When Napoleon rose to power in 1799, there was no ancient base from which to draw his staff, and he had to choose the people he thought best for the job, including officers from his army, revolutionaries who had been in the National Assembly, and even some former aristocrats such as prime minister Talleyrand. This policy was summed up in Bonaparte's often-quoted phrase 'La carri?re ouverte aux talents', careers open to the talented, or as more freely translated by Thomas Carlyle, 'the tools to him that can handle them