* (Bogotá, 1811), 1-9; V. Rocafuerte, *Ideas necesarias á todo pueblo americano independiente que quiero ser libre* (Mexico, 1821), 103-11; R.J. Cleveland, *A Narrative of Voyages and Commercial Enterprises*, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass., 1842), vol. I, 183-4, 209-10; see also M. Rodríguez, *La revolución americana de 1776 y el mundo hispánico: ensayos y documentos* (Madrid, 1976); M.E. Simmons, *La revolución norteamericana en la independencia de Hispanoamérica* (Madrid, 1992); B. Bailyn, *To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders* (New York, 2003), 131-49.
51. Jefferson to John Jay, 4 May 1787, in Boyd, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. XI, 339-41; K. Maxwell, *Naked Tropics: Essays on Empire and Other Rogues* (London, 2003), 109-10.
52. J. Malagón, ed., *Las Actas de Independencia de América*, (Washington, DC, 1955), collects most of the major Latin American declarations of independence.
53. 'Acta de Independencia' (5 July 1811), in *Interesting Official Documents Relating to the United Provinces of Venezuela* (London, 1812), 3-21.
54. See generally J.L. Romero, 'La independencia de Hispanoamérica y el modelo político norteamericano', *Inter-American Review of Bibliography*, 26 (1976), 429-55; S. Deans and E. Countryman, 'Independence and Revolution in the Americas: A Project for Comparative Study', *Radical History Review*, 27 (1983), 144-71; J.E. Rodríguez O., 'The Emancipation of America', *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), 131-52.

in the metropole had effectively declared their independence of Portugal's former colony in 1820.⁵⁵

The first great era of declaring independence lasted until 1849. During this period, and beyond Latin America, the American Declaration provided the model for declarations of independence in North America, Africa and Eastern Europe. For example, the Texas Declaration of Independence (March 1836) affirmed the necessity of 'severing our political connection with the Mexican people, and assuming an independent attitude among the peoples of the earth'.⁵⁶ Likewise, the near-contemporary declaration of independence from Mexico issued in Alta California in November 1836 demanded that the territory be considered 'a free and sovereign state' [*Estado libre y soberano*].⁵⁷ The first such declaration in Africa, the Liberian Declaration of Independence (1847), composed by the Virginia-born African-American Hilary Teague, also began with a declaration that the Republic of Liberia was 'a free, sovereign, and independent state'; alone among declarations of independence before the twentieth century, Liberia's enshrined a recognition of 'certain inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, and the right to acquire, possess, enjoy, and defend property'.⁵⁸ More conventionally for this period, the Hungarian declaration of independence (1849), affirmed that Hungary (along with Transylvania), 'constitute[d] a free, independent sovereign state'.⁵⁹

As if to confirm the equation of independence with sovereignty, it was also in this period that the united Maori tribes of the North Island of New Zealand signed a 'Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand' (1835).⁶⁰ This document recognised the territorial sovereignty and land ownership of the Maori only in order to allow British penetration of the islands before the French could lay claim to them. As the British Resident, James Busby, disingenuously explained the manoeuvre, 'the establishment of the Independence of New Zealand, under the protection of the British Government, would be the most effectual mode of making

55. 'The Declaration of Brazilian Independence' (9 Jan. 1822), in E.B. Burns, ed., *A Documentary History of Brazil* (New York, 1956), 198-200; *Manifeste de la nation portugaise aux souverains et aux peuples de l'Europe* (15 Dec. 1820) (Lisbon, 1821); Maxwell, *Naked Tropics*, 155-6.
56. 'The Unanimous Declaration of Independence Made by the Delegates of the People of Texas' (2 Mar. 1836), in J.H. Jenkins, gen. ed., *The Papers of the Texas Revolution, 1835-1836*, 9 vols (Austin, 1973), vol. IV, 493-7.
57. 'En el Puerto de Monterrey de la Alta California ...' (7 Nov. 1836) (Monterey, 1836), reprod. in [Parke-Bernet Galleries,] *The Celebrated Collection of Americana Formed by the Late Thomas Streeter, Morristown, New Jersey*, 8 vols (New York, 1968), vol. IV, 1781. My thanks to Daniel Slive for this reference.
58. 'A Declaration of Independence by the Representatives of the People of the Commonwealth of Liberia in Convention Assembled' (26 July 1847), in A.K. Dormu, *The Constitution of the Republic of Liberia and the Declaration of Independence* (New York, 1970), 37-42.
59. 'Declaration of the Independence of the Hungarian Nation' (14 Apr. 1849), in W.H. Stiles, *Austria in 1848-49*, 2 vols (New York, 1852), vol. II, 418; I. Deak, *The Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians 1848-1849* (New York, 1979), 258-64.
60. 'Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand' (28 Oct. 1835), in *Fac-Similes of the Declaration of Independence and the Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington, NZ, 1877), 4.

the country a dependency of the British Empire, in every thing but the name'.⁶¹ The American example could nonetheless cut both ways. Within a decade of the New Zealand declaration, the Maori insurgent against empire, Hone Heke, attacked a British flagstaff, the symbol of imperial sovereignty, just after 4 July 1844; he was inspired in part by the example of American independence.⁶²

The equation of independence with statehood rather than with nationality became increasingly clear during the second half of the nineteenth century. This equation helps to explain the otherwise seemingly paradoxical fact that there were almost no declarations of independence between 1849 and 1918, the period usually associated with the high tide of European nationalism. Yet, as we have seen, independence was associated with sovereignty and hence with juridical status rather than with identities of whatever kind, whether ethnic, linguistic, historical or religious. Nationalism was a force for consolidation and agglomeration in emerging nation-states like Germany and Italy; declarations of independence were indexes of fragmentation and separation and thus betrayed centrifugal forces which ran counter to the centripetal pull of nation-formation. Moreover, the heyday of European nationalism coincided with the zenith of extra-European imperialism. As nation-states consolidated within Europe so they extended their imperial holdings beyond it: 'Europe in the 1870s was not a Europe of nation-states but of empires, old and would-be'.⁶³ Again, the forces behind both consolidation and expansion were antithetical to the impulses that had led before 1850, and would lead again after 1918, to the declaring of independence.⁶⁴

The most revealing declarations of independence that can be found in the decades after 1850 are the secession proclamations of the states of the Confederacy. These took quite literally the claims to sovereign statehood made in the Declaration of 1776: thus, the South Carolina Declaration of Secession (20 December 1860) asserted that 'South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world, as a separate and independent State; with full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all the other acts and things which independent States may of right do'.⁶⁵ The American Civil War can be seen, among many other things, as a battle over the structural interpretation of the Declaration of Independence. Abraham Lincoln's achievement was to highlight the 'self-evident' truths of the second paragraph at the expense of

61. Busby to Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, 31 Oct. 1835, The National Archives (Kew) (hereafter TNA), CO 209/2, fol. 98v; J.O. Ross, 'Busby and the Declaration of Independence', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 14 (1980), 83-9.

62. C. Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington, NZ, 1987), 118-20.

63. Cooper, 'States, Empires, and Political Imagination', in Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 182.

64. Compare A. Cobban, *The Nation-State and National Self-Determination*, rev. edn (London, 1969), 46-9, 101.

65. 'Declaration of the Immediate Causes which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union' (20 Dec. 1860), in *Journal of the Convention of the People of South Carolina, Held in 1860, 1861 and 1862* (Columbia, SC, 1862), 461, 466.

the claims to statehood in the opening and closing sentences of the Declaration.⁶⁶ The victory of the Union secured the victory of that reading of the Declaration, with the consequence that its primary intention – to declare independence, in the sense of sovereign statehood – would have to be recovered by later efforts of intellectual archaeology.⁶⁷

The twentieth century would witness two great heydays of declaring independence: one in the immediate aftermath of the First World War; the other, beginning in 1945 and continuing until 1993, with a short hiatus in the 1970s and early 1980s. The collapse of the Romanov and Habsburg empires during and after the First World War led to the re-emergence of submerged nationalities and the creation of new states to accommodate them, often with the accompaniment of a declaration of independence. The declaration from this period most clearly indebted to the American example was the Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation (1918). This was drafted in Washington, DC, by, among others, Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor of Mount Rushmore. It placed the American Declaration within a lineage stretching from the proto-Protestantism of Jan Hus in the fifteenth century all the way to the Wilsonian promise of self-determination in the early twentieth.⁶⁸ Likewise, the example from the second period most beholden to the American Declaration was Hồ Chí Minh's Vietnamese Declaration of Independence, which opened with quotations from the second paragraph of the American Declaration (checked with an American OSS officer) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. Hồ, long an admirer of George Washington, thereby placed the Vietnamese revolution into a longer revolutionary tradition while also making a shrewd, albeit unsuccessful, bid for American support for Vietnamese independence.⁶⁹

The document most closely modelled on the American Declaration would be the example that clarified, once and for all, the terms on which any such declaration could be deemed acceptable to the international community. This was the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) issued by the embattled white

66. M.D. Peterson, *'This Grand Pertinacity': Abraham Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence* (Fort Wayne, 1991).

67. Most important among them are E. Dumbauld, 'Independence under International Law', *American Journal of International Law*, 70 (1976), 425-31; J.G.A. Pocock, 'States, Republics, and Empires: The American Founding in Early Modern Perspective', in T. Ball and J.G.A. Pocock, eds, *Conceptual Change and the Constitution* (Lawrence, Kan., 1988), 55-77; P.S. Onuf, 'A Declaration of Independence for Diplomatic Historians', *Diplomatic History*, 22 (1998), 71-2, 82-3.

68. 'The Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation' (26 Oct. 1918), in G.J. Kovtun, *The Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence: A History of the Document* (Washington, DC, 1985), 46-8.

69. Hồ Chí Minh, 'Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam' (2 Sep. 1945), in Hồ Chí Minh, *Selected Works*, 4 vols (Hanoi, 1960-2), vol. III, 17-21; M.B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York, 1991), 10-11; D.G. Marr, 'Hồ Chí Minh's Independence Declaration', in K.W. Taylor and J.K. Whitmore, eds, *Essays into Vietnamese Past* (Ithaca, 1995), 221-31.

minority government of Southern Rhodesia on 11 November 1965. In conscious imitation of the 1776 Declaration, it opened with the words:

Whereas in the course of human affairs history has shown that it may become necessary for a people to resolve the political affiliations which have connected them with another people and to assume among other nations the separate and equal status to which they are entitled ...⁷⁰

Both sides in the dispute between Ian Smith's minority regime and the British government understood the confrontation with the elephantine memory of imperial elites as a re-run of the American Revolution. In March 1963, more than two years before UDI, Harold Macmillan's Conservative government had investigated military contingency plans against the possibility of Rhodesian independence: the ominous title of the secret file containing the resulting documents was 'Boston Tea Party'.⁷¹

The Rhodesian Declaration appeared only five years after the United Nations had issued its Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (1960). In this document, the United Nations proclaimed that 'the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible', and that 'all peoples' – meaning all majority peoples – 'have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory'.⁷² Because the Rhodesian Declaration did not reflect the right to freedom and sovereignty of the majority population of Rhodesia, it provided no legitimate basis for recognising the independence of the government that had promulgated it.⁷³

* * *

The criteria for legitimate state-creation have developed considerably since 1776. At least since 1918, and the rise of both Leninist and Wilsonian conceptions of self-determination,⁷⁴ there has been greater international pressure to bring structures of internal sovereignty into harmony with the mechanisms of external sovereignty. The spread of rights-talk since 1948 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has only increased that pressure, just as it helped to accelerate the

70. [Government of Rhodesia,] 'Proclamation' (11 Nov. 1965), in A.P. Blaustein, J. Sigler, and B.R. Beede, eds, *Independence Documents of the World*, 2 vols (New York, 1977), vol. II, 587.

71. TNA, DO 183/253. The same analogy had been used earlier, in October 1956: TNA, CO 1015/1009.

72. 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples' (14 Dec. 1960), United Nations, General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV).

73. R.M. Cummings, 'The Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence and the Position of the International Community', *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics*, 6 (1973), 57-84; J. Nkala, *The United Nations, International Law, and the Rhodesian Independence Crisis* (Oxford, 1985), 43-52.

74. A. Cassese, *Self-Determination of Peoples: A Legal Reappraisal* (Cambridge, 1995).

movement towards anti-imperial self-determination in the wake of the Second World War. However, so long as sovereignty confined within statehood remained the presumed end-point of self-determination, there would be little hope for many internal minorities – especially indigenous peoples – to obtain self-determination under reigning definitions.⁷⁵ It seems to be an historical rule that once states have established their right to external self-determination they become resistant to further internal challenges to their autonomy or integrity: ‘In such cases, the right reverses into a taboo’.⁷⁶ This is in large part because of the function of territoriality as the condition that links independence to statehood: without a defined territory, there can be no state, and without a state there can be no meaningful independence, runs the equation. Territoriality has long been the stubborn heart of statehood: when two peoples claim the same territory, there can even be two irreconcilable declarations of independence vying for apparently irresolvable validation on the ground, as in the case of Israel and Palestine.⁷⁷

The dilemmas thrown up by the contagion of sovereignty can be traced back at least as far as the American Revolution. However, they cannot be traced back much farther than that, because of the novelty of the association between independence and statehood at the moment Americans declared their independence of Great Britain in 1776. That the Americans should have been the first to declare *independence* was therefore more than merely semantically significant. It was the index of an incipient but fundamental norm in international relations. It also marked the beginning of a wholly unprecedented explosion of state-making, first in North America, then in the Caribbean and Latin America in the early nineteenth century and, most spectacularly, in Africa between 1956 and 1975 and in Central and Eastern Europe and the territories of the former Soviet Union from 1990 to 1993.⁷⁸

The Americas, starting with British North America in 1776, were not so much the nursery of nations as the crucible of states: ‘the validity and generalizability of the blueprint were undoubtedly confirmed by the *plurality* of the independent states’.⁷⁹ It would therefore be no exaggeration to say that origins of our modern

75. For alternative strategies see Cassese, *Self-Determination of Peoples*, 344-65; G.J. Simpson, ‘The Diffusion of Sovereignty: Self-Determinations in the Post-Colonial Age’, in M. Sellers, ed., *The New World Order: Sovereignty, Human Rights, and the Self-Determination of Peoples* (Oxford, 1996), 35-69; P. Aikio and M. Scheinin, eds, *Operationalizing the Right of Indigenous Peoples to Self-Determination* (Turku, 2000).

76. P. Anderson, ‘Stand-Off in Taiwan’, *London Review of Books*, 3 June 2004, 15.

77. [State of Israel,] ‘Proclamation of Independence’ (14 May 1948) and Palestine National Council, ‘Declaration of Independence’ (15 Nov. 1988), in W. Laqueur and B. Rubin, eds, *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, 6th edn. (Harmondsworth, 2001), 81-3, 354-7.

78. R. Rich, ‘Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union’, *European Journal of International Law*, 4 (1993), 36-63.

79. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn. (London, 1991), 81; compare A. Watson, ‘New States in the Americas’, in H. Bull and A. Watson, eds, *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford, 1984), 127-41.

world of states can be traced back to the Americas and, in particular, to the American Revolution. Hannah Arendt lamented that '[t]he sad truth of the matter is that the French Revolution, which ended in disaster, has made world history, while the American Revolution, so triumphantly successful, has remained an event of little more than local importance'.⁸⁰ On the contrary: the American Revolution was an event of truly global importance. Its contagious consequences spread to encompass the entire world of states we all now inhabit, for good and ill but, for the time being, inescapably.

80. H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1973), 56.