

The Dark Side of Democracy: The Modern Tradition of Ethnic and Political Cleansing

The twentieth century's death-toll through genocide is somewhere over sixty million and still rising.* Yet most scholars and laypersons alike have preferred to focus on more salubrious topics. If they think about genocide at all, they view it as an unfortunate interruption of the real structural tendencies of the twentieth century—economic, social and political progress. Murderous ethnic and political cleansing is seen as a regression to the primitive—essentially anti-modern—and is committed by backward or marginal groups manipulated by clever and dangerous politicians. Blame the politicians, the sadists, the terrible Serbs (or Croats) or the primitive Hutus (or Tutsis)—for their actions have little to do with us. An alternative view—often derived from a religious perspective—sees the capacity for evil as a universal attribute of human beings, whether 'civilized' or not. This is true, yet capacity for evil only becomes actualized in certain circumstances, and, in the case of genocide, these seem less primitive than distinctly modern.

In fact, most of the small group of scholars studying the most notorious twentieth-century cases of genocide and mass killing—Armenia, the Nazi ‘Final Solution’, Stalinism, Cambodia, Rwanda—have emphasized the modernity of the horror. Leo Kuper essentially founded genocide studies by noting that the modern state’s monopoly of sovereignty over a territory that was, in reality, culturally plural and economically stratified created both the desire and the power to commit genocide.¹ Roger Smith has stressed that genocide has usually been a deliberate instrument of modern state policy.² Some emphasize the technology available to the perpetrators: modern weapons, transport and administration have escalated the efficiency of mass, bureaucratic, depersonalized killing.³ However, Helen Fein detects modern ideological goals, as well as technological means, for ‘The victims of twentieth century premeditated genocide . . . were murdered in order to fulfil the state’s design for a new order.’⁴ She stresses the genocidal potential of modern ‘myths’ or ‘political formulae’—ideologies of nation, race and class.

In the Name of the People

But let us remark a quality they all share. They have justified themselves—and their genocides—‘in the name of the people’. In this respect, they are no different from more moderate twentieth-century ideologies, for this has been the age of the masses. In all the varied German law courts of the last eighty years—from Weimar to Nazi to communist DDR to the *Bundesrepublik*—the judges have used the same opening formula: ‘In Namen des Volkes’, ‘In the Name of the People’. American courts prefer the formula ‘The Case of X versus the People’. By claiming legitimacy in the name of ‘the people’, genocidal régimes claim kinship to movements which are usually recognized as the bearers of true modernity, like liberalism or social democracy. Indeed, I argue here that modern genocide can be regarded as ‘the dark side of democracy’.

This is an unconventional view, however. The now dominant ‘democratic peace’ school has declared that democracies are essentially pacific, rarely fighting wars, and almost never against each other. They are the absolute antithesis of genocide. The school’s main representative in genocide studies is Rudolph Rummel.⁵ He claims

* This essay was prepared for The Social Science Research Council Workshop ‘Democracy, the Use of Force and Global Social Change’, University of Minnesota, May 1–3 1998. The conference proceedings, including a slightly different of this essay, are being published in *Democracy, Liberalism and War: Rethinking the Democratic Peace Debate*, edited by Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Press, 2000.

¹ L. Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*, New Haven 1981.

² R. Smith, ‘Human Destructiveness and Politics: The Twentieth Century as an Age of Genocide’, in *Genocide and the Modern Age*, edited by I. Wallimann & M. Dobkowski, New York 1987.

³ See Z. Baumann, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Ithaca 1991.

⁴ H. Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*, New York 1979, p. 8.

⁵ R. Rummel, *Death by Government*, New Brunswick 1994, pp. 12–24.

that the more authoritarian a state, the more likely it is to commit genocide. Wielding many twentieth-century statistics of genocide, Rummel concludes that democracies commit virtually no genocide. He concedes a few cases where they do, but argues that these have been in wartime, where mass murder has been perpetrated secretly and without a democratic mandate. They are, therefore, exceptions that prove the rule. This is not an unreasonable argument in the case of small-scale atrocities like My Lai, during the Vietnam War—which, when exposed, was indeed prosecuted and condemned by American democracy. But Rummel fails to distinguish the more important cases of ‘democratic mass killings’, like the fire-bombing of Dresden or Tokyo, the dropping of the atomic bombs or the napalming of the Vietnamese countryside—whose casualties he also minimizes. Though some degree of military secrecy was obviously maintained in these cases, nonetheless, the American and British governments took these decisions according to due democratic constitutional process. Moreover, authoritarian genocides are also committed in wartime and with an attempt at secrecy. Hitler committed almost all his murders during the war, and he did not dare make them public—indeed, nor did Stalin. But there are larger exceptions to Rummel’s ‘law’: the frequent genocidal outbursts committed by seventeenth- to early twentieth-century European settlers living under constitutional governments. Rummel mentions these briefly, absurdly minimizes the numbers killed, vaguely suggests that ‘governments’ may have been responsible, and fails to explain them. In fact, Rummel never makes clear *why* a régime would want to murder vast numbers of people. After all, almost all historical régimes were authoritarian yet did not commit mass murder. As I will argue below, there *is* a relationship between democracy and genocide, but it is more complex and double-edged than Rummel acknowledges.

Robert Melson attempts to explain genocide in terms of wars following hard upon a revolution. He says revolutions undermine the institutional and moral restraints of the old régime, creating a potential moral vacuum.⁶ They also throw up revolutionaries seeking a wholesale transformation of society in the name of a mythical ‘people’. That ‘people’ then needs defining and delimiting, which may result in the exclusion of opponents, perhaps by violent means. And war, he says, aggravates régimes’ feelings of vulnerability and/or invincibility, permits states to become more autonomous, allows them the option of more ‘radical’ policy alternatives and increases the vulnerability of the victims. The combination of revolution and war may thus persuade a régime that domestic opponents are in league with deadly foreign enemies, to be legitimately killed. But Melson is careful to say that this is not a necessary outcome. In Cuba, for example, the revolution/war cycle was followed only by the expulsion of the bourgeoisie, not by its murder. He also concedes that earlier

⁶ R. Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust*, Chicago 1992, ch. 9.

revolution/war combinations—for example, the English, American and French revolutions—were less likely to produce genocide than later ones, though he offers no good explanation of this. Finally, he does not note that the growth of the ideologies of nation, race and class, which were used to legitimate genocide, all surged in modern times with or without the accompaniment of revolution or war.

Rummel and especially Melson offer us genuine insights, but they do not go far enough. If we want to understand the growth of ideologically-legitimated and state-perpetrated genocide, we must realize that this has been the perverted product of the most sacred institution of Western modernity: democracy. For genocide can be seen in two distinct ways as ‘the dark side of democracy’—the most undesirable consequence of the modern practice of vesting political legitimacy in ‘the people’.

The People and Its ‘Other’

Let us first meet ‘the people’ in one of its earliest declarations:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this CONSTITUTION for the United States of America.

‘The people’ described in the Preamble to the American Constitution has had enormous influence in the world. It now legitimates almost all modern states—and so is seen unreservedly and universally as a good and moral collectivity. But if sovereignty and moral legitimacy are vested in the mass of the population of a given territory, then two problems may follow. First, the citizen body is conceived of as sharing distinctive virtuous characteristics, ethnic and/or political, which may distinguish it from non-citizen inhabitants or neighbours who are not entitled to citizenship. ‘We, the people’ may generate the sense of the alien ‘other’. Second, if sovereignty is also conceived of as territorial—which is a normal feature of modern states—then the ‘other’ may be physically excluded from the territory of the people.

However, it is necessary to make two sets of distinctions in pursuing such possible implications. First, I distinguish two rather different ‘peoples’ implicit in democratic practice: a *stratified* and an *organic* people. Whereas both tend to conceptualize ‘foreigners’ as ‘others’, the organic people may also exclude many persons who might otherwise be considered citizens. If the people or nation is conceived of as being internally stratified, then the state’s main role is to mediate and conciliate amongst its competing interest groups. Such a state preserves diversity among its citizen body and so is relatively unlikely to encourage ethnic and political cleansing among it. Yet, if the people or nation is conceived of as organic, as ‘a perfect union, one

and inseparable' (as in 'The American Creed'), then some leaders and movements may be tempted to seek to enhance the 'purity' of the organic people or nation by suppressing the real-world diversity of its seeming members. Indeed, many modern régimes which claim to be democratic have exhibited a pronounced tendency toward ethnic and political cleansing.

Second, we must distinguish between different types and degrees of 'cleansing', and we must clearly state that most do not approach genocide. The mildest types have been the most common. They are *induced assimilation*, *induced immigration* and *induced emigration*, which all lack significant coercion. During induced assimilation, the 'other' voluntarily seeks assimilation into the dominant group. This has been the typical form of cleansing of immigrant groups into the United States: they lost much of their sense of socio-cultural distinctiveness as they pursued economic success and social conformity and became Americans. This is a relatively harmless form of cleansing, lamented only by those who value the preservation of traditional cultures. Induced immigration schemes also offer incentives, usually to culturally similar groups to the host population, while barring dissimilar 'others'—as, for example, in the 'White Australia' immigration policy of the recent past. The third form of inducement, to emigrate, has often been urged by rightist nationalists, like recent National Front parties, but they are rarely implemented—and, when they are, they become tinged with coercion.

The first escalation in cleansing is to *coerced assimilation*. Here the 'other' is institutionally coerced to join the dominant group and abandon its former identity. Its language may be banned from schools or offices, its religion banned, its distinctive family names forcibly changed. Though this is unpleasant, there is little physical coercion and no expulsion or murder. A distinctive form of middling violence, usually employed only against small 'others', is *biological assimilation*: the minority is prevented from reproducing itself by restrictive marriage laws and, in the extreme, by sterilization. Of course, the oppressed group may react to any of these pressures with the voluntary 'exit option' of emigration, which also furthers cleansing. The next escalation is the first clear-cut case of territorial exclusion, to *coerced emigration*, the 'other's' removal from the sovereign territory being pressured by actual force—physical harassment, expropriation of property and so on, such that one's present domicile becomes too difficult to endure. The next escalation is *deportation*, organized, forcible removal from the state's territories. Then comes *murderous cleansing*, that is organized killings. These may merely lead back to coerced emigration. But, in rare cases, murder may lead onto the final escalation, *genocide*, the deliberate, systematic attempt to wipe out a particular population. Genocide occurred very rarely in the centuries preceding this one.

These are ideal-type distinctions, of course. Most pressures on actual 'others' have been rather mixed. For example, the historic pogrom

directed against Jews typically included considerable violence, looting and rape, some forced religious conversion, but only occasionally murder. Most perpetrators (and certainly the political rulers often encouraging them) did not conceive of removing Jews altogether—Jews were too useful. And cleansing typically proceeds in erratic bursts, usually then dying away or producing a backlash. Fortunately, genocide is far from the being the inevitable end of such processes. Finally, such policies are most typically directed against ethnic groups, though they can be against religious groups or political opponents. Political cleansing has generally been the mildest, while ethnic cleansing has been the most severe. So let us examine the main forms of modern cleansing.

Liberal Democracy and Its Dark Side

Accounts of liberalism generally stress bourgeois individualism. It is said that liberal democracies are pacific because liberal constitutions first and foremost protect individual human rights. My position is different, seeing less the disembodied individual than groups, especially social classes, as central to liberalism. I will argue that class struggle and its institutionalization—far more than an essentialist respect for individual human rights—have restrained most liberal democracies from cleansing atrocities ‘within’ their core citizen body. Nonetheless, liberal democracies *have* committed massive cleansing, sometimes amounting to genocide—in colonial contexts where large social groups were defined as lying outside of ‘the people’. Let us consider the two liberal cases in turn.

Obviously, ‘the people’ did not really ‘ordain and establish’ the American Constitution. This was accomplished by fifty-five middle-aged white gentlemen of the highest rank and property, closeted for two weeks in Philadelphia. They claimed to represent ‘the people’ of the thirteen colonies. But who exactly was ‘we, the people’? The Founding Fathers did not mean to include women, slaves and native Americans. Most did not want to include white males without property, in other words, the lower classes. British politicians of the period were more explicit, distinguishing between ‘the people’ and ‘the populace’. The populace comprised the lower orders, the crowd, the mob—definitely not a part of ‘we, the people’. ‘We’ was comprised of groups of propertied males who were termed ‘interests’—gentlemen, merchants, manufacturers, artisans and so on. These interests were acknowledged to be divisive, though these men of property and education also shared ‘a common stake in the nation’. The citizen body was thus recognized as being both internally stratified and existing above lower classes who were entitled to some, but not all, the rights of citizenship.

There were two ways in which such stratification restrained the ‘we, the people’s’ antipathy to ‘the other’—and both continued the tradition of restraint demonstrated by earlier ‘old régimes’, composed

only of aristocratic and highly privileged classes. First, moves toward the deepening of liberal democracy, toward the extension of 'we, the people' were dominated by class relations, with which political actors were already highly familiar. Debates over the extension of the franchise were dominated by old issues. Where should the property line be drawn? Should employees or servants—incapable of independent judgement—have the vote, be jurors or hold office? Should some classes have more votes than others? It was recognized, as it was already within the citizen body, that these plural class and strata interests could be compromised but not eliminated. 'The people' was not one and indivisible but plural and stratified. Thus, the political essence of liberal democracy is less individualism than the acceptance of the legitimacy of contending group interests. These remain, institutionalized in a party system; they cannot be transcended, overcome, cleansed. And since the state is mainly a mediator between interests, it is a limited state, enjoying few powers of its own.

Conflict as Mainstay of Democracy

Class as a central conflict issue in liberal régimes was soon joined by age and gender. Should only household heads have full rights and at what age could other males in the household be said to be of independent mind? Then gender loomed, entwined with age and class, so that women of a certain age or class might be considered politically responsible before other women. This raises the second cause of restraint. Class, age and gender all stratify but they do not usually segregate people into different communities. These groups must necessarily live and work amongst each other. Even during bouts of severe class conflict, workers and employers spent most of their waking hours co-operating with one another. People of different ages and men and women also live and constitute families together. Though some residential segregation may occur between classes, they are also routinely interdependent. Such interdependence restrains most potential antipathy between 'we, the people' and 'the other'.

Class conflict has always been important in the development of modern society. It has tended to result in liberal and social-democratic institutions. And that is also true of age and gender conflict. All these groups remain as contending interests within the people, recognized as having legitimate conflicts which are institutionalized in the multi-party systems of liberal or social democracy. Stratification is the essence of liberal and social democracy. Since this form of democracy does not try to eliminate exploitation, some groups will always feel oppressed and they will perennially rise up to contest new forms of exploitation. But class conflict amid liberal institutions is not resolved by cleansing the land of one's opponents, still less by mass murder. Thus, though capitalism is not in itself particularly benign, the class resistance it generates tends to produce liberal conciliation.

The importance of class and then gender conflict in liberal states meant that, in Europe, ethnicity—language communities or supposed communities of descent—played little role in early politics. British property owners were all considered citizens—whether they spoke English, Celtic or Gaelic (which many of them then did). Religion, an older axis of stratification, remained important, especially in Europe's only internal colony, Ireland. There, it continued to range a 'Protestant Constitution' against an 'uncivilized' Catholic 'other', leading on occasion to mass killings. But, until the twentieth century, most dominant ethnic and even religious groups in Europe expected to *assimilate* 'the other'. This might involve some institutional coercion, especially to suppress minority languages. But 'the other' was not forced out, still less butchered. It was allowed to become British or French or German.⁷

In Europe, liberal states dominated only in the North-West—the Nordic countries, the Low Countries, France, Switzerland and the British Isles. As we shall see later, the other half of Europe moved less easily toward liberalism. Yet almost all Western European countries also had colonies. Especially in settler colonies, organicism did permeate conceptions of 'the people'. Though recognized as containing diverse interests, the people was considered organic in one respect: it was essentially 'European', superior to, though potentially polluted by, other 'races'. Thus some of the states I began by calling 'liberal' were in reality dual. They had a dark side. Capitalist class compromise, liberal democracy and tolerance among the European settler people were all built on top of terrible atrocities committed against the indigenous 'others'—for this was *Herrenvolk* democracy. The worst-case scenarios resulted where colonization was by whole settler families. These were more interested in seizing the natives' land than in trading with them or exploiting their labour. Nor did such settler families need to procreate with—and eventually intermarry with—the natives. Thus they were more likely to regard the natives as a racial 'other' and seek simply to drive them away, by whatever methods worked, including murder. Often this involved brutal deportations, occasionally it amounted to bursts of deliberate genocide. Brutal slavery was actually a milder alternative: here the 'inferior' group was not usually removed but exploited and segregated outside the liberal institutions of the Europeans.

Settlers and Their Victims

I note two persistent features of the colonial dark side. First, the settlers often enjoyed *de facto* local self-rule—whatever the constitution said. For the period, these were distinctly 'democratic'

⁷ In fact, the most violent cleansings of this period tended to be those on the European periphery, where exploited classes could also be defined as culturally—though rarely ethnically—inferior. This was so in the ferocious 'Highland clearances' by landlords of their crofters, resulting in much coerced emigration to the New World.

communities, yet their ethnic cleansing of the natives was usually worse than that committed by the colony's less democratic imperial authorities. The Spanish, Portuguese and British Crowns, Viceroys and Governors, and the Catholic and some Protestant Churches, tended to be milder toward the natives than were the settlers themselves—which is why most Indians supported the British in the American Revolutionary War. Second, deliberate genocidal bursts were more common among British than Spanish or Portuguese settlers. In both cases, we find that the stronger the democracy among the perpetrators, the greater the genocide.

But let us also note that the native peoples' own political institutions were usually far more democratic than the settlers'. Their indigenous forms of political participation were more 'direct' than representative, but the rights of the ordinary male members—sometimes also the females—of native tribes and nations were usually far greater than those of the citizens of representative liberal democracies. For example, they could freely leave the tribe or nation or they could refuse to fight for it. The 'democratic peace' school have excluded groups like the Indian nations from their calculations, on the somewhat dubious grounds that they did not have permanent, differentiated states of the 'modern' type. Though this is convenient for the self-congratulatory tone of much of their writings, it is illegitimate even by their own definitions. For Indian nations did develop permanent constitutional states through the mid-nineteenth century—for example, the Cherokee in 1827, the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Creeks in the period 1856–1867. One of the causes was pressure from the US government for the formation of 'responsible' government with which it could negotiate.⁸ Predictably, the negotiations turned into wholesale expropriations and deportations, interspersed with genocidal outbursts. Thus liberal democracies were actually committing genocide against other democracies, repeatedly. If we counted up separately the cases where 'the people' of the United States, Canada and Australia committed mass murder on the individual Indian and aboriginal nations, we could probably tip Rummel's statistical scales over to the conclusion that democratic régimes were more likely to commit genocide than were authoritarian ones. But I have no wish to reverse the statistical artefact, only to suggest a more limited sociological reality: that in colonial 'dual' societies, settler democracies were more likely to commit massive ethnic cleansing, sometimes amounting to genocide, against other democracies.

Was this a *necessary* connection between the two sides of liberal democracy, between genuine democracy and genocide? Not in one sense: the emergence of liberal-democratic régimes in the North-West European core did not depend on genocide in the colonial

⁸ D. Champagne, *Social Order and Political Change: Constitutional Governments under the Cherokee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw and the Creek*, Stanford 1992.

periphery. It was caused indigenously from within Europe. We are dealing with two separate phenomena. Yet there was another connection. Since the imperial authorities, especially those of Spain or Portugal, were not committed to rule 'by the people', they were less likely to develop theories emphasizing the racial (or other) commonality of all settlers. Yet, since settlers wished to legitimate rule by the 'people', while seeking to limit the people to Europeans, they were likely to develop the theory of 'the people' as 'race'. This is the first sense in which genocide was the dark side of democracy.

All this runs flat contrary to Rummel's 'democratic peace' explanation of genocide—at least in the early modern era. Only for the Europeans and then, much later, for the few indigenous survivors or the descendants of slaves, could America and Australasia be considered to have had liberal-democratic and generally non-murderous states. Ethnic cleansing, murderous, deporting, amounting at its worst to genocide, was central to the liberal modernity of the New World—committed first by the settler colonies then by the 'first new nations'. The process continued in North America and Australia until there were virtually no more native peoples to exterminate. It was not a product of democracy per se, but a product of democracy amid colonial exploitation.

Organic Democracy Before 1915: The Dark Side as Dominant

If we contrast developments in the Centre, East and South-East of Europe with the North-West, we find three essential differences. These were the main causes of the dominance of organic rather than liberal conceptions of the nation-state. They quickly led to a dominant dark side and ultimately led to fascism. All three are also commonly found in the contemporary developing world. That is why both genocide and fascism may recur there.

Firstly, aspirations for democracy appeared later in these more backward countries. Thus, they emerged in an era in which the most 'advanced' political theory was of mature democracy, dominated by the notion that the *whole* people—in other words, the eighteenth-century British 'people' and 'populace'—must rule. In the Centre, East and South, limited stratified franchises of the Anglo-American type were soon overwhelmed by more popular legitimations. Seeking nonetheless to keep the masses at bay, élites developed a different type of intermediary polity, less often limiting the franchise than the sovereignty of parliaments. All males might vote but their representatives had to share legislative power with a strong executive—usually a monarchy. The German *Kaiserreich* was the prototype: the *Reichstag*, a parliament elected by universal male suffrage, shared powers with the *Kaiser* and his ministers.

This meant that élites could use their powers within the state to manipulate and mobilize from above 'the people'. Their capacity to

do so was enhanced by the economic backwardness of most of the region. Here, 'the people' was still largely rural or in small artisanal or casual back-street employment, largely outside the reach of working-class organizations—Germany itself would not be an example of such backwardness. This has also been the case more recently through much of the world. Limited franchises in today's 'Southern' countries of the world seem barely possible. Either everyone or no one has the vote—though the vote might be partly or largely phoney. By enhancing executive powers, this first difference thus enhanced *statism* beyond liberal levels.

Secondly, by now, all states were expected to do much more for their citizens: to provide infrastructures integrating their territories, to engage in mass mobilization warfare, to sponsor economic development and to organize social welfare. As Victor Perez-Diaz notes, the state became 'the bearer of a moral project'.⁹ In the 1890s and 1900s, statist projects surged on the Far Right with the writings of proto-fascists like Barrès and Maurras, on the Centre-Right with Social Catholicism, and amid centre-leftists like the German 'Socialists of the Chair', British 'New Liberals', French Radical Republicans and Russian liberal *zemstvo* intelligentsia. The Left lagged behind. Until after First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, most socialists remained attached to utopian or communard notions of a minimal post-revolutionary state. In the twentieth century, the statist surge continued, affecting most countries of the world. Though slightly dented by the recent revival of neoliberalism, states in the 'South' have been expected to substantially co-ordinate social and economic development. They are *statist*.

Finally, the region was dominated by 'multi-national' dynastic Empires—Hapsburg, Romanov and Ottoman. Thus, entwined with the usual class conflicts, came imperial versus local conflicts. In the era of democracy, these conflicts moved from conflicts between élites to conflict between supposed national communities. Local élites claiming representative rights for themselves, faced with pressures from below, sought to mobilize the 'whole' people against the imperial enemy and its local clients.¹⁰ The imperialist Germans, Russians and Turks—and later the Hungarians—responded with their own 'revisionist' nationalisms. Croats, Ruthenes and others might resent past Bosnian/Turkish and present Serb domination, Romanians might resent Hungarians; Slovaks might resent Czechs, and almost everyone might resent the formerly dominant Germans and Russians. Jews, formerly clients of the imperial rulers, often an apparently privileged minority dominating trades, professions and higher education, were widely resented in newly-liberated nations.

⁹ V. Perez Diaz, *The Return of Civil Society*. Cambridge, MA 1993.

¹⁰ See M. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power. Vol. II: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760–1914*, Cambridge, MA 1993, ch. 10.

Thus *nationalism* was enhanced beyond liberal levels. This also occurred in mid-twentieth-century resistance to colonialism: the 'whole' indigenous people was supposedly mobilized against the colonial exploiters and their clients.

The Birth of Organicism

From these two boosts to statism and one to nationalism developed—and continues to do so—the organic nation-state. I give one early example.¹¹ In 1882, three young Austrian politicians propounded the 'Linz Programme' which was intended to found a new party, the Deutsche Volkspartei, the German People's Party. The programme combined German nationalism, universal suffrage and progressive social legislation. It denounced equally liberalism, laissez-faire capitalism and Marxian socialism. The three men declared that, whereas liberals advocated a constitution enshrining the conflict of interests, they upheld the 'substance' of democracy. Their legitimacy, they said, was grounded in the unity of the people, 'the good of all', 'the interests of the people'. The projected party never materialized. The three split and went off to found their own parties. Adler became a leader of the Social Democrats, Lüger founded the Christian Socialists and Schönerer founded what became the Pan-German Party—these were the three mass parties of inter-war Austria, and two of them generated mass fascist movements.

These young Austrians were endorsing an *organic* conception of the people and state. The people, they said, was one and indivisible, united, integral. Thus its state need not be grounded upon the institutionalization of conflict. One national movement could represent the people, ultimately transcending any conflict of interests between social groups. Class conflict and sectional interests were not to be compromised but transcended. As the twentieth century began, the notion emerged that the transcending agent might be the state.

Organicist conceptions had two obvious vices. First, they led toward authoritarian statism. Few single parties of the Left or the Right have been able to maintain internal party democracy. Without institutionalized competition within, single parties fall to élites and dictators. Who is to express the people's supposedly singular essence? Given the real diversity of human communities, a state controlled by an élite or dictator can most easily claim to speak with a singular voice. Thus genuine organic democracy proved temporary, being in the long run self-contradictory. Second, organicism led toward the exclusion of minority communities and political opponents from full

¹¹ Drawn from E. Schmidt-Hartmann, 'People's Democracy: The Emergence of a Czech Political Concept in the Late Nineteenth Century', in *East European History*, edited by S.J. Kirchbaum, Columbus 1988—she also instances a very similar movement among Czech politicians of the following decade.

membership in the nation. These nationalists came to believe in: (i) a national essence, distinguishable from other national essences; (ii) their right to a state which would ultimately express this essence; (iii) their right to exclude 'others', with different essences, who would weaken the nation.

Thus late-nineteenth-century minorities in the East came under increasing pressure, leading through induced to coerced assimilation and thence to coerced emigration.¹² Jews took the brunt of the pressure. Two and half million Eastern Jews responded by migrating westward in the decades before 1914. Russian pogroms were escalating to murderous cleansing. During 1881–1883, Jews were scapegoated for the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. Politicians and the press fanned the flames, and the Tsarist authorities seemed unwilling to intervene. Yet these were mainly outbursts from below, especially from young male industrial workers displacing labour unrest onto Jews.¹³ Thus there were far more beatings, rapes and lootings than premeditated murders. The next Russian eruption was more political and so more murderous. It came in 1903–1906, fanned by the war with Japan and the 1905 revolution. Small-scale pogroms grew as discontent against conscription was displaced onto the Jews. They became more deadly when Jews were attacked as supposed 'socialists' by counter-revolutionary mobs egged on by conservative politicians. The Tsarist government was ambivalent, alarmed by the scale of the violence—3,000 Jews died—yet recognizing that pogroms could be used to whip up popular rightist support. During this period, political Zionism, the goal of a homeland in Palestine, spread among Jews as a pressured 'exit' option, secular and leftist in tone. Indeed, since they were increasingly attacked by rightists, Jews who sought to remain also turned further to the Left, further inciting rightist nationalists.

But it was not just Jews. During this same period, over five million non-Jewish East Europeans were also emigrating from areas where they constituted minorities—especially Slovaks, Croats, Germans and Slovenes. During the nineteenth century, every Ottoman Turkish defeat in Europe resulted in mass flight and many killings of Muslims. The final chapter came in the Balkan Wars from 1912 which led to half a million Christian Ottoman subjects fleeing northward, and perhaps a similar number of Muslims fleeing south, both fearing reprisals for being identified with the wartime enemy. Organic nationalism, accompanied by increasing statism, were intensifying. But the Great War took it into actual genocide—in which these refugees played a disproportionate role.

¹² Most of my figures on emigrations are drawn from R. Pearson, *National Minorities in Eastern Europe, 1848–1945*, London 1983 and M. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford 1985.

¹³ J. Klier, 'Unravelling of the Conspiracy Theory: A New Look at the Pogroms', *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 23, 1993, pp. 78–89.

Armenian Genocide

The War also brought full-scale genocide. The mass murders of Armenians by Turks in 1915 should not be thought of being marginal to Europe, committed amid a backward or 'barbarous' Islamic civilization. They were committed by a modernizing secular state, still a major player in European power-politics, committed to the most advanced European ideals. Thus I will address it at some length.

The death-toll was somewhere over one million, fifty to seventy per cent of all Armenians in the Turkish lands.¹⁴ If this was slightly lower than the Jewish loss-rate in the 'Final Solution', this was mainly because more Armenians could flee into neutral countries—350,000 of them managing to reach Europe, the biggest group of refugees during the war. The genocidal decision was taken by the Committee of Unity and Progress (CUP), the highest level of the Ittihadist (Young Turk) government. The orders were transmitted through reliable Ittihadist Governors and army group commanders to local civilian, police and military authorities. Some officials at all levels refused. In most known cases, they were relieved of office and replaced by men specially selected by the CUP. Wavering officials, wishing to preserve their careers, then came into line. Alongside the official civilian and military administrations operated a third genocidal agency, the notorious 30,000 strong 'Special Organization'. Its officers—though not the rank and file—had been specially selected for their commitment to the Ittihadist cleansing goal.¹⁵

The core of the Ittihadist movement consisted of modernizing young army officers and urban professionals—especially doctors—conducting the same political operation as was occurring over half of Europe. Refugees from Europe were also prominent. They had overthrown Abdul-Hamid's Ottoman régime in 1909 in the name of democracy, though without being explicit about the form of democracy they intended. In government, they rapidly intensified the organic nationalism already growing in their movement, since they wished to repudiate what they denounced as the 'backward' multi-ethnic, multi-religious Ottoman Empire. Though they found the Islamic notion of *Jihad* (holy struggle or war) a convenient mass mobilizing force, they themselves conceived the identity of their nation not as Islamic but as ethnic. It was 'Turanian', referring to the Turkic-speaking population inhabiting the lands stretching eastward

¹⁴ There are now several reliable overviews of this genocide—for example, V. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, Providence 1995; R. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*. New Brunswick 1986; G. Libaridian, 'The Ultimate Repression: The Genocide of the Armenians, 1915–1917', in *Genocide and the Modern Age*, edited by Wallimann and Dobkowski.

¹⁵ V. Dadrian, 'The Role of the Special Organisation in the Armenian Genocide in the First World War', in *Minorities in Wartime*, edited by P. Panayi, Oxford 1993, p. 68; *The History of the Armenian Genocide*, pp. 43–9.

from Turkey into Central Asia—supposedly descended from the great conquerors Attila, Genghis and Timur/Tamburlaine. How similar this is to the historical myths of half-a-dozen European organic nationalisms of the period! Indeed, there was a rival European claimant to be the inheritor of this very ‘Turanian’ mantle—the Hungarian fascist movement. The Ittihadists wished to refound an Empire recently destroyed by the European Powers by re-orienting it toward Western Asia.

The Ittihadists saw the Armenians as blocking this goal. Since the Turks had lost their Christian lands, the Armenians were now the largest Christian minority left, clearly linked to the Europeans who had conquered the Ottoman Turks. Their main communities were in the east of the country, standing ‘threateningly’ astride the lines of communication with the rest of the Turanian people. As Eastern Orthodox Christians, they relied on Russia for external protection, and, indeed, some Armenian nationalists were supporting the Russians, who, in turn, were promising them a state. All these characteristics seemed to make them accomplices of the enemies of the organic Turanian nation. Indeed, the actual killings were triggered by the disastrous defeat in 1915 of Enver Pasha’s army sent against the Russians in the Caucasus. The Armenians were scapegoats and, in wartime conditions, neither the Western Entente nor Russia could protect them. In these respects, their status as ‘threatening enemies’ of the organic nation-state strikingly resembles that of the Jews. It is worth asking why Armenians, rather than Greeks, Jews or Kurds took the brunt of the Turkish fury. The answers seem to be that Greeks and Jews were protected by foreign states—especially by the powerful German ally—while Kurds were seen as too ‘primitive’ to be really threatening, candidates for coerced assimilation, not murderous cleansing. In these respects, therefore, the Jewish ‘Final Solution’ was not unique, but the worst case of the sequence of genocides committed by modern organic nation-statism—begun in 1915.

Towards Nazi Genocide

The First World War had increased population flight among minorities, and sometimes it increased coercion against them. Thus, for example, about 10 per cent of Serbs were rounded up by the Austrian armies, sent to camps in Bulgaria and Hungary, mostly to be used as forced labour. The War was to destroy most multi-national states; it greatly weakened traditional conservatism, with its distrust of the masses; it provided an economic model of how statist intervention and planning might achieve development; and its mass-mobilized armies were to provide a military and paramilitary model of popular collective action in the pursuit of nationalist goals.

War’s end brought an even more politicized wave of pogroms in Eastern Europe, as extreme rightists connected their political enemy,

'Bolshevism', with ethnic enemies. German and Italian rightists attacked Slavs, though Jews remained the favourite target. Although leftists were also often anti-Semitic or anti-Slav, their leaders recognized that this was in principle wrong, conflicting with socialist or anarchist internationalism. In the Russian Civil War, a few pogroms were committed by Red Army units, rather more by local peasants themselves. But a quarter of the 100,000 victims—10 per cent of Ukrainian Jews—were killed by Ukrainian nationalists and over half were killed by the White Army. The Whites blamed Russia's misfortunes on the 'diseased microbes' of the 'Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy'—eerily anticipating SS language. Even the more 'liberal' Whites, the Kadets, would not condemn the pogroms. When defeated, these fleeing rightists brought West the infamous and influential *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a forged manual for a supposed Jewish conquest of the world. The composite notion of a 'Judeo-Bolshevik' conspiracy spread through the east of the continent. Rightist movements across Russia, the Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic states, Romania and Hungary led local populations in murders of Jews.¹⁶

Cleansing by emigration was then officially ratified by the 1918 Peace Treaties, implementing Woodrow Wilson's doctrine of 'national self-determination'. Apart from Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, each state was effectively assigned to a dominant ethnic group, comprising at least 65 per cent of the population. Anyone dissatisfied was given the right to change their state within one year. It was anticipated that many minority persons would move to a state where they would be part of the ethnic majority. After a year, those minorities staying put had to hope their state would respect the treaty clauses guaranteeing minority rights. Often they did not, and the Powers had little interest in enforcing them. The treaties increased the flow of refugees—as they were expected to do. But the reality of emigration, never expressed in the treaties, was that it was coerced—encouraged by local violence and seizures of property and sometimes enforced by states. By 1926, there were nearly 10 million European refugees, including 1.5 million forcibly exchanged between Greece and Turkey (1.2 million of them from Turkey), 280,000 similarly exchanged between Greece and Bulgaria, 2 million Poles, over 2 million Russians and Ukrainians, nearly 1 million Germans, nearly 250,000 Hungarians and 200,000 Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians.

Sixty million Europeans had been ruled by a foreign power before 1914, compared to only 20–25 million afterwards. In Eastern Europe, subordinate nationalities had been reduced from a half to a quarter of the population in only five years. Citizen rights were now

¹⁶ P. Kenez, 'Pogroms and White Ideology in the Russian Civil War', in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, edited by J. Klier & S. Lambroza, Cambridge 1992; Marrus, *The Unwanted*, pp. 62–64.

substantially identified with ethnicity. Such ethnic cleansing was not at the margins of Western society. It was encouraged, by its Great Powers, European and American. And all this had occurred long before the rise of Hitler.

The Conservative Switch

In the inter-war period, organic nation-statism, involving attempts to exclude minorities and opponents from full membership of the nation, grew in Germany, Austria, Italy, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, (Czech-dominated) Czechoslovakia, (Serb-dominated) Yugoslavia and Turkey. Stateless nationalist movements such as the Slovaks, Ukrainians and Croats followed suit. All sought states resting on an organic nation, denying the salience of class conflict, excluding other nationalities from full membership. They were not, at first, majority movements. But they began to surge as conservatives made a world-historical switch: to compete with the Left, they sought to mobilize the people behind nationalism.¹⁷ Across the Centre, East and South-East, conservatives and nationalists joined forces. Sometimes, conservatives stole populist and even fascist clothing while suppressing actual fascists. Such organic nationalism proved extremely successful, coming to dominate the states and movements mentioned above—except for the rather milder Czech and Bulgarian régimes and the more divided Slovakian and Croatian movements. Only a few of these movements went as far as fascism, but they almost all borrowed one fascist organization, the paramilitary formation, which was proclaimed as the armed vanguard of ‘the people’, potentially capable of inflicting terror on its ‘enemies’—as well as intimidating potential opposition within ‘the people’ into silence.

The presence of conservatives ensured a strong class bias in most movements—least of all in fascism. But leftist opponents were denounced as quasi-ethnic enemies of the nation. Liberals were denounced as foreign ‘internationalists’, socialists as ‘internationalists’ or ‘Bolsheviks’, a term intending to convey both ‘Russian’ and ‘Asiatic’ connotations. Religious and ethnic minorities represented ‘foreign’ interests and states. Liberals were the most mildly treated, their meetings broken up, their leaders roughly jostled, deprived of office merely by election-rigging amid a climate of intimidation. Socialists were more harshly treated, sometimes banned, their militants jailed, occasionally murdered. Paramilitaries spearheaded all these activities. But socialism is only a belief-system. If socialists renounced their beliefs, they could be assimilated into ‘we, the people’—coerced assimilation. Religious minorities suffered more variable treatment. Almost all these states—plus the three main stateless movements—possessed their own church, supposedly

¹⁷ Michael Mann, ‘Sources of Variation in Working-Class Movements in Twentieth-Century Europe’, *NLR* 212, July–August 1995, pp. 14–54.

expressing the 'soul' of the nation. Minority churches experienced persecution, mitigated if they could wield influence through other states. Minor religious sects such as Jehovah's Witnesses or Orthodox Innocentists, unprotected abroad, suffered worse. Nonetheless, the Christian religions were belief-systems and, like socialists, their adherents could convert. During the Second World War, the Croatian Ustashe paramilitaries engaged in mass forcible conversions of Orthodox Serbs, though these were interspersed with mass murders.

But, by the 1930s, the attacks were directed mostly against ethnic minorities. Germans and Czechs, Germans and Poles, Poles and Ukrainians, Romanians and Magyars, Croats and Serbs and so on recognized each other as possessing enduringly different essences, partly biological, partly cultural, but not very malleable. In order to protect the integral unity of their nation, dominant nationalities passed laws in the educational and civil service realms discriminating against minorities. They also curtailed the freedom of association of minority cultural and political organizations. But even coercive assimilation appeared insufficient to many.

What happened next was influenced by the rise of fascism, the world-historical power of Germany and the world-historical accident of Hitler. Without the idiosyncratic Nazi leadership, genocide would have been a much less likely outcome than intermediate stages of ethnic cleansing. Yet the Nazi genocides, and 'The Final Solution', were recognizably the apotheosis of what I have been describing.

From Cleansing to Extermination

The first group to be murdered was mentally handicapped German and Austrian Gentiles. The Nazis expanded the widespread practice in early twentieth-century Protestant Europe and America of the sterilization of the mentally handicapped and 'deviants' (biological assimilation) into murderous cleansing. Seventy thousand mental patients were killed to preserve the 'biological purity of the people' before the war even started. From now on, the paramilitary SS spearheaded the genocide. Almost 200,000 more patients were murdered as the net then widened after 1939 to include Polish, Russian and French patients.¹⁸ Then, in a burst of colonial-style 'native clearances', more than two million Poles were murdered to cleanse the land for Aryan colonists.¹⁹ This was the extreme culmination of the tensions which had endured for some time between Germans and Poles living as minorities inside the other's state.

The next two targets proved to be the main ones: Jews and Russians. Somewhere just short of six million Jews—nearly three-quarters of

¹⁸ M. Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: 'Euthanasia' in Germany, 1900–1945*, Cambridge 1994.

¹⁹ For the murder-rates among the Slav nations see M. Berenbaum, ed., *A Mosaic of Victims. Non-Jews Persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis*, New York 1990.

European Jews—were ruthlessly murdered. Though the killing of somewhere around seven million non-Jewish Soviet civilians and three million Soviet prisoners of war was essentially murderous *political* cleansing, aimed at persons described by the Nazis as ‘Bolsheviks’, the victims were also consistently described in racial terms, as *Untermenschen*, ‘subhumanity’. Conversely, Jews, seemingly a racial/religious target, were routinely described in political terms as ‘Judeo-Bolsheviks’. Jews and Russians were viewed as aligned in a leftist ‘international conspiracy’. Jews were also linked to a second ‘international conspiracy’ involving finance capitalism and the liberal powers, who had humbled Germany after the First World War. The killing orders issued to German troops routinely entwined political and racial targets—‘Jews, gypsies, racial inferiors, asocials and Soviet political commissars’, or ‘all racially and politically undesirable elements among the prisoners’, or ‘second-class Asiatics’, ‘criminals’, ‘anti-social elements’ and ‘agitators and saboteurs’. Finally, the gypsies and various small ethnic groups—such as the Kashubians, Sorbians and Krimtchaks—became targets, largely for reasons of contingent ideological consistency, alongside persons with physical handicaps, recidivists, homosexuals and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Like milder organic nationalists, the Nazis had developed a mixed political-ethnic, domestic-international sense of the enemy to be cleansed.

Though many ‘ordinary Germans’ were involved as perpetrators of genocide, the core staff were ‘real Nazis’. In current research on the biographies of 1581 German war criminals—who tended to be either the leaders or the most repetitive killers among the perpetrators—I find that virtually all were members of Nazi organizations, that two-thirds had a long history of Nazi activities and that more than half had prior experience of extreme violence. I also show that they were recruited disproportionately from ‘core Nazi constituencies’—that is, ‘lost’ or ‘threatened’ border territories, the public sector and professions amid whose practices Nazi ideology resonated strongly. These experiences all made them strong nation-statists, anxious to cleanse the organic nation-race by all steps necessary, including mass murder. These Nazis also found their main murderous collaborators among the organic nationalist movements and paramilitaries I have been discussing—the Thunder Cross and rightist fraternities and militias of Latvia, the Lithuanian Activist Front, the Ukrainian ONU, the Hungarian and Romanian ‘radical rightists’ and fascists, the Slovakian Hlinka Guards, the Croatian Ustashe. All claimed their justification was a combined political-ethnic, domestic-international threat to the organic nation. Among these, the Romanians seized the chance to also murder Ukrainian nationalists and Orthodox Innocentists, while the Ustashe cleansed their land of Serbs—murdering almost 400,000 and forcibly converting a similar number. Even the Italian fascists, originally possessing a cultural rather than a racial view of the nation, moved toward racism while committing genocide in Ethiopia. Near the war’s end, many of them turned this on the Jews.

Leftist Organicism

There was a leftist version, though the inter-war emergence of organicism was slower and less thorough on the Left. The new USSR quickly embraced the statism that pre-war socialist and especially communist movements had denounced.²⁰ By September 1918, the independence of the soviets, the unions and the law was almost gone, the Cheka secret police was into its first murders, 'merciless extermination' was declared to be the fate of the kulak class enemy, concentration camps were built and the 'Red Terror' had been formally inaugurated. Statism was seen more as political necessity than moral principle—unlike extreme rightism. Nonetheless, some Bolshevik language had begun to resemble fascist language. Trotsky made a famous speech with a decidedly fascist title: 'Work, Discipline and Order Will Save the Soviet Socialist Republic'. He also sometimes praised paramilitary virtues: economic problems, he declared, had to be 'stormed' with 'disciplined armies' of workers. Like the fascists, the Bolsheviks gave status and privileges to 'old fighters', leaders wore military tunics and used metaphors drawn from infantry formations to describe revolutionaries—fortress-storming, shock-troops, campaigns, labour brigades and so on. Violence would help generate 'socialist morality' and 'Soviet Man', the equivalents of the Nazi 'German morality' and 'New Man'. The notion of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', dormant since the Revolution, was revived among Marxists.

Yet Bolshevik 'enemies' differed from fascist ones. Bolsheviks had no initial conception of national enemies, despite fighting in the Civil War against Ukrainian and other nationalists. They claimed their state would embody not the (Russian) nation but the transnational proletariat. Acknowledging that their realm contained many nationalities, they endorsed multi-culturalism, not of an ethnically-blind type but linked to federalism. The Soviet Union was a federation of 'sovereign national republics', each with its republican autonomy, while smaller nationalities enjoyed lesser autonomies. Thus, the enemies of the proletariat were not ethnic but political rivals, classes and foreign powers. The political rivals were Whites, Kadets, Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), Mensheviks, then Trotskyists and 'Left' and 'Right' oppositions. But these were usually the vanguard of the second enemy, opposed classes. The forward march of the proletariat was being subverted by the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, feudal classes and the 'kulaks'. But, third, since the Soviet Union was 'encircled' by hostile foreign powers sending aid to these enemies, opposed classes were routinely denounced as 'aliens' 'traitors', 'spies' and 'saboteurs' sponsored from abroad.

Thus 'the proletariat' came to mean 'the people', beset by linked domestic and foreign enemies. This had more than a passing

²⁰ Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, New York 1991, chaps. 15–18.

resemblance to the fascist notions of the enemy. From 1920, Lenin was describing 'class enemies' in terms that disconcertingly anticipated the SS: they were 'bloodsuckers', 'spiders', 'leeches', 'parasites', 'insects', 'bedbugs', 'fleas'. As with the SS, the language suggested both 'threatening' and 'dehumanized' enemies, 'infecting' the people, requiring 'cleansing'.

Stalin took the action much further. Forced industrialization and collectivization, he argued, was being subverted by almost-irredeemable class enemies—especially the 'kulak' class. Since no-one knew quite who a kulak was (Lenin had largely invented the term), and régime policy was being opposed by almost all peasants, local officials and roving paramilitaries had to do their own class analysis, filling in forms headed 'Purging of Class-Alien and Anti-Kolkhoz Elements from the Collective Farms'. They labelled class according to very varied indicators. Lynn Viola claims that the key one was any link to the 'old régime' (*byvsbie liudi*).²¹ This meant large or noble landowners, clergy, church elders, members of church sects (especially Baptists and Evangelicals), wealthy peasants, peasants who had joined the Stolypin reforms of the late Tsarist period and 'separated' their land from the commune, entrepreneurs, merchants, traders, Tsarist officers and policemen, Cossack headmen, estate stewards and village elders—plus anyone else who had supported the Whites, SRs or Ukrainian nationalists during the civil-war period. We see here the entwining of political and class labelling in a somewhat frantic search for enemies. Sometimes, local communists went far beyond what higher party officials wished, defining class in terms of heredity, taking out local resentments on the second and even the third generations. The Bolshevik élite condemned such invoking of bloodlines. Viola argues that Stalinism involved 'a compound of political warfare unleashed from on high and traditional antagonisms' unleashed from below. Yet both were essentially aiming at class enemies.

Blood and Class

Thus, Stalinist mass murder was not just socialism blown entirely off course. Socialism had acquired a strong sense of an alien 'other'. Especially under Stalin—though beginning earlier—socialism's opponents were cleansed in their millions because, as 'bourgeois', or 'petty bourgeois', or *kulaks*, or old régime, they were 'class enemies' opposed to the 'proletariat'. Since the latter had been transformed into 'the people', other classes were 'enemies of the people'. In Asia, the Chinese and Cambodian communists went further, accepting bloodlines as a way of identifying class enemies. The Chinese population was classified in 1948 into persons of 'good' 'neutral' and 'bad' class backgrounds. Thus their parents—and, more recently,

²¹ L. Viola, 'The Second Coming: Class Enemies in the Soviet Countryside, 1927–1935', in *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives*, edited by J.A. Getty & R. Manning, Cambridge 1993.

their grandparents—were defining which side they were on. The Khmer Rouge took this to far more murderous lengths, into a kind of ‘classicide’ analogous to genocide, killing about half the Cambodians with bourgeois backgrounds. But when they linked this to more conventional organic nationalism, they fell. When they began murderous cleansing of Vietnamese, the army of communist Vietnam invaded and deposed them.

Few other socialist parties went much distance along the organic road. They did claim they were ‘the vanguard of the proletariat’. Thus other parties, even potential allies, supposedly represented other classes and were therefore enemies. The Spanish leftist use of the term *pueblo*, meaning village as well as people, implicitly excluded many from membership in the people: Spanish priests, landlords and others they called ‘fascists’—again, a ‘foreign’ term—were killed as being outsiders to the *pueblo*. Yet, during the inter-war period, most leftists realized that to take and retain power they needed a broader base of support than just the working class. Thus they sought to mobilize a broader populist constituency, variously called ‘the people’, ‘working people’, ‘the toiling masses’ or ‘workers and peasants’. Even Stalin began to invoke the people, using a much older, less proletarian term, the *narodny*, which included peasants as well as workers. Socialism remained committed to socialist internationalism and quite tolerant of most ethnic communities. The USSR often positively encouraged the ‘sub-nationalisms’ contained within its borders—except with supposedly ‘treasonous’ nations during the Second World War. Social democrats embraced the people more in inclusionary than exclusionary terms. Nordic social democrats claimed to embody the *Volk*—as in welfarist slogans like the ‘people’s home’, ‘people’s health’ and ‘people’s security’. But this excluded no one.

Nonetheless, both fascism and communism derived from the central political theme of modernity: they claimed to represent alternative organic conceptions of ‘we, the people’, the people as a singular working class and the people as an integral nation. They viewed dictatorial states as bearers of a moral project to cleanse this people of its enemies. Fascism and communism were from the same family of political ideals as liberal democracy. Essentially modern, they were the dark side of democracy, generated by organicist rather than liberal-democratic ideals.

Cleansing After 1945

I have shown that modernity generated two different conceptions of democracy. First, North-Western European and white settler régimes had a pronounced sense of class conflict, and sought to institutionalize it. Thus they developed and deepened forms of liberal, not organic, democracy among themselves. But the white settlers developed an organic conception of their whole community as

opposed to alien indigenous 'others'. They practised severe forms of ethnic cleansing upon them, including the commission of genocide. Second, the different circumstances of Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, meant that not class but ethnic stratification became the central political issue. Unlike classes, most ethnic or religious communities are not necessarily interdependent. They can live in their own cleansed communities, with their own organic state. They were increasingly doing so. In two distinct ways, therefore, massive and murderous ethnic and political cleansing was not really the antithesis of democracy—as is the most common view. Rather, it was its underside.

Nor did this history end in 1945. For then the cleansing rebounded ferociously on Germans. Of the 17.7 million Germans living east of the two post-war Germanys and Austria (excluding the 2 million in the Soviet Union), 1.1 million were killed in the War, 11.7 fled successfully to Germany, 2.1 million died or went missing during the flight and only 2.6 million remained in the East. Nearly 100,000 Croats were put to the sword by Serbs as they surrendered, and 150,000 Turks were expelled from Bulgaria. Until Yugoslavia broke up, there was no more mass murder. But coerced emigration of Turks continued from Bulgaria—where those remaining were required to take Bulgarian names—with around 350,000 moving in 1989. Then Czechoslovakia broke up, peacefully, into two mono-ethnic states and perhaps a third of the last two to three million Germans in the East flocked 'home' to united Germany.

But is this history not over? Has not the liberal, stratified nation-state now triumphed? By 1945, fascism was discredited; state socialism mostly fell in 1989–91. And does not liberal democracy dominate all Western Europe, much of Central Europe and some of Eastern Europe, plus parts of Latin America and East and South Asia? Democratization is positively correlated with central features of modernity: with the level of economic development, with literacy and with urbanization. Yet the studies reveal that the absolute level of economic development seemingly required for a transition to democracy has steadily increased throughout the twentieth century. Liberal democracy is becoming more difficult to attain. Its extension has sometimes been by force—as in the cases of Germany, Austria, Italy and Japan. It has also spread through particular cultural networks, to neighbours, co-religionists and kith and kin. Researchers have observed a 'British effect', whereby former British colonies such as India or the Caribbean Islands are more likely to be liberal-democratic than ex-colonies of other powers. The recent switch of both Vatican and US foreign policy to support democracy and human rights have boosted their chances in the South. At the moment, the outlook seems fair for liberal democracy. But such particularistic encouragements cannot be guaranteed to continue.

Towards Ethnic Homogeneity

In any case, where democracy has triumphed, it has often been tinged by organicism. Europe is actually nearing the end of its century-long drive toward ethnic homogeneity. In 1991, Kosovo was 90 per cent Albanian, Slovenia was 88 per cent Slovene, Croatia was 78 per cent Croat, Serbia 66 per cent Serb, Macedonia 65 per cent Macedonian. Bosnian Muslims were only 44 per cent of Bosnia, but cleansing there and in Croatia then rapidly escalated into mass murder and desperate refugee flight. When the Albanians of Kosovo are either all cleansed by murder and expulsion or attain their own statelet, all of the states of the former Yugoslavia will be around 80 per cent composed of one ethnicity. So are the two statelets of a once-united Cyprus. We can follow most of the media and most Western politicians and blame the evil machinations of a few war criminals for this cleansing. Clearly, in all the cases I have mentioned, organicist movements had to struggle to overcome their rivals. Their victories were carefully constructed, often closely-fought, partly dependent on coercion, not given by history. But they have also had a popular aspect. In the crucial elections of late 1990, nationalist parties won majorities in all the republics of the former Yugoslavia. Some—especially in Serbia and Croatia—already had organicist tendencies, but almost all the others rapidly developed them. Of course, from 1991 onwards, electoralism was joined by militarism and paramilitarism in the descent to murderous cleansing. Paramilitarism has especially remained an essential part of ‘popular’ organicism, wielding its distinctive coercive powers to silence doubts within the ‘people’—as well as to cleanse the enemy. But, as we have seen, such movements inhabit the centre of the European tradition. It is not surprising that they have been winning, since they can wield the powerful ideology of ‘We, the people; they, the enemy’. Where in modern Europe has there been a different outcome?

Soon, only three specific areas of multi-ethnicity will remain across the whole of Greater Europe. Russians will remain as substantial minorities in many others’ states (and vice-versa). Will this last? It is difficult to say. Second, a few older multi-ethnic states in Western Europe remain: the UK, Switzerland and Spain, with Belgium the relative newcomer of 1830. Their multi-ethnicity was acquired in the pre-organic era, when ethnicity mattered little. In these countries, only Northern Ireland retains its capacity for murder—though Basque terrorism is not yet finished. All other European Union countries are now over 85 per cent mono-ethnic. Indeed, emigration between the EU countries has been steadily declining over the last forty years. Third, however, immigrants to Western Europe from outside its borders now form 5–10 per cent of most national populations. Yet these immigrants, unlike inter-war minorities, are not plausibly linked by nationalists to some external threat to the nation. True, Muslim immigrants—especially in France—can be linked to Christian fears of neighbouring Islam. But most

immigrants to Europe are resented for more material reasons—employment and housing competition. Such conflict between material interest-groups is more easily solved than are supposed ‘threats’ to the purity of the nation.

Thus organic nationalism, excluding to the point of murderous cleansing, has been one of Europe’s contributions to modernity. Of course, once the nation is cleansed, it requires little further violence. Impeccably liberal nation-states can bloom above the mass graves of the cleansed—in the US, in Australia, in Germany—and eventually perhaps in Serbia. In South and Central America, as in some parts of Asia and Oceania, cleansing of small indigenous peoples continues, largely committed by local settler paramilitaries. The greatest irony is that the once-cleansed ex-settler colonies, later receiving mass immigration, can even flaunt their multi-culturalism. Though the indigenous peoples are silent because absent, the recent immigrants have not been associated with an external state, nor do they demand threatening regional autonomies. What Americans call ‘multi-culturalism’ is largely apolitical, in the sense that the cultures do not demand rival states. And since immigrants offer little threat to the nation-state, the natives do not respond with organic nationalism—they are satisfied when the government strengthens the borders against further immigration.

Indeed, murderous cleansing is nowadays fairly rare anywhere. Though organic nationalism can be detected amid much ‘third-world’ or ‘southern’ political theory, most is fairly mild. Malaysia’s Prime Minister has justified a predominantly one-party régime in terms of ‘the philosophy that the group and the country are more important than the individual’. He likes to call this ‘Asian’ as opposed to ‘Western’, though the claim to an organic nation is actually thoroughly European. East and Southeast Asia contains a variety of states, some largely mono-ethnic (such as Japan and Korea), others noticeably multi-ethnic (such as India). More potential exists in a few states. In a few Islamic countries, and in India and Israel, have arisen strong ‘fundamentalist’ claims that this religious people is the bearer of absolute truth and virtue, against the error, decadence and sin of the foreigners and secularists. A strong theocratic state must express this truth: its very intolerance is considered a virtue. Zones of murderous ethnic cleansing also exist in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. On the whole, though, few Middle Eastern or Asian states seem in great danger of falling to organic nationalism. And this is also true of Africa. ‘Tribalism’ is, of course, the predominant political bane of the continent, and this intermittently generates atrocities. Yet, since most African countries contain so many ethnicities, their régimes are necessarily coalitions between ethnic groups, which helps restrain organic nationalism. The exceptions are those where religious schism provides a potentially organicist cement to these coalitions (as in the Sudan or Nigeria) or the handful of cases where there are only two

predominant ethnicities (as in Burundi and Rwanda). It is worth noting that the periods of massive killings and coerced emigration in the latter case have been precipitated by Hutu movements brandishing the organicist banner of 'majoritarian democracy'.

The Decline of Statism

Fortunately, the other half of the organicist formula, extreme statism, languishes, proclaimed only by some religious fundamentalists. The main historic carriers of extreme statism, fascism and communism, collapsed so disastrously that the whole statist project seems discredited for now. Current organic authoritarian régimes pretend that they are democratic, or that they will shortly move to democracy. The words 'fascist' and 'communist' have become merely terms of imprecise abuse. This means that—with the exception of a few fundamentalists—we are not dealing with movements as ideological, as impervious to pragmatic concerns, as the Nazis. Given time, however, this context-dependent rejection of the powerful state will probably fade. Then, extreme statist values may be harnessed once again to cleansing movements espousing organic nationalism, to generate ideologies as ferocious as fascism.

What lessons can we draw from the history I have charted as to where and when severe ethnic and political cleansing may be likely to emerge? Can we identify counter-measures that might be taken to defuse it? First, we must abandon the false complacency conferred by the notion that the emergence of liberal democracy is the inevitable outcome of modernization. Second, we must accept the fact that liberal democracy did not emerge out of social harmony but rather social conflict, especially class conflict. To encourage it requires realistic acceptance of such conflict and willingness to institutionally compromise it. Third, organic democracy has tended to emerge where a dominant 'people' lives amid either one or two ethnic or religious minorities, plausibly identifiable as some kind of 'threat' to the dominant people. This perceived threat should be realistically confronted, not simply dismissed. It has usually arisen when the self-styled representatives of the dominant 'people' can plausibly associate a minority with a foreign enemy or exploiter, either a foreign state or an 'international conspiracy'. The identification of such enemies permits the rallying of the whole organic people, overcoming its internal social conflicts. Fourth, this has implied distinct types of 'threat'. Where the minority is regionally concentrated and supported by a neighbouring state, the threat is of potential loss of territory to that state. Where there is concentration and support from non-neighbours abroad, the threat is of possible secession and the founding of a new state. Where there is no regional minority concentration, the threat is sensed as a more diffuse international exploitation, as in the historical notions of 'Jewish finance capitalism' or 'Judeo-Bolshevism'. Fifth, we must appreciate the nature of the main institution linking together the leaders, 'the people' and their

joint coercion over minorities: the armed paramilitary, a distinctly modern and populist form of organization.

We should thus be somewhat concerned about several parts of the world today. Many developing countries possess a dominant ethnicity or religion, many possess minorities with strong regional implantation, some of which form the majority in a neighbouring state. Many experience some degree of exploitation by foreign imperialism and/or international capitalism—to which some local minorities can be plausibly linked and so regarded as far more ‘powerful’ than their numbers would warrant. Finally, the kinds of small-arms on which paramilitaries rely—which enable quite small groups of young men to coerce their own community into the prison-house of organic nationalism—have never been easier to acquire in the world. All this is a recipe for intermittent organic nationalism, occasionally surging into murderous cleansing.

Preventing Genocide

Can we in the North help the countries of the South avoid the worst scenarios—that is, our own past ones? We should reflect on the history of popular sovereignty I have outlined. The dominant Western system of liberal democracy has made sacred a majoritarian and territorial form of sovereignty. It has often added a high degree of state centralization—though this is not universal. These qualities have never been good at dealing with spatially concentrated minorities—and that is why so few of these remain in Western countries. The few older ‘deviant’ countries, like Switzerland or Belgium, which developed confederal and consociational practices of power-sharing which are not simply majoritarian, are actually more appropriate solutions to such conflicts. Indeed, late communist Yugoslavia was, in certain respects, going one step further, to the removal of the notion of an unproblematic locus of territorial sovereignty. Had the international community understood this, and also understood the dangers of replacing it by a series of majoritarian and sovereign nation-states, then this terrible burst of murderous ethnic cleansing might have been averted.²³ Democracy is as problematic a form of political régime as any other.

We should also seek an international régime more sensitive to regional conflicts, which would reduce rather than widen inequality in the South and which would encourage the institutionalization of internal social, especially class, conflict. Yet, in recent years, international institutions have sought to free capital from ‘the dead hand’ of regulation and economies are to be given the ‘shock therapy’ of market freedom, almost regardless of the consequences in terms of unemployment, wage levels, worker protections—and political reactions. Nothing could be more likely to generate extreme local

²³ See S. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, Washington, DC 1997.

nationalist reactions against foreign exploitation, and against any local minorities who could be plausibly linked to this—such as Chinese capitalists in Indonesia and elsewhere, the supposed ‘Jews’ of Asia. Finally, the North must exercise much greater control over its own arms sales, both of the heavy weapons of repression by the state, and the small-arms upon which paramilitarism thrives. Guns preempt ballot-boxes—since the paramilitaries wielding them claim to represent the vanguard of the people. In this industry, capitalist profit subverts liberal democracy.

If all this fails, we could be confronted once again with mass murder. In the most extreme cases, we should be prepared to countenance vigorous political and military intervention and swift international prosecution of crimes against humanity. But we should also view both present and past with greater realism and honesty. Ethnic and political cleansing was central to the modernization of both the Old and New Worlds. We must recognize how difficult it was and is to achieve modern multi-ethnic liberal or social democracy. Organic nationalism is more popular than is normally recognized. Where all else fails, we do need Vance-Owen plans—backed by all necessary force—to help deflect organicism into milder stages of cleansing achieved by mutual negotiation—through agreed population and property exchanges, border alterations and so on. Something more is always needed beyond pious denunciations of the machinations of evil leaders. Unaccompanied by more constructive or comprehensive action, mere threats to the leaders may actually increase their local popularity. Since we ourselves live in ethnically cleansed states, our denunciations also smack of hypocrisy.