



**SOFIA UNIVERSITY**  
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**Philosophy Taught in English Program**

**Genocide, Modernity, and the Philosophy of Peace**

**PhD Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of  
the Doctoral Program in Philosophy Taught in English**

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## Introduction: Genocide as a Radical Rejection of Political and Social Modernity

Modern intellectuals and artists love to talk about crisis. Indeed, sometimes it seems that the idea and the two groups are synonymous. However, be that as it may, the world is not always in crisis sometimes it is in a process of resolution, confirmation, and positive adaptation. Thus, there are positive events in the world too that we should not overlook.

Undoubtedly, one of the crisis events of the early part of the Twentieth century in Western civilization was the appearance and practice of genocide. It was an event that, for many, marked a caesura in the Western mind/experience. It was argued forcefully that one could never talk about the West in the same way again and that a new and critical analysis was necessary to explain the horrible result of Auschwitz.

At the early forefront of attempts to explain this crisis event, were the intellectuals of the Frankfurt School. They believed that the West was rotten to the core. That is to say that the very things the West had prided themselves most in, Enlightenment thought, was responsible for its greatest human tragedy. In particular, Horkheimer and Adorno made, what they perceived as a Western obsession with technicity, scientific method, and bureaucracy to be the root cause of the West's disastrous quest for total control.

Ideas such as a mistrust of modernity and all it entailed however were not the exclusive domain of the left however. It had a long history on the conservative side as well. In a sense, it was a romantic reaction to modernity in all its guises: science, liberalism, and capitalism. Ideas and practices that were equally loathed by both left and right, particularly the radical wings of such movements.

However what both radical wings failed or were unwilling to perceive was that modernity was not only about science, capitalism, and attempts at societal control but also about something else:

radical Enlightenment.

Radical Enlightenment was, put succinctly, the attempt at the political and social emancipation of man from all forms of authority except his own conscience and reason. Its values were best expressed by Immanuel Kant and Thomas Paine as well as many other Enlightenment figures. Many of them stressed what we would later call the "human rights" revolution. That each and every person had an intrinsic dignity and was worthy of respect and more than just a modicum of responsible freedom as both a citizen and private person.

It is this blind spot as regards the political and social aspects of Enlightenment thought vis a vis modernity that this dissertation takes most issue with.

It seeks to make clear that: *contrary to the Frankfurt school, it was not Enlightenment thought and practices that led to the emergence of genocide in the West (and elsewhere), but the very contrary: the rejection of Enlightenment thought particularly in its political, social, and moral dimensions.*

In seeking to illuminate this thesis, I begin in chapter one to describe the relationship between historically documented human behavior, the emergence of the state, and the role of violence and war as played out in human history.

Here, in chapter one, I maintain that genocide is an act which is very ancient indeed. It is either as old or older than human history, or has surely been around since antiquity.

However, I do not thereby maintain that genocide is in anyway "fixed" in an "eternal human nature" I merely suggest that it is an ancient possibility that may be acted upon given certain specific historical situations.

Following this line of thought, I make it clear that social responses such as "empathy" are just as likely in the human historical repertoire as are violent responses such as genocide.

In chapter one, the state is described as a vehicle for war making and traces its roots there. This idea of the state as a weapon of organizing war is developed throughout the dissertation.

In chapter two, I develop the notion of what is necessary for the practice of genocide to occur. After much research I found that several things may need to come together for genocide to happen; the most important of which, however, is the simultaneous presence of a state of war.

For modern genocides to occur ideologies of race and nation were crucial as motivating factors as well as the various promises of Utopian projects tied to them. A sense of domestic upheaval and existential urgency is crucial here.

Most importantly, for our thesis, such murderous ideologies totally neglected the human rights side of the Enlightenment tradition as represented by the American and French Revolutions and as was embodied in the seminal historical document the *Rights of Man*.

In this chapter, we also explore the Arendtian notion that modern genocide owed a lot to the experiences culled from the Imperialist and Colonialist age. A period in which the colonized "other" was treated as intrinsically inferior. It was, arguably, a period of apprenticeship for the atrocities that were to come, particularly in Germany.

In chapter three, we directly attack the thesis of the Frankfurt School, most famously expressed in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that the Enlightenment itself was responsible for its most noticeable failure in the Holocaust.

We historically contextualize the Frankfurt School within German intellectual history and seek to show that their way of thinking was deeply rooted in romanticism and cultural pessimism very prevalent in Germany on both the left and right. Most importantly, we try to show how limiting their definition of Enlightenment thinking was. A charge leveled at them by their very own student: Jurgen Habermas.

In short, chapter three endeavors to negate the thesis that Enlightenment thinking bears the brunt of the responsibility for the most horrible outcome of the twentieth-century. In fact, it seeks to

prove the opposite that it was a lack of deep Enlightenment based roots that led to the disaster and not the reverse. It was a *dearth of political and social Enlightenment and not its excess that led to the genocidal experiences of the West.*

Chapter Four, attempts to interpret the events of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century within an Hegelian framework. It seeks to show that the culture of the late nineteenth century was one which we could call a "culture of genocide" in the sense that many of its beliefs and practices were held against a variety of social and political agents of the time and their respective attempts at greater levels of freedom and recognition. The nineteenth century is thus seen, in a sense, as an unstable battery that was charging with negative energy and that finally exploded in the twentieth-century resolving, in a bout of extreme violence, the contradictions of the prior century.

Our Hegelian interpretation of the historical events of 1871 to 1945 lead directly to its denouement in chapter five.

Thus, in chapter Five, we argue that the practical and ideological tensions of the first half of the twentieth-century we're resolved, violently, in 1945 and led to the new synthesis represented by the liberal Global Hegemony led by the United States until the present day.

What we are attempting to say here is that after the conflicts of the earlier part of the century the social forces and actors which were seeking, in a Hegelian fashion, for more political representation and social recognition were to meet their satisfaction in an ever growing global legal regime that attempted to base itself on the best that Enlightenment thought had to offer in the realms of the social and the political.

In a sense, the post war world and its new "democratic peace" (among democracies of course) started to bear an uncanny resemblance to the league of peaceful republics as envisioned two hundred years ago by Kant in his *Perpetual Peace*.

In the conclusion, we reiterate our main thesis that it was neither Modernity nor Enlightenment that was the cause of modern barbarity in the midst of European civilization but rather its partial rejection and attempted negation of the political, social, and moral elements of Enlightenment thought. We buttress this argument with a discussion of a seminal work by Arno J. Mayer *The Persistence of the Old Regime*. Here, with his help, we argue once again, as in chapter four but in a different vein, that the aristocratic anti-democratic, anti-socialist, anti-liberal, and anti-capitalist elements of Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century were very powerful and influential and had a devastatingly retarding power over the events of that time. That the West, in essence, was lacking in Enlightenment thought and was, instead, steeped, in illiberal thought whether nationalist, racist, Darwinist, or, even, gendered. In short, Europe had not, by far, accepted the lessons of 1776 and 1789 but was actively engaged in a reactionary rearguard action that was to lead, in the final analysis, to war and to genocide. The old elites and their radically conservative ideas, in combination, with the new facts of expansive imperialism, were to create an environment of thought that would open up the Western imagination to unprecedented violence towards the "other". But this outcome was emphatically not rooted in Enlightenment and liberal thought but in its enemies, particularly the incendiary thought of Friedrich Nietzsche combined with pernicious social Darwinistic and volkisch elements of the time.

In conclusion, to paraphrase the eminent scholar Jeffrey Herf, the world prior to 1945 "did not suffer from too much reason, too much liberalism, too much Enlightenment, but rather from not enough of any of them."

## Chapter One

### Human Behavior, War, and The State

Much has been written about human nature as to its essential nature to its possible non-existence. In general there have been three scholarly camps offering their version of the human predicament. The first camp which we might term the “Hobbesian” persuasion sees early man as a brute enmeshed in a never ending spiral of violence. The second camp which we might call the “Rousseauian” argues vehemently for early man's inherent peaceable nature. And finally the third camp we might name after the American political scientist Robert Axelrod, as “Axelrodian” which posits human nature as an ever changing mix of strategies both peaceable and violent according to apparently natural laws of cooperation to be found throughout the animal kingdom.

Yet there is another perspective which we can call "Hegelian" after the philosopher of the same name. It is a unique perspective. It posits man as engaged in a dialectical struggle for recognition and ever increasing freedom. It is, in a sense, a struggle for power between a weaker and a stronger opponent; between a lord and a bondsman. It was just this struggle which Marx was later to transform into a theory of "class struggle".

Hegel was, in his latter works, also to add the idea that "war" in itself tested the unity of polities and kept them cohesive over the long term; this, it should be stressed, was in the context of his own time; a time which Hegel made no pretense as being able to surpass; for Hegel there is no escape from one's own time horizon. So, for Hegel, human nature is historically variable.

To begin then, we should ask whether man is inherently violent or aggressive or are these behaviors largely a product of cultural evolution and divergence?

Many commentators from a wide range of scholarly fields have endeavored to show that man's propensity for violence is a natural outcome that can be traced back through his own evolutionary history and indeed much further back into the animal kingdom as a whole. We might see this plethora

of argumentation as “the naturalistic argument”.

Philosophically this form of argumentation may have been stated most convincingly by the political philosopher Thomas Hobbes. He posited a murderous world mostly occupied by feuding for gain, safety, and or reputation. He laid out his argument in his immensely influential philosophical work “The Leviathan”.

Strikingly different in interpretation of the same theme was Jean-Jacques Rousseau who saw man as timid and peaceful living off the natural abundance of the land. He explained his position most fully in his “Discourse on the Origins and and Foundation of Inequality among Mankind” in 1755. To him, violence was a cultural product born of the rise of agriculture, private property, and the growing predominance of the state creating an uneasy class society dominated by culturally created forms of hypocrisy.

More recently, scholars such as Desmond Morris and, especially, Konrad Lorenz viewed violence as a sort of display of possible aggression rather than as violence in and of itself. This view however has, since the 1960's, been discredited.

Rather, new research has shown that intraspecific killing is the norm and the main cause of animal mortality. The suggestion of course is, that man is not unique in killing his own kind. A major book on the subject has been Lawrence Keeley's “War before Civilization” where he demolishes the doctrine that pre-state society's were peaceful and thus that warfare is a relatively late cultural invention.

Following Keeley and others, quarrels were rife among hunter-gatherers resulting in much higher homicide rates than are to be found in any modern industrial society. And it was precisely here, that issues of territoriality were found to be central as to some of the causes of pre-state endemic violence.

A crucial example for this line of argumentation has been Tasmania. Arguably the most primitive and cut off society ever found by Europeans; the Tasmanians were totally independent of any

cultural contact for 10,000 years and were still found engaging in lethal/genocidal warfare among themselves—and the list of hunter-gatherers occupied by similar activities has not been short. The chief conclusion for this point of view is that pre-civilized/agricultural peoples had extremely high rates of killing—far surpassing that of industrialized societies including those of the first half of the twentieth century.

And even more fundamentally than this; it has been posited that intraspecific fighting has been endemic to our species for millions of years.

If one accepts this line of argumentation then the sad fact appears that over millions of years man's natural state was one of fear and apprehension of violent death. A fear that was all too often realized.

Philosophically, Sigmund Freud explored such thoughts in his dual vision of man as a being possessed of two almost overwhelming drives which he termed “Eros” and “Thanatos”, or the sexual drive or death/destructive instinct respectively. To Freud, man seemed driven by these two drives and was caught between either their suppression or fulfillment even down to modern day life.

However, there is at least another way of interpreting this potentially bloody and, at first glance, self-defeating enterprise of violence and counter-violence and that is to see it as one of many possible strategies of behavior dependent on the given circumstances. That is to say that man may indeed be “hardwired” for horrific violence but will only show this side of himself when the circumstances are “propitious” for their use.

But before we turn to a further analysis of this situational claim we should in all fairness state that the modern converse of the vision of man as the “killer ape” still exists and is, perhaps not surprisingly, similar to Rousseau's statement of it nearly three centuries ago.

Scholars, such as Douglas P. Fry who support this thesis claim, like Rousseau before them, that man's existence was nomadic and not particularly known for warfare. Indeed, many like the famed anthropologist, Franz de Waal, see us as co-descendants of a “gentile chimpanzee” like the Bonobo. Be

that as it may, and the latest evidence is contradictory on this point, these modern day Rousseauists emphasize the cooperative nature of mankind.

The underlying drive or emotion behind various levels and forms of our propensity for cooperating, according to the new Rousseauists, is our capacity for empathy. This manifests itself in various ways from empathizing with different species, such as a stranded whale, to military men loathe to kill the enemy. This whole scholarly literature seeks to act as a corrective against the prevailing view in some quarters of man's violent disposition.

However, in terms of our paper, it should be noted that this school of thought shifts man's violent nature, as did Rousseau, from our ape-like ancestors and hunter-gatherers to the start of the agricultural revolution and the rise of states, such as is famously and gorily depicted in the Old Testament. So importantly, for our thesis, *both* schools of thought are saying that extreme violence such as genocide *predated modernity by thousands of years, if not necessarily millions*.

In addition, this scholarly literature contends that proponents of the pessimistic view of human nature have seriously misread the archaeological and anthropological literature. Be that as it may, this paper is more inclined to a third alternative way of viewing human nature in its historical and current context.

This third view or “Axelrodian” viewpoint derives as it's name suggests from Robert Axelrod and his famed book “The Evolution of Cooperation”. In addition, however, I have added profound insights from the celebrated American intellectual, Francis Fukuyama and his two-volume book: *The Origins of Political Order*.

Fukuyama reminds us that there never was a *solitary* human nature. That there never was a *lone individual*. This way of thinking Fukuyama labels as the “Hobbessian Fallacy” that is the propensity to believe that there was an original human nature in isolation. Rather, as backed up by numerous fields of knowledge, Fukuyama asserts what is by now the obvious line of argumentation that man has always been a social animal, as Aristotle taught us so long ago. It was in sociality that human nature and

groups for that matter evolved and emerged. There never was a state of “man against man” just as there never was a “solitary savage”. Man was always a group creature, born into a group and, more often than not, died within that same group. The only thing that has changed over time is the size and complexity of that grouping: from hunter-gatherers, to early states, to empires, and finally, and most recently, national states.

What Fukuyama offers is nothing less than “the recovery of human nature by modern biology”. Basing himself on primatology, population genetics, archaeology, social anthropology, and evolutionary biology he introduces us to the twin concepts of kin selection and reciprocal altruism.

Fukuyama criticizes Hobbes, Rousseau, and Locke, on one very important point. It is the same one we just mentioned a little bit earlier namely that human mutual dependence comes about almost accidentally as a result of technological innovations like agriculture that require greater cooperation. Thus, according to this view, human society emerges only with the passage of historical time and involves compromises of natural liberty. This, as Fukuyama emphatically states, is not the way things actually happened.

As mentioned earlier Hobbes is famous for his assertion that the state of nature was a state of war of “every man against every man.” Rousseau, by contrast, argued explicitly that Hobbes was wrong, that primitive human beings were peaceful and isolated, and that violence developed only at a later stage when society had begun to corrupt human morals. Hobbes is far closer to the truth, albeit with the important qualification that violence took place not between isolated individuals but between social groups.

Violence can be interpreted as a social activity engaged in by groups of males and sometimes females. The vulnerability of both apes and humans to violence by their fellow species members in turn drives the need for greater social cooperation.

But this might mean that the real driver of state formation is violence or the threat of violence, making the social contract an efficient rather than a final cause.

But it seems extremely likely that religious ideas were critical to early state formation, since they could effectively legitimate the transition to hierarchy and loss of freedom enjoyed by tribal societies. Max Weber distinguished what he called charismatic authority from either its traditional or modern-rational variants. The Greek word charisma means “touched by God”; a charismatic leader asserts authority not because he is elected by his fellow tribesmen for leadership ability but because he is believed to be a designee of God.

To a much larger degree than economic benefit, religious authority can explain why a free tribal people would be willing to make a permanent delegation of authority to a single individual and that individual’s kin group. The leader can then use that authority to create a centralized military machine that can conquer recalcitrant tribes as well as ensure domestic peace and security, which then reinforces the leader’s religious authority in a positive-feedback loop. The only problem, however, is that you need a new form of religion, one that can overcome the inherent scale limitations of ancestor worship and other kinds of particularistic forms of worship.

There is no clearer illustration of the importance of ideas to state formations than the emergence of an Arab state under the Prophet Muhammad. The Arab tribes played an utterly marginal role in world history until that point; it was only Muhammad’s charismatic authority that allowed them to unify and project their power throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The tribes had no economic base to speak of; they gained economic power through the interaction of religious ideas and military organization.

What explains then pristine state formation? We need the confluence of several factors. First, there needs to be a sufficient abundance of resources to permit the creation of surpluses above what is necessary for subsistence. This abundance can be natural: the Pacific Northwest was so full of game and fish that the hunter-gatherer-level societies there were able to generate chiefdoms, if not states. But more often abundance is made possible through technological advances like agriculture. Second, the absolute scale of the society has to be sufficiently large to permit the emergence of a rudimentary

division of labor and a ruling elite. Third, that population needs to be physically constrained so that it increases in density when technological opportunities present themselves, and in order to make sure that subjects cannot run away when coerced. And finally, tribal groups have to be motivated to give up their freedom to the authority of a state. This can come about through the threat of physical extinction by other, increasingly well-organized groups. Or it can result from the charismatic authority of a religious leader. Taken together, these appear to be plausible factors leading to the emergence of a state in places like the Nile valley.

Here we should pause for a moment to gather our thoughts and review what has been written up to now. Based on the ideas and research of others we have posited the idea that man is a social animal that evolved, over millions of years, in groups. These groups, more often than not, engaged in violence, even on the scale of genocide. Over time, recurring violent interactions and the occasional “cease fires” served to modify and, eventually through new technologies, expand the extent and power of these human groups. In time, particularly after the invention of agriculture, early state structures began to form. This socio-historical event did not eliminate violence but began to transform its exhibition. That is to say, that with the rise of the state began a series of transformations concerning the quality and nature of violence. More often than not violence within states declined, while violence between states continued (although this too would eventually decline as we will see in later chapters). We should now explore these ideas by taking a look at three prominent scholars and their work: Norbert Elias, Peter Singer, and Steven Pinker.

In his classic book “The Civilizing Process” Norbert Elias explained an important historical trend that purported to show that increasing political centralization coupled with a growing commercial infrastructure was sufficient to reverse trends in violent behavior. In a sense his was a reworking of Hobbes's Leviathan thesis which posited man's deliberate giving up of his freedom to a central authority in exchange for safety from others malign intentions. In addition Elias postulated that political centralization and an increase in “gentle commerce” led to a crucial psychological

transformation of warriors into courtiers. This is interesting in that it posits a psychological change first, followed by the creation of new social roles. To sum up: Elias's theory of The Civilizing Process suggests that government administered justice/power can have unintended effects leading its citizens to internalize norms of self-restraint and quash their impulses for retribution rather than act on them.

Elias not only spoke of the historical development of self-control but of an overall increase in empathy, too. Peter Singer, in some ways, echoing Elias talks about an ever expanding circle of empathy over historical time. In short, he says, that over the course of history people have enlarged the range of beings whose interests they value as they value their own. A good candidate for the inflation of the “empathy circle” is the expansion of literacy. In a sense, Singer's version of conscious historical movement is similar to Hegel's assertion that the history of man is the movement of peoples towards an ever greater free recognition of each other as equals. An historical movement which had its apogee, according to Hegel, with the outbreak of the French and to a lesser extent American revolutions.

Aside from admitting the universal existence in human nature of aggressive and altruistic impulses, Singer points to, like Aristotle before him, man's singular use of his faculty of reason to define him and his future trajectory. As Singer famously put it: “Beginning to reason is like stepping onto an escalator that leads upwards and out of sight. Once we take the first step, the distance to be traveled is independent of our will and we cannot know in advance where we shall end.”

But like Hegel, Singer too believes that reason is inherently expansionist and that it ultimately seeks universal application. Thus ethics, for Singer, evolved out of our social instincts and our capacity to reason. And again like Hegel, Singer points to a discernible trend in ethics/moral thought in which ethics first inhabits a group and then is able to adjudicate between groups; ever expanding to include more and more clusters of disparate individuals. In effect that society is rapidly moving towards the direction of more general valuations.

We now turn to a more contemporary interpretation (2011) of the relationships between human nature, war, and the state as rigorously expounded by Steven Pinker in his acclaimed (not by everybody

of course!) book “The Better Angels of Our Nature”.

It should be stated right up front that Pinker's book can and should be viewed as a continuation of Elias's and Singer's work with some important updates.

Pinker names and analyzes no less than six trends which he tries to unify holistically.

Trend number one he calls the Pacification Process which in effect echoes in part Elias's thesis that the rise of states led to a decline in violent deaths within this enlarged human group.

Trend number two is a direct nod to Elias and is called, as it was by Elias the Civilizing Process and talks about exactly the same things: the rise of central authority, urbanization, and commerce.

Trend number three is linked to the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment and has to do with the first organized movements to abolish socially sanctioned forms of violence such as despotism, slavery, dueling, judicial torture, superstitious killing, sadistic punishment, cruelty to animals and the first systemic stirrings of pacifism. He calls this trend the Humanitarian Revolution.

The fourth major trend takes place after the end of World War II. It represents the historical fact that the great powers have not engaged head on with each other. He calls this ongoing state of affairs The Long Peace.

Linked to the fourth major trend is what he calls the New Peace and has to do with the significant decline in conflicts of all kinds since 1989.

The final trend is also linked historically to trends three, four, and five and is called the Rights Revolutions and has to do with the explosion of litigation concerning ethnic minorities, women, children, homosexuals, and animals. It is the most recent evolution of human rights discourse.

The Leviathan, Commerce, Feminization, Cosmopolitanism, and the “Escalator of Reason” are mostly, if not all, recent trends. For Pinker, not surprisingly, the past is a distinctively horrific place where the Hobbesian struggle was commonplace. Violence of all kinds was rampant including genocide. The past was a place where a person had a high chance of coming to bodily harm. Such statements of course are backed up by a plethora of scholarly research in a myriad of fields of

knowledge. The scholarly literature is as vast as it is depressing.

Even our most ancient and revered books and traditions such as the Old Testament and the Homeric sagas are filled with gory tales of total war/genocide. The archaeological record backs up their bloody narratives. Truly one would not be wholly out of line to say that the Old Testament in particular is one long celebration of violence. Even the very first distinctly human tale of Cain and Able when the world, allegedly, had but four people in it comes out to a rate of .25 percent chance of an early, violent death. A rate which interestingly enough coincides with that of known hunter-gatherers.

Yet, importantly, Pinker (as well as others) have pointed to the essentially strategic nature of violence. Organisms are selected to deploy violence only in circumstances where the expected benefits outweigh the expected costs. That discernment is especially true of intelligent species, whose large brains make them sensitive to the expected benefits and costs in a particular situation, rather than just to the odds averaged over evolutionary time. Thus, violence becomes a more attractive proposition the lower the risk of heavy costs to oneself. Therefore, *the principle of deadly violence in nature is fighting against weakness, only at highly favourable odds—asymmetrical fighting.*

Throughout history considerable intraspecific killing did take place, but it was carried out against the weak and defenceless who could not fight back effectively. Thus deadly fighting was normally asymmetrical, with the casualties overwhelmingly concentrated on the receiving end. Therefore, if humans can be caught unarmed, they are at a tremendous disadvantage and are extremely vulnerable. Humans thereby became quintessential first-strike creatures.

This and other considerations lead Pinker (among many others) to the counter-intuitive conclusion that modern wars, despite their massive death tolls, have a much less lethal demographic effect overall than did pre-state fighting. Even the dreadful figures from cataclysmic events such as the World Wars fall short of those for primitive societies. Thus, contrary to a popular viewpoint, it was the distant and not so distant past that was murderous, rather than modernity itself.

Now is perhaps a good time to take stock and philosophical perspective on what has been

written so far.

We have seen that man is a social animal that throughout its evolutionary history has lived in groups. For most of that history, violence between groups and, indeed, within groups was common. Genocide, the most extreme case, was not unheard of.

This has led scholars to believe that the further back one reaches into the human past the bloodier it gets. Paradoxically, this has led some scholars to some optimistic reasoning.

Among these thoughts is that, contrary to a very popular school of thought, it is not modernity that is the wellspring of violence but the ancient past. Modernity, in contrast, has set into motion a variety of long term trends that have had a strong tendency in restraining violence of all kinds. The growth and refinement of the state/Leviathan, “gentle commerce”, urbanization, cosmopolitanism, feminization, and the growth and use of reason have greatly contributed to the discouragement of violence. Demographically our ancient past was more likely an Armageddon rather than our near future. Most importantly, however, for our paper is that we can tentatively state that the brutal act of *genocide predated modernity by at least thousands and even millions of years.*

## Chapter Two

### Elements of Genocide

For many observers, such as the philosopher Hannah Arendt and the historian Niall Ferguson the Herero and Nama experience of genocide was, in a profound way, the fertile intellectual breeding ground for the most famous genocide that was yet to come: the Holocaust.

In short, a major thesis concerning the rise of modern genocide as opposed to those genocides carried out in antiquity and before is that the art of modern annihilation was learned in colonial

conflicts before being transported back to the European mainland in a sort of culturally lethal "boomerang effect".

It is tempting to see the genocidal brutality of the German officials and settlers in South-West Africa as reflective of a peculiar mind-set that would later sanction the annihilation of European Jewry. Perhaps Hannah Arendt was right, at least in the German case, when she postulated that the seeds of totalitarianism were sown during the colonial experience in Africa.

At this point it might be enlightening to quote Aimé Césaire:

"Yes, it would be worthwhile to study clinically, in detail, the steps taken by Hitler and to reveal to the very distinguished, very humanistic, very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century that without his being aware of it, he has a Hitler inside him, that Hitler inhabits him, that Hitler is his demon, that if he rails against him, he is being inconsistent and that, at bottom, what he cannot forgive Hitler for is not crime in itself, the crime against man, it is not the humiliation of man as such, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa."

However it should be noted that in contrast to the stress on the 'occupation' of Europe, historians have begun to talk of 'colonization', particularly in eastern Europe. They place the Nazi 'colonization' project in direct comparison with earlier European overseas practices, noting only that this time they applied to the creation of a continental empire in Europe.

In this sense Aimé Césaire is once again on point when he provocatively argues that " the Holocaust . . . visited upon the peoples of Europe the violence that colonial powers had routinely inflicted on the "natives" all over the world for nearly five hundred years".

Starting with the paradigm-shifting work of Susanne Zantop, who showed that the German colonial imagination long preceded and outlasted any formal imperial structures, historians have looked beyond a narrowly focused imperial history to show that ideas and fantasies of empire—an ‘intellectual colonialism’—penetrated deeply into German culture and society in every sphere, from advertising to sexuality to science. Thus it could be said that the Holocaust had to be first imagined as an inverted utopian project before anything else.

Once again it should not be forgotten that Hannah Arendt claimed, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, that colonialism provided the building blocks for fascism in Europe, and scholars have recently begun testing this so-called ‘boomerang thesis’ empirically.

The European contact with exotic colonial ‘others’ in previously unknown parts of the world strengthened the belief in an alleged European/‘white’ superiority, and often resulted in the treatment of the ‘other’ as an inherently inferior form of life.

If one looks closely at the history of the Belgian Congo and also that of other parts of Africa, you eventually notice something striking. If you were to ask most Americans or Europeans what were the great totalitarian systems of the twentieth century, almost all would be likely to say: Communism and Fascism. However, there was a third totalitarian system—European colonialism—the latter imposed in its deadliest form in Africa. Each of the three systems asserted the right to control its subjects’

lives; each was buttressed by an elaborate ideology; each perverted language in an Orwellian way; and each caused tens of millions of deaths.

Yet it was a combination of factors that was to prove decisive in modern genocide. Ideologies of race and nation, revolutionary regimes with vast Utopian ambitions, and last but not least in importance moments of crisis generated by war and domestic upheaval all taken together were to fuel the genocidal rage of the twentieth-century. They should be taken as warning signs for the future.

Significantly, it should be noted, tying in with our thesis of colonialism and genocide, that it appears that the only early-twentieth-century imperial power that officially banned intermarriage between colonists and nonwhites, including those of mixed blood, was Germany. Among the European colonies in Africa in the early twentieth century, only the German dependencies banned intermarriage between whites and nonwhites, including Christian “halfcastes.” These facts will link up with our discussion of a possible *sonderweg* of German history and the specific nature of Nazi racism.

Yet, while xenophobia is an ancient and virtually universal phenomenon, racism, arguably, is a historical construction with a traceable career covering the period between the fourteenth century and the twenty first. As we have argued before, xenophobia like genocide is ancient, but at the same time had undergone changes during the pre-modern and modern periods. Like war, genocide changes its face over time.

Therefore we should never forget how close racism is to genocide. It serves as a wellspring or as a main source for its practical formation. One could say that racism exists when one ethnic group or historical collectivity dominates, excludes, or seeks to eliminate another on the basis of differences that it believes are hereditary and unalterable. The French philosopher Pierre-Andre Taguieff has even renamed racism/xenophobia ‘heterophobia’

Up to now in this chapter we have discussed the possible links between colonialism and modern genocide, the state's role in the perpetrating of modern genocide, and racism's role in the ideological sustenance of modern genocide. It is now time to say a word or two about the role of Utopianism in genocides in the modern era.

Vast Utopian ambitions coupled with racist ideologies unified much of the mental landscape within which modern genocides occurred. Indeed it underlined the key tension withing genocidal

regimes, the one between the grand promises of the future and overwhelming, systematic political violence.

In almost all genocidal regimes, the drive for the creation of a "new man" and a "new woman" were prevalent.

National rebirth often through primordial rites of blood and fire were to guarantee the birth of the Utopian society.

It was radical Utopian thinking, often with roots in Nietzschean philosophy, that supported striving towards the "superman".

Ultimately, the nation became the focal point of all Utopian pursuits, for racial-anthropological purity and racial/hygienic health.

‘Cleansing’ thus became implicitly or explicitly a crucial part of the solution and the vehicle for a Utopian future.

Finally, for this chapter, we should discuss as a somewhat practical matter the necessary condition of war for the carrying out of genocide.

As we have mentioned before war and genocide have much in common. Indeed while one can have war without strictly speaking committing genocide, the reverse, after much research, seems increasingly unlikely.

What then is the connection between war and genocide?

At its most general war and the subsequent domestic upheaval that it causes opens the triple floodgates of "opportunity" "license" and "chaos". Simply put, everyday norms and taboos become easier to break. Violations of common human decency become the norm rather than the exception. For many scholars, then, war ranks as genocide’s greatest single enabling factor.

In the twentieth-century, for some regimes (and for all genocidal regimes) war became the substitute for democratic participation. Regimes encouraged the racially elect to pillage and purge, which made people complicit with the regime's policies.

In the twentieth-century, for some regimes (and for all genocidal regimes) war became the substitute for democratic participation. Regimes encouraged the racially elect to pillage and purge, which made people complicit with the regime's policies. There can be no doubt that genocide developed at moments of severe crisis both domestically and internationally. Wars in particular created grave insecurities but also provided revolutionary elites with grand opportunities for asserting their powers and reshaping their populations.

If state formation, imperialism, war, and social revolution are genocide's "four horsemen," then war and genocide might be described as Siamese twins. The intimate bond between the two is evident from the twentieth-century record alone. All three of the century's "classic" genocides – against Armenians in Turkey, Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, and Tutsis in Rwanda – occurred in a context of civil and/or international war

As Jacques Sémelin has said: "War's special trick is to push to incandescence the imaginaire of fear . . . It is "them" or "us." In the name of this security dilemma, everything becomes justifiable."

### Chapter Three

#### Enlightenment, Modernity, and Genocide Reconsidered

So far we have seen that modern genocide, as opposed to ancient genocide occurs under specific conditions. Among these conditions are a strong, mobilizing state, a state of war engendering an environment of extreme insecurity and brutalization, and a racist-eliminationist ideology

buttressed by utopist visions of a future society. These conditions, with the exception of war and its consequences are indeed modern. However they are a far cry from more universalist claims suggesting that the root of modern genocides lie within modernity itself and or the Enlightenment. Such claims have overemphasized a Weberian focus on rationality and bureaucracy, while totally overlooking what is perhaps the most important aspect of Enlightenment; political liberalism and the crucial conception of the rights of man which underpin it.

At the outset, I would like to point to a trend in European intellectual thought that is nothing if not old. Almost a hundred and seventy years old to be exact. It usually goes under the name of "declinism". Its thesis has always been the same: the immanent collapse of Western civilization.

The explanatory problem here is clear. According to the various thinkers which have represented this trend of thought for almost two centuries, the West is always living on borrowed time. This despite the fact that during all that time science and technology, belief in democracy, the rights of the individual, the rule of law, as well as free-market capitalism and the private ownership of property have taken hold of more and more corners of the globe than ever before. Clearly then, over the course of nearly two centuries, Western ideas and institutions have not only not collapsed but have enjoyed an unprecedented global expansion.

It is important to emphasize that much of Declinism and Cultural Pessimism took place in a very specific cultural/historical milieu: Modern Germany. Indeed, it will be argued that there is a straight intellectual line to be drawn from Nietzsche, Burckhardt, Spengler, Husserl, Heidegger, Adorno, Marcuse and finally, even, Bauman. They all directly or indirectly were effected by the visions, pretensions, and predilections of a profound cultural pessimism that permeated the life, politics, and culture of modern Germany.

In some ways, we could argue that the true father of all Declinism and Cultural Pessimism was Rousseau. It was he who argued that man's exit from nature was the original Fall and that all

subsequent civilization was the true "barbarization". It is an idea that was to underline much of Western thought, particularly in cultural anthropology.

In stark contrast to Rousseau stands Hegel. Hegel believed that all History was a progress towards an inevitable goal which was Reason's own idea of freedom. Man and civil society in Hegel's view were progressing stage by stage in an inevitable upward spiral of self-understanding. Freedom was History's goal and thereby the ever greater self-empowering of man. It is no wonder then that the Frankfurt School was "compelled" to give Hegel up--he could not fit their world-view of decay that had revealed modernity and progress to be the 'true' harbingers of barbarity. We, however, have not given him up so much as transformed him as will be explained more fully in chapter four.

Yet another cultural force that was to drive pessimistic and declinist analyses was the enduring legacy of Romanticism. Here was a cultural movement which idealized the past, doubted the present, and despaired of the future. Romanticism's pose was of man alienated from himself and his own time. In the nineteenth century it was fed not only by the experience of the French Revolution but also, crucially, by the failed revolutions of 1848. In a sense we could say that much of the spirit of pessimism was a product of frustrated political and social ambitions as quashed by quasi-feudal regimes all over Europe. In effect then, it was not modernism that was the problem, but a lack thereof: in particular a lack of true democratic political liberalism that was one of the deep systemic problems of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This combination of what we can call a culture of "deep Romanticism" and a structural lack of political modernism or rationality of expression (the stalling of Hegel's historical "march of freedom through the world") was to prove a breeding ground for the next phase of cultural pessimism which was obsessed with all kinds of ideas concerning 'decline' and, now ominously, degeneracy. It was here that ideas of volkisch nationalism, neo-Gobinian vitalism, and racial eugenics were to thrive and expand. Importantly, although these ideas were born in the modern world and sometimes called upon modern

terms and concepts, they were decidedly anti-modern and anti-Enlightenment in tone and meaning, often rabidly so.

Another crucial concept buttressing the general trend of declinism and cultural pessimism stemmed yet again from modern Germany. This time a crucial distinction was drawn between the forces of "Zivilization" and "Kultur". The former was seen as superficial and materialistic, the latter as transcendent, organic and whole. It was mirrored in the concept of "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft" which offered a distinction between modern society's creation of an industrial, commercial civilization which supported "Zivilization" and the farming, traditional village communities which were at the heart of "Kultur" and all that was allegedly vital in the "soul" of a nation. Clearly, a more potent protest against the forces of both technological or social progress could hardly be proffered. Progress or "Zivilization" was seen as soul-destroying, alienating, and just plain anti-life. This was a strain of thought that would lead in many directions, one of which was the Frankfurt's school classic anti-Enlightenment work entitled the "Dialectic of Enlightenment".

An aside should be made now to discuss how Marxism fits into this intellectual tradition of pessimism and decay. Clearly, at least on the surface, Marxism is a progressive creed. True to its Hegelian roots it sees History as progressing through stages the culmination of which is the liberation of man through his mastering of the social and economic forces which had hitherto dominated him. It is a gospel of man's full realization of himself. On the other hand, there is not just a little pessimism in Marx's work. Similar to Nietzsche, Spengler, and others, Marx sees the current historical figure of the bourgeois as "historically" bankrupt and is not loathe to attack him both morally and spiritually, although a professed materialist. Similarly to other authors already discussed, the present situation, which is symbolized by the economic and social relations of capitalism is one of impending doom. It is a system racing to its apocalyptic climax. A furious and violent end which will herald the beginning of a new civilization based on entirely new relations yielding up a "new man" historically prepared for the "new society". Here progress and pessimism are epically mixed. Thus it was to prove easy for later

day Marxists to pick up on the later note of pessimism, particularly after Marx's predictions stubbornly refused to come true. All this within a general culture of pessimism and declinism, materially driven, as we said earlier, by the impotency or entire lack of appropriately modern political and social institutions; especially in a lopsidedly modern Germany as we shall see.

Another "Master of Suspicion" who was to have a crucial ideological role to play in many of the genocidal and violent acts of the twentieth century was certainly Friedrich Nietzsche. However, in all fairness to Nietzsche, it should be noted that his, particularly by way of Spengler, was an expurgated version as prepared by Nietzsche's sister and Wagner's wife. Nietzsche became the fountainhead of thought for racialist, volkisch pessimism of all kinds, as well as strident nationalism. An historical outcome which the original Nietzsche would have despised. Ultimately, the "will to power" thus became an idea to justify all kinds of aggression both at home and abroad.

At this point we should begin to emphasize what already has become somewhat apparent and that is that much of German and European thought of the nineteenth and the first third of the twentieth century was in revolt against Enlightenment and, indeed, earlier Humanist values. A dark thread of declinism, cultural pessimism, and apocalyptic utopianism runs through figures as diverse as Marx, Burckhardt, Nietzsche, Spengler, Adorno, Benjamin, Freud, Heidegger, Fromm, and Marcuse. German culture was a reactionary hot-house that was building in potential for at least 70 years until it exploded. To say that it was the culmination of Enlightenment thought is at best a grave distortion, a case of self-willed blindness, a set of guilty delusions, and at worst a disingenuous intellectual absurdity. In the end, it was also to prove a self-made intellectual dead end.

It is worth reemphasizing that among the themes most precious to the cultural pessimists of the nineteenth and twentieth-century was opposition to liberal/Enlightenment ideas such as limited government, human rights, and, especially, the free market. Thinkers, whether of the left or the right, were united in the idea that laissez-faire capitalism was a mortal threat to the very essence of man. In the words of Werner Sombart, it set up and perpetuated a world of "Lug und Trug" pandering to the

basest instincts of man, finally locking him up in the souless "Iron Cage" of Max Weber's bureaucratic civilization.

Stemming from Nietzsche, and through him Heraclitus, with an added dose of Social Darwinism, the idea of "struggle" seized the imagination of the cultural/political elite of Germany and through them to the middle-classes and working-classes. Mann spoke of Germany standing against the world-entente of civilization, Ernst Haeckel spoke of the immanent destruction of the weak by which he meant the bourgeois civilization of the West. "War as the father of all" was the Heraclitean fragment by which whole generations were taught to believe and idealize. Within this cultural context, we should not be surprised at all that Hitler's most famous book was entitled "My Struggle"; in this he was very much in the mainstream of the German thought of his time. Indeed, he was a 'natural' expression of it. The dark fruit of cultural pessimism and antagonistic reactionism had come to ripen.

The Frankfurt School, independent of its self-professed 'Marxism', was as much a product of its time and cultural environment as were their intellectual antagonists. Indeed, they shared many viewpoints despite their hatred for one another. Drinking deep from the well of the cultural pessimism that surrounded them, the Frankfurt School was against mass democracy as an aspect of true, political freedom; it was against technology and positivist science which they thought destroyed the human soul; it was against industrial capitalism which they viewed as the destroyer of "Gemeinschaft" and, finally, and seemingly most important for them, they were against the cultural products of modernity which they felt were the true signs of the end of the West and the emblems of man's enslavement to a "Zivilization" of "Lug und Trug". These ideas were shared by the radical right. It is thus impossible not to see the theses of the Frankfurt School as a particular cultural product of a particular nation and era rather than a universalist prescription for "all" that is "wrong" with "Zivilization" and the "West". There is more here of Nietzsche and of Spengler than there is of Marx, more than their founders would have liked to admit.

Like the many cultural pessimists before them and since them, the Frankfurt School saw the Western World as coming to an end, as a rotten and twisted example of "Zivilization", as something (Nietzsche) that had to be "overcome". They never once thought that perhaps their viewpoint was being determined more from their specific cultural milieu rather than from inexorable, intrinsic, and universalistic principles. In short they took a leap of smugness; they mistook Germany for the world.

As is well known, the Frankfurt School attributed the horrendous events of the 30's and 40's not to particular cultural and historical contingencies and anti-Enlightenment philosophies (as we are attempting to do here) but to an alleged universalist cause that inhered in liberal capitalism generally and in Enlightenment thinking.

Similar to Spengler's "Faustian spirit of the West", the Frankfurt school attributed the catastrophe in Germany to an alleged spirit of absolute control and domination which drove Western civilization in particular and an impulse towards total integration. They did not see, or want to admit, that what happened in Nazi Germany, was not happening in the traditionally liberal states of the West: France, England, and the US. The Frankfurt school focused far too much, in the spirit of Max Weber, on issues concerning bureaucratization, rationalization, and technology. Missing altogether the very essence of liberal and Enlightenment thinking which had to do with political liberalism and its underlying conception of human rights. But like other cultural pessimists they obviously thought that the political traditions of the West had not much, if any merit. In this, their analysis falls far short of what is necessary and reveals their own blindness as to what actually occurred in their home country. A country without real democrats on either the left or the right or among almost any of the social classes of the time.

Yet Horkheimer and Adorno went even further than liberal capitalism and went back to the origins of Western Civilization where they alleged to have found the root cause of liberal bourgeois civilization's decline. They declared that the West suffered from a peculiar surfeit of rationality and reason. And that the Enlightenment was not about Reason at all, but concealed its real agenda which

was preoccupied with the pursuit of power over nature and human beings. For them, there was a straight historical line connecting the ancient Greeks to the Nazis.

Thus, the chief rationale of the Enlightenment, was a technological one which led to total domination and created a totalitarian society. Science and progress are the twin horsemen of the cultural apocalypse of both Europe and the world. The Enlightenment is the deadly tool of those who would seek to completely annihilate the other. There is no mention of the political and social aspect of the Enlightenment as represented by Thomas Paine or the American Federalists. The focus is on instrumental rationality.

However, on the face of it, it would be hard to justify such claims when Nazi-Germany was the self-professed enemy of all that was Enlightenment and was offering a stark alternative view of Western culture and its future. At the very least, the Nazis saw themselves as champions of "Kultur" and negators of "Zivilization". Such a view was dismissed by the Frankfurt School.

This neglect of the political by the Frankfurt school is characteristic. Rather than analyzing this crucial category of society, the Frankfurt school routinely dismissed it and rhetorically collapsed it within their cultural concerns. Yet, it was here, in the political that the fatal flaw in their analysis was to show itself.

As concerns the causes of genocide, the Frankfurt school, in this paper's estimation was wide of the mark. As we have seen, the occurrence of Genocide is decidedly not a modern phenomenon. It is most definitely not an outcome of either modern society and, still less, Enlightenment thinking. Modern cases of genocide (but not all of them) do share some modernist traits such as a mobilizing state, an external condition of warfare, and a racist-eliminationist, totalizing, utopist ideology. But the Frankfurt School dismissed Nazi-Ideology and the state of German society as irrelevant. Most absurdly of all, they seemed to strongly imply that antisemitism had no role to play in the events that took place between 1933 to 1945. Such thinking led them to construct crude analogies between

German and American societies, analogies utterly deaf to the distinct political, social, and historical differences between them.

Almost obscenely, the Frankfurt School suggested that the Holocaust was nothing out of the ordinary since we, all, in the West were/are living a Holocaust of the Everyday. In their drive to discredit all of Western Civilization, these thinkers added nothing to our understanding of Genocide in general, or the Holocaust in particular.

On the human side however, it is immanently understandable why German intellectuals would seek to shift the blame for some of the worst calamities in Western history onto a general "system". If the whole was rotten, then surely a particular expression of it was not to blame. Humanely understandable, absolutely. But it does not excuse a serious intellectual disservice to generations to come.

Another claim of the anti-Enlightenment school of thought is that bureaucracy and bureaucratization had much to do with the creation of the Holocaust. This is simply mistaking a tool with the tool user. Bureaucracy is an organizing tool. It does what the society within which it is embedded wants it to do. In the Nazi case, it helped organize mass murder. In many other cases it delivers social security checks and child support payments. Just as a knife can be used to slice butter, or slit a neighbor's throat a tool's use depends on the motivations and outlook of the user. The really interesting question then is: why did bureaucracy function differently in the USA, United Kingdom, France, and Nazi Germany? The answer of course is that these nations operated on different political and social values. One was motivated by a murderous anti-Enlightenment ideology, while the others continued and developed the traditions of political liberalism and human rights.

Most recently, Zygmunt Bauman has followed in the footsteps of the Frankfurt school. His arguments are much the same, even identical. He blames the Holocaust on modernity and the ideas of the Enlightenment. Science, bureaucratization, instrumental rationality, and an urge to organize and dominate are the ultimate reasons for the darkest outcome of the twentieth-century. His arguments are

by and large almost exactly the same as the Frankfurt school's before him and, not surprisingly, our counter-arguments are the same too.

Like the Frankfurt School, Bauman vastly underplays the role that the hatred of Jews and a comprehensive ideology of antisemitism played in the Holocaust. The unique character of German society under the Nazis with its murderous ideology drove the extermination process in spite of an instrumentally governed administrative system not because of it.

Indeed, the irrational lengths that the Nazi regime would go to fulfill its ideological mission are almost breathtaking. The extermination of the Jews was never either rational or economic from the point of view of the regime or their war effort. The policy of extermination cost the regime precious time and economic and military resources that could have been far better used in the war effort. At the very least, the German economy suffered from the massive project of the elimination of the Jews and, in more general terms, the irrational world vision of the Nazis cost them the winning of the war. One might have to only ask what would have happened had the Nazis been an "ordinary" or "standard" national-dictatorial regime which not only employed but rewarded its German Jewish scientists for advances made in nuclear research? This historical counter-factual bears thinking about.

To further the point, Nazi ideology was not only irrational, it was fervently anti-rational. It hearkened back to a mythical pre-Christian past, adopted romantic ideas about nature and a way of life according to its mystical dictates, and most of all, similar to all cultural pessimism, it encouraged a messianic view that the end of the world was nigh and that a titanic struggle between "races" was at hand.

The Nazis had nothing but contempt for rationalism and despised the Enlightenment. They were at pains to emphasize the difference between a "Weltanschauung" or "World View" and a "Welt-an-Denken" or "Thinking about the world". In the first the Nazis relished the idea of a direct and spontaneous experience of the world, while in the latter they denigrated the Western bourgeois man's penchant for reasoning and analyzing. For the Nazis there was no analysis only direct action.

It should be recalled here that, generally, the "project of modernity" is linked to the Enlightenment and Immanuel Kant's injunction to "free one-self from self-incurred immaturity". Initially, Enlightenment stood against prejudice and the tyranny of ancient custom. It challenged authority of all sorts, particularly the universal church. It sought scientific progress, the rational investigation of society, politics, and ethics, all of which brought hope to large swathes of society that previously had none on this earth.

Without a doubt the case of Rwanda is a serious blow to Modernity as being the ultimate culprit for genocide. In Rwanda, one million people were exterminated in twelve weeks. This is a rate of killing that exceeds by a wide margin the allegedly "modern" Nazi Holocaust. Not only is Rwanda more modern chronologically, it also was carried out by people using relatively primitive agricultural implements. No scientific or technical experts were involved. The killing was often face to face and public. No official policy of secrecy was implemented. No special or specific "distancing" strategies were used. What, however, was crucial was the Hutu's ideology of hate; just as in the German case, as I have tried to argue.

We might take a moment now and step back and see where we have been. We have argued that genocide is old, at least as old as war itself. We have also argued that some distinctions can be made between ancient occurrences of genocide and more modern ones. In recent genocides, a mobilizing state, a state of war/emergency, and racialist-eliminationist ideologies often coupled with utopist aspirations had a crucial role to play. Most recently we have categorically rejected the idea that the project of modernity, Enlightenment thought, and or science are the root causes for genocide's occurrence. Rather, we have suggested that cultural, social, historical, and perhaps most importantly, political variables, structures, and attitudes have had a much greater role to play on whether or not genocide takes place. For the most part, we have used modern Germany as an example tacitly sticking close to many critics' idea of German history as an example of a special historical path or *Sonderweg*. Some prominent members of this school of thought include the sociologist Ralph Dahrendorf, the

historian Fritz Fischer (who coined the phrase), the political scientist Jeffery Herf and, to some extent, the philosopher Jurgen Habermas to name but a few.

At this point, for the sake of additional clarity, we might bring up and modify George Orwell's famous essay on Gandhi. Let us ask, as George Orwell did, would a Gandhi be possible in a Nazi controlled Europe/world? The answer of course was no. The difference between the British Empire and the Nazi "New World Order" was extreme. As Niall Ferguson has recently put it, the British Empire always had a "self-liquidating" character about it; for once its possessions acquired the rule of law, liberal political institutions, a workable free-market, and a relatively impartial administrative bureaucracy it could not contradict its founding political principles for long and deny its charges that which they eventually so longed for: complete self determination. Such an outlook is based firmly, on basic Enlightenment principles particularly as expressed by Montesquieu, Spinoza, Locke, Hume, Smith, Paine, and the Federalists to name but a few. In stark contradiction to this tradition, we find the Nazi world view dividing the world up between "master" and "slave" nations; an inherited non-negotiable 'genetic' status.

At the risk of belaboring the point, one should pick up on Dan Stone's notable analysis of the Nazi genocide as an example of "transgressive" violence that had, at its roots, a lethal combination of "mystical" antisemitism, political conspiracy theories, and "fantasy" thinking. For Stone, this archetypal example of modern genocide had very little, if anything, to do with the logic of reason, Foucault's "Bio-power", or the "Dialectic of Enlightenment". For Stone, the historical tragedy of the Holocaust was a result of a culture saturated with racial fantasies.

Crucially, Stone goes on to say that modernity was the setting for genocide but not its driving force. Thus, in the German case, bureaucratic involvement may have been considerable and essential but it was not the locus from which the Holocaust was born. In the end, though, according to Stone and this paper's major argument, bureaucracy was placed at the service of the Nazi world view and not the other way around.

In the final analysis, no form of economic or any other kind of "rationality" can account for the destruction of the Jews. The immense trouble that the Nazi regime went through, during a time of existential crisis, to hunt down the Jews of Rhodes, Crete, and Southern France belie any kind of ends-means rationality, indeed it bespeaks of a vast and deep fanaticism.

To conclude, we may say, along with Stone, that the German case evinces the "trappings" of modernity: bureaucracy, organization, and technology but does not, thereby, account for the origin of the idea to murder the Jews.

Perhaps one of the more fruitful ways of interpreting Nazism and other genocidal movements is as a political religion. This way of understanding has a long and distinguished pedigree going back to such figures as Eric Voegelin, Carl Schmitt, Raymond Aron, and Jules Monnerot. It has recently been popularized by Emilio Gentile and Michael Burleigh.

Seen in this way, Nazism, but not only Nazism, can be seen as an ideology which gave new meaning to German society and culture. In the mix was national prestige, old fears of racial degeneration, international conspiracies, and the momentous rebirth of community. Yet the shared utopian goal of rebirth was key. The murder of the Jews was the requisite sacrifice for such.

Indeed, Nazism was not just an attempt to create a Nazi Empire in Europe. It was also not just an attempt to reorganize Europe along racial lines. Although it was all these things, it was something more. In the words of Yehuda Bauer, it was a "total rebellion against Western civilization".

It was the apogee of an ideology which idealized and attempted to realize the epitome of anti-rationalist thought of "thinking with the blood".

As we already mentioned, Emilio Gentile has repopularized fascism's interpretation as a political religion. Gentile sees fascism as a "sacralization of politics". As a fusion between the political and the sacred producing an eschatological vision of salvation for the national community. Importantly, a political religion such as fascism seeks to displace traditional forms of faith. It tries to

go beyond any kind of conflict of values, providing a solid and comfortable framework for rebirth and deliverance.

Although genocide is ancient, and modernity was not its ultimate cause, it was reformulated by humanity's transition from the pre-modern to the modern. A part of that transition took place under formal conditions of imperialism buttressed by the new ideology of social Darwinism.

Social Darwinism was certainly an influential line of thought in the European Age of Imperialism. It strongly implied that the natural "struggle for survival" was occurring at a national level between peoples and different races. It gave the nation-state a new and dangerous racial understanding of itself. This type of thinking cut across class and national lines. It was a European wide phenomenon. It was certainly a phase of European history, but not necessarily a "destiny". Social Darwinist thought did not doom Europe to become genocidal, indeed no such thing happened in Britain and/or France. Again, England and France's continued adherence and belief in political liberalism as developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries precluded such an outcome as would occur in Germany where Enlightenment thought, practice, and, especially, institutions were weaker. In a pluralistic society, there can be many competing beliefs, some of them pernicious, what there cannot be, at least not for long, is one uncontested undisputed paradigm. Modernity has gone through many phases, and most probably will go through many more. One of its historical phases, precipitated in part by Darwin's discoveries and their misapplication, we can now term "racialist" or perhaps more accurately, if somewhat exaggeratedly, as "The Age of Social Darwinism". It was a phase/era that was to have its dramatic end in 1945. As one observer put it, "Hitler gave racism a bad name".

In addition to this, Social Darwinism provided a dangerous critique of liberal thought and its institutions. The essential liberal idea of human equality came under attack from Social Darwinist ideas of biological inequality. There was a drive to construct society along more "natural" lines more suited to the "survival of the fittest". Thus, the pseudo-science of "negative eugenics" was born. It flew in the face, not only of political liberalism as such but also was in revolt against traditional forms

of Christian morality, Renaissance Humanism, and any hint of sentimentalism. In a word, it was an undermining and destabilizing element in European civilization from the start.

Much of what we have already said has not inconsiderable back up from the "modern conscience of Germany" the philosopher, Jurgen Habermas. Habermas, too, has argued that the German outcome was due to its not following the historical path of both France and England. That German culture and society was too particularistic and only thinly universalist. That Germans were in the grip of viewing themselves as culturally and ethnically unique. And that all this led to a stunted, lopsided growth not allowing it to mature into a modern nation-state. Finally, we are also in agreement with him that in order to insure that no other historical monstrosity occurs we must practice ever more cosmopolitanism, support constitutional patriotism, and endeavor to buttress such extraterritorial constructs as the European Union. In short, we must continue to be good liberal democrats in the traditional sense of the word embracing what is best in traditional Enlightenment thought.

Yet perhaps Jeffery Herf and Ralf Dahrendorf represent our thesis most adequately. Simply put, in modern Germany and elsewhere where genocide took place the bourgeoisie, political liberalism, and the Enlightenment were weak. While in England and France the state was associated with democracy and equality, in Germany it continued along illiberal and authoritarian paths. In Germany, rapid industrialization took place within "the inherited structures of the dynastic state of Prussia". A situation that gave little leeway for political and economic liberalism.

Thus German society was only "partially", never "fully" enlightened. Horkheimer and Adorno overlooked this fact and projected Germany's problems into "dilemmas of modernity per se". Therefore they wrongly blamed the totalizing strength of the Enlightenment when, really, it was its relative weakness that was to blame. In the words of Jeffery Herf: this unique combination of industrial development and a weak liberal tradition was the social background for reactionary modernism.

## Chapter Four

### Is Hegelianism One of Genocide's Victims?

Like Hegel before me, I am in fundamental agreement with him that we must understand history as it is and not as we would have liked it to be. After all, to understand is not necessarily to condone. Of course this is but one interpretation of events which the reader, in the end, can either accept, partially agree to, or reject altogether.

To be an Hegelian is to both practice a method and espouse a vision. The method is profoundly entwined with the practice of what I call "deep history" or what Hegel called "comprehended history" (*begriffne Geschichte*). In Hegelian terms History is not "one damn thing after another".

For Hegel, History has meaning, deep meaning. It is profoundly teleological. History develops through a series of complex contradictions, far more complex than the famously misunderstood thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis model (a model which Hegel more often than not scoffed at).

We can start to apprehend that the motor of Hegelian History as opposed to mere contingent history is what Hegel calls the world-spirit or world-mind (the German contains both senses of spirit and mind, *die Weltgeist*). World-spirit/mind is the history of man's true, rational comprehension of himself which culminates in the social-political recognition of each and every man as free and worthy of recognition as a man. Thus, the primary goal of man's history (as opposed to the history of nature) is his rational self-realization of both his inner and outer freedom.

Within this interpretation is the important observation that not all events, epochs, eras, individuals of history are of importance. Some are merely contingent and pass in and out of history without great meaning, such as the conflicts between the Habsburgs and the Bourbons . Others are of the greatest importance for the advancement of humanity towards its most innermost truth and logic

(that each man is free and thereby worthy of recognition). As Hegel stated in his *Philosophy of Mind/Spirit*:

"When individuals and nations have once got in their heads the abstract concept of full-blown liberty, there is nothing like it in its uncontrollable strength, just because it is the very essence of mind, and that as its very actuality."

In everything that Hegel says, it is crucial to understand that for him, as for Aristotle, man is rational. The path he takes is rational. Even when, at first or even second, or third glance, such as the First World War, historical events may appear absurd or profoundly irrational; yet the Hegelian philosopher armed with his conception of deep History and his analytical method of historical contradictions may well find meaning where others have found none.

Yet, what does Hegel mean when he discusses the contradictions of history, or put more traditionally the dialectic of history? For Hegel, the self-understanding of man evolves through contradictory movements through history. For example, a self-understanding of oneself as a Christian in the middle ages would involve, among other things, the attribution of all the qualities of man posited in a supernatural being, such as God. Such an understanding would produce for centuries a conscious state known as the "unhappy consciousness" since all of man's qualities are projected outwards onto an imagined all-powerful object, leaving man empty as a power unto himself. In this state, man does not recognize that he is the author of his own destiny. He is profoundly cut off from the nature of his being. He is fundamentally unfree in his belief and actions.

This state of affairs is disrupted by the appearance of a "world-historical" figure, in this case, Martin Luther who, motivated by his own reasons, brings to being a new epoch which was contingently available in his time. In other words, if it had not been Martin Luther, somebody else in his time would have apprehended the historical situation as it truly was, which in this case was the rupture with Rome and the purely objective understanding of man's relationship to the divine and the consequent

deepening of self-reflective conscious space which Hegel calls "interiority" or the birth of the modern subjective space which began with Socrates and culminates, in principle, with the French Revolution.

At this point, a word or two should be said about the role "world-historical" figures play in the resolving of the contradictions inherent in the movement of History. As we have just said, "world-historical" figures such as Alexander, Caesar, Martin Luther, and Napoleon for example grasp to its fullest the concrete possibilities of their age. In other words, a particular age/epoch had spiritually, intellectually through the actions of man (self-embodied spirit/mind), reached a fruition point or moment of potentiality in which it was ripe for change/transformation. Thus, it was not important if someone named Martin Luther had grasped the age's inherent dynamic, if it had not been him someone else would have. The particular individual is of secondary importance, the fact that the age itself is rife with contradictions that must be resolved is the important part.

An historical illustration or two may serve here. As is well known in the history of science, both Leibniz and Newton appear to have, almost at the same time, discovered the calculus; history as a matter of temporal fact has awarded the honor to Newton, yet, obviously, it could be said that the concrete historical availability of the discovery was at hand. The same story could be told of Darwin and the less known English naturalist, Alfred Wallace (whose own independent discovery of the laws of natural selection prompted Darwin to publish his own somewhat earlier research).

World-historical individuals are motivated by their own passions and interests, yet they, unknowingly, serve or better yet, resolve, the contradictions of their own age. This is Hegel's famous "cunning of reason". For instance, Napoleon may have crowned himself Emperor, a seemingly reactionary fact which was only made possible through the deaths of millions, but he also, through the movement of his mass armies (itself an historical first) spread the ideas of the French Revolution throughout Europe. In the bleakest of terms, we could rightly say that Napoleon was indeed a pathologically egotistical "mass murderer" who nevertheless furthered the cause of humanity's self-realization of its true essence and potentiality. To be sure this is without question a heartbreaking

observation about the dialectic of history and the way historical contradictions are resolved, but, alas, they appear to be true.

In a word, it is, as it often is among the best of scientific theories, highly counter-intuitive that absolutely dreadful events in the history of humanity should have had highly positive results. But as Hegel noted above, while we are morally outraged by the paths history has taken and the oftentimes despicable men who have led its charge, we are, nevertheless, forced to acknowledge the cruel ironic nature of the reality of History.

Before we leave the subject of the dialectic it should be stressed that "the negation of the negation" is nothing more than a new challenge towards what currently is, the given, leading to a resolution of the old given through a new self-reflection or social action thereby creating something altogether new which contains both terms while, at the same time, resolving contradictions within each of the terms themselves. In this technical, logical way, history moves into new ages discarding some things standing in the way of its higher self-realization, while preserving other elements that do not stand in the way of its ultimate development.

Now we have come to the part of our chapter which begins its most controversial aspect and task: that of using the Hegelian philosophy of History as the main interpretive tool for the twentieth-century with a view, in particular, to its connection to racist beliefs, practices, and extreme outcomes such as genocide.

The historical matter of fact is that, as we discussed in chapter two, the "West" was neither as free, noble, or progressive as it would like to imagine itself to have been vis a vis its historical internal nemesis Germany. In short, the "West" from approximately 1860 to 1913 was a place rife with intellectual, spiritual, social and political contradictions many of which were barriers to the "world-spirit's" aim of individual freedom and self-respect.

The Western world of this time, as we have discussed in chapter two, was intellectually, and for the most part (with notable exceptions such as John Stuart Mill), spiritually racist, chauvinist, classist

(particularly in England and Germany), social-Darwinist, imperialistic, misogynist, and anti-homosexual. These attitudes translated themselves, materially, in the various institutions of colonialism as well as racial segregation policies (the American "negro" question, as one notable example) and including the medical practice of eugenics in the form of sterilization if not murder. In addition, this was a world where the old feudal/aristocratic elites and their institutions were still very much alive as well as revived in imperialist beliefs and practices as well as ultra-nationalist ideas and parties. Indeed, perhaps most importantly, the old feudal/aristocratic elites had successfully inculcated the middle and lower classes in their "Culture of Honor" which was an extensive social and political belief system which encompassed romantic notions of gendered behavior under the twin notions of "Chivalry" for men, and "Chastity" for women. Furthermore, the concept of honor was not just an idea, but had very serious historical repercussions such as being a major ideal/material factor in the outbreak of World War One, through the romanticizing of war/conflict/ and normative notions of masculinity. The historical literature is rife with European elites', as well as the classes below them, near obsession with national rank, honor, glory and, from time to time, the necessity to defend their women's sexual reputation. As Mark Girouard remarked: "Opinions will always differ as to whether the Great War could or should have been prevented. But one conclusion is undeniable: the ideals of chivalry worked with one accord in favour of war."

Keeping the above quote in mind, it is impossible to agree with one of the Twentieth-century's greatest, if highly controversial, historian Niall Ferguson when he argued in his famous counter-factual account of the causes of the First World War (in *The Pity of War*) that it would have been, rationally speaking, in the interests of Great Britain to have stayed out of that War to have been an utterly unhistorical conception. It is to have missed what was essential about the period, and that was its precocious material progress which was not matched by an equally precocious understanding of its spiritual possibilities. In short, this was a world that had achieved great technical progress while not recognizing or being able to widely realize the necessary ethical and moral opinions to have made that

achievement less dangerous. Rather, on the contrary, the survival, or revival, of older moral and ethical conceptions and ideas such as "chivalry" was the "determinate negation" that was to give the lie to that unbalanced self-perception of the age and confront it with the horror of the truth in the form of the trenches of World War One, where not only millions died, but a conception of civilization too was buried. In a word, for the West, real modern war had to reveal the falseness of the earlier concept of the "chivalrous" war, and in this sense World War One, or something like it, was inevitable. Ironically, in the fashion of Hegel, it was the first step, but only a first step, to learning the virtues of a modern peace.

As we noted in Chapter three, reactionary modernism was a partially modern view of the world which focused on the technical, scientific potentialities available to the modern world while refusing to accept the political, social, and even, to some extent, economic teachings of what the preeminent historian, Jonathan Israel, has termed "the Radical Enlightenment". In short, according to this view, breakthroughs in physics were fine, the "Rights of Man" not so much.

If the First World War put a formal end to three Empires (the Hapsburg, Wilhelmine, and Ottoman) and shook the "Culture of Honor" it did not thereby, completely break it, and the elites which continued to support it. Indeed, in that most famous of unstable political creations after the "Great War", the Weimar Republic, it was rightly said of it that it was a "democracy without democrats". As Hegel had noted long before, in his explanation of why Napoleon was unsuccessful in setting up a constitutional monarchy in the Spain of his time, the Weimar Republic was an "alien" construct that was imposed from without and had not been a historically contingent product from within. Democracy for Germany was an external wish, which had very few, true supporters among a large swathe of the population of the time. This historical feeling was encapsulated by the oft repeated phrase of the era "Everything was better under the Kaiser".

Indeed, elsewhere in Europe the "Culture of Honor" continued as did the negative impediments to freedom which we had mentioned at the outset: racialism, imperialism, chauvinism and all its

grotesque institutional and ideational permutations. Thus, the world of pre-1914 had been seriously wounded, but not mortally so. And similar to all living things which are wounded and facing possible annihilation, because it should always be remembered that the "World-Spirit/Mind" is a living concrete, embodied thing made by the actions of men and women in history; the ideational forces of the old-world were to make one last irrational, cataclysmic stand for its understanding of itself and its hoped for promulgation into the future.

We should take a necessary side step here and mention that some of the nature and character of the transitory qualities of the world-spirit/mind between the two-world wars was captured in the literature of the time by Ford Madox Ford, Heinrich Mann, Robert Musil, and Ferdinand Celine as well as in the great inter-war film *Le Grande Illusion*.

Between 1924 and 1928 Ford Madox Ford published a series of novels which presented to the world the character of Christopher Tietjens, who is described as the last "eighteenth-century" man. Tietjens represents the landowning, aristocratic elites of pre-World War One Britain. The Great war reveals to Tietjens the contradictions between the "Georgian" facade of his society and its actual "sordid" reality. The War and its consequences reveals to Tietjens his own essential irrelevance, or put in Hegelian terms, his irrationality in relationship to the specific time and place he is living in. The ascendance of women and the withdrawal of the prevalence of men in society is also of particular note in the novel.

Heinrich Mann's book, *Der Untertan (The Loyal Subject)* completed in July 1914, but not published until 1918 reveals a preeminently Wilhelmine character called, Diederich Hessling. Hessling is a product of the patriarchal, cruel society of Wilhelmine Germany in which he becomes an archetypal nationalist of the time, marked by a fanatical devotion to Kaiser Wilhelm the II. It is notable,

among other things, in its depiction of German society's increasing susceptibility to chauvinism, jingoism, ultra-nationalism, anti-Semitism, and proto-fascism. The relationship between fathers and sons is also of note.

Robert Musil's, *Der Mann Ohne Eigenschaften (The Man Without Qualities)*, written between 1930 and 1943 is widely regarded as one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century. In this book, we are introduced to a man named Ulrich, a subject of the declining Austro-Hungarian Empire, who with acute modern analytical abilities drifts through the stream of life and is surrounded by a myriad of contradictory social and political ideas some profound, others flimsy. He can be seen as a character full of potentiality but no consequent, responsible action. The book is also notable for its varying portrayals of the disturbing side of sexuality, a Viennese specialty.

Louis-Ferdinand Celine's first novel published in 1932, *Voyage au bout de la nuit (Journey to the End of Night)* is a novel of despair and nihilism (and a fair bit of Anti-Semitism) which introduces us to the type of literary character that became prevalent after the Great War: the anti-hero; in this case Ferdinand Bardamu. It is a book of thorough going pessimism which reveals, in our context, a moment in the history of the subjective state of the "unhappy consciousness" in its extreme, not at home in its time and place and ferociously skeptical of everything that is possible in the world. A complete negation without any positive resolution. Considered a modernist masterpiece.

At last we come to one of the greatest interwar films, *Le Grande Illusion (Grand Illusion)*. This film, among other things, is unquestionably progressive while dealing with issues such as class, race, and nationality. The aristocrats portrayed in the film are seen as noble, if no longer historically viable. The film advances the notion that the future belongs to the common man, while maintaining the hope that despite this historical fact, various classes can maintain a level of understanding and humanity

between them. Interestingly enough, the film also counters anti-Semitic stereotypes prevalent at the time.

The works we have just cited bring just a taste of the varying currents and counter-currents unleashed by the Great War of 1914-1918. What many of them have in common is their hybrid nature of modernist form, with considerable preoccupation with the conscious content of the past; whether it was the Aristocracy, Masculinity, Nationalism, the changing role of women, Racism, Colonialism and other topics we have already mentioned. Yet, despite its preoccupation with the past and the immediate shock of the First World War, in each work glimmerings of simultaneously parallel as well as alternative futures were more than apparent.

And indeed, on a political level, it was in the borrowed language of the future and selected symbolism of modernity that the forces of the past were to sell itself as a viable option. For neither Nazism nor Communism, being the half-way houses or "pathological transitions" to true modernity, could ever have garnered any support unless they focused on some aspects of modernity while neglecting others. And crucially, both historical movements focused on the technical, scientific side of modernity while discounting as "useless" what they considered the corrupt and decadent "bourgeois morality" of politics, society, and, even art, that had continued to evolve in those lands which had accepted the radical Enlightenment view of themselves as once shaped and reflected, among others, in the works of Thomas Paine and John Stuart Mill.

Yet, in Hegelian terms, their projects were doomed to failure from the start if not only because they, from the outset, negated the essential nature of man which is rational, seeks equal recognition, and longs for an equal share in freedom, but because their own creations were unstable half-terms of the very thing they were trying to grasp and put to victorious use: modernity.

Both movements took half-steps to meet the modern spirit which had been developing in the nineteenth century and was only increasing in both rationality and reality after the "Great War". Seen in this way, it is no accident, that, for instance, the old elites of Germany sought to align themselves and then "control" the Nazi party; a task which they were already too pre-modern to undertake. More importantly, in this way, the oft repeated, and often puzzled about "modern" nature of Nazi Germany can be more fully understood. In Hegelian terms, Nazi Germany had partially negated the Old Wilhelmine Germany in some aspects (as a broadly based popular dictatorship rather than a traditional monarchy) but had retained many of the same attitudes of the World pre-1914: racist, imperialist, and culturally anti-Enlightenment while intensely focused on industrial/technical/scientific progress. In a sense, Nazi Germany was old-Wilhelmine Germany in a futurist uniform.

At this point, we should make one point clear. We know that Hitler considered himself a "World-historical" figure. Unfortunately for him and the world, he did not read or understand his Hegel well enough. For like all the world-historical figures before him, he was not to realize his own aims, which were a "Thousand Year Reich", but the very opposite of his aim which has always been the aim of "World-Spirit/Mind"; the promulgation of freedom and the recognition of man. In a terrible historical irony, the "Hitlerian Revolution", similar to the French revolution a century and a half before it, was to force the resolution and thereby consequent overcoming of many of the illiberal vestiges/contradictions of the West. Thus, from a Hegelian point of view, it is no accident that almost immediately after the disappearance of this uniquely evil "world-historical" figure; the processes of racial equality, minority rights, gay rights, collective security, feminism, de-colonialization, unprecedented and widespread anti-war sentiment, the first public condemnation of genocide as a historical practice, the birth of the bomb (as of this moment arguably the most important modern device directly responsible for holding in check the outbreak of global war, if not local war), the unprecedented spread of the "gentle hand of commerce", the birth of Israel (where Jews, in a Hegelian sense, achieved true recognition), the demise of the eugenicist movement, and even animal rights were

to come to the fore. The essential irrationality and irreconcilability of the Hitlerian project with contingent, historical reality removed many of the lingering ideational/material barriers to a modern world. Instead of a "Thousand Year Reich" of pain and suffering, an infinitely better, if still very imperfect; Pax Americana has arisen in its place and with it, despite all its glaring imperfections, hope for a better future open to the further, hopefully beneficial, unforeseeable meanderings of the world-spirit/mind. Contrary to the hopelessness of Adorno and the Frankfurt school who famously stated that "poetry was not possible after Auschwitz" we tentatively call the period following the "negation of the negation" (the first half of the Twentieth Century): the Auschwitz Rebound.

## Chapter Five

### Kant's Perpetual Peace in a New World Order

In the last chapter, we provocatively interpreted the 20th century as an Hegelian moment in the history of humanity. In particular, we understood the first half of the twentieth-century as undergoing a dialectic of self-awareness which, at its end, resolved many of the social and political contradictions of the latter half of the nineteenth-century. In a profound sense, the violent denouement of the first half of the last century prepared the way for the peaceful evolution of the second half. Total war, while not quite resolving itself into total peace, did however do away with some of the worst aspects of global great-power conflict. Economically, politically, and socially the years after the Second World War have delivered unprecedented stability and well-being for a record number of the earth's inhabitants, if not, unfortunately, for all of them. As we will argue, this chapter sees the first Hegelian half of the twentieth-century resolving itself into a Kantian world of, if not Perpetual Peace, then something very much like it; a fighting chance at least; a critical rational hope.

Somewhat like Hegel, Kant too had a dialectical vision of world history/destiny. The engine for history's movement, for Kant, was his concept of what he called man's "asocial-sociability". For Kant,

as for Aristotle, man was naturally a social being. But unlike Aristotle, he also was, simultaneously, an asocial being. This meant that human existence was constantly being lived within a tension of wanting to cooperate and live together as well as wanting to be left alone to enjoy ones own advantages against everybody else. In short, Kant viewed the tension between the individual for himself and the the individual for society/others as a crucial mechanism that moved history and the consciousness of humanity.

Indeed, when we reflect for just a moment on man's "asocial-sociability" we see the crux of many social, economic, and political problems down through the ages. Man is both a singular and plural entity. He wishes to enjoy himself, but finds that he cannot fully do so without the aid and cooperation of others. In a sense, he is doomed to sociality. He is preordained to cooperate. He must live with others if he is ever to have a chance to live fully at all. Thus both the task and the conundrum of human history is how to maximize individual well-being while maintaining the appropriate social and political bonds that make such living possible. This was for Kant man's ultimate destiny, the construction of a world open to individuals as ends in themselves while living in a social/political matrix that most amply provided for such a morally satisfying arrangement.

While Kant was skeptical of an individual's ability to change and evolve to a considerable extent he was more optimistic of the specie's ability to change and ameliorate both itself and its circumstances. Like Hegel after him, Kant was not naive that such amelioration would take considerable time as well as not inconsiderable setbacks and downright disasters, but indeed progress would be made because of these negative experiences and not in spite of them. For as Kant saw them, disastrous historical occurrences would gradually teach humanity where its true interests lay. And since man was at least partially a selfish, self-regarding animal he would slowly develop a social situation in which that selfish part of him would be better served by paradoxically giving up some of that selfish nature. Ironically, then, selflessness and a spirit of compromise would, in the end, better

serve the individual needs of separate people rather than a blind all encompassing struggle for total domination, an unsuccessful attempt at which was made in the middle of the twentieth-century.

Following this original Kantian insight, we could say that Kant would have been in agreement with the idea that power is better served and preserved by compromise than by total mastery. That law and order mixed with a spirit and the possibility of a modicum of individual freedom would prove to be the more stable social compact. That man, longing for a maximum of freedom, would have to concede the same to all other fellow human beings at the end of history, since it was not only morally right, but ultimately rational too. Thus, for Kant, at the end of history, perpetual peace was not an idealistic dream but a necessary outcome of the "asocial-sociability" dialectic that was the very essence of man's situation and being. It was destined to be resolved and resolved rationally and, thus, satisfactorily.

Viewed through the lens of Kant's historical vision, we can now more fully understand his stance vis a vis war. For Kant, war was always a radical attempt at a revision of the relationships between states. It was a dismal affair, not least because it was, ultimately, irrational in the long run, since the attempted revisions were always partial and, thus, unsatisfactory.

War, then, was an ancient tool that was not fully conscious of its limited rationality. Since the goal of war was to adjudicate a satisfactory situation between states, its constant repetition could not fail to reveal its woeful failing as an adequate tool for its ultimate end. Clearly, another method as well as other political arrangements would be needed to reach war's own self-professed goal: a stable, favorable arrangement between states.

For Kant, the problem would be solved not at a structural level, but at a unit level. That is to say that Kant believed that when states ceased to be autocratic, they would also cease to be warlike, at least among non-autocratic states. Thus the more states (the units in the international system) became republics/democracies the more the system itself would take on more rational, peaceful like features. Republican states, because of their rational commitment to freedom, would be more inclined to

negotiate a separate peace among themselves rather than waste their precious resources in violent conflict, the ends of which could be better reached by the gentler hands of commerce and diplomacy.

Such a vision, stands in stark contrast to what is usually termed the "realist" or "neo-realist" view of international politics which starkly views the nature of the units of the system as irrelevant and focuses instead on the inherently "anarchic" nature of the international system of states. For Realists then, the international system is far more important than the individual units that compose it. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

According to the Realists, a world composed totally of democratic/republican states would be no more closer to a "perpetual peace" than a world of autocratic/totalitarian states. Clearly, these two views of international politics are sharply at odds with one another. Which one is right?

Apparently, the world before 1945 was a realist world. It was a world made up of predominantly either monarchist/autocratic/totalitarian states vying for comparative advantage, often through extremely violent, fraudulent means. This much is defensible on the Realist side, its long historical accuracy.

Yet there is another story that can be told that began about 200 years ago, sometime around that fateful year in which Hegel viewed Napoleon on horseback in Jena. It is the story of the ascendancy of liberal states among the great powers and the way that ascendancy gradually transformed the international system of states.

In 1815, the then reigning liberal power in the world, Great Britain, attempted to construct a consultation system between states that would be better able to adjudicate great power conflicts without recourse to war. It was a system, for all its failures, that held up surprisingly well for almost a century. And, we should always remember, that it was but a first attempt of its kind.

When that system finally broke down in the "Great War" under the pressure of the ambitions of one particular autocratic rising great power, Imperial Germany, efforts were immediately under way to revive another consultation system that would be equally effective after that revisionist power's partial,

temporary defeat. Yet, that that attempt, the league of nations, was not effective historically would not have surprised Kant. For Kant, had crucially understood that no voluntary league of republican/democratic states could be successful without the backing of the most powerful democratic state, in this specific case, the United States.

In Hegelian fashion, as we partially discussed in the previous chapter, the United States was not fully aware or conscious of the historical situation in which it found itself, as leader or Hegemon of the free world and since it was not fully conscious of the role which it had, despite itself, achieved in 1919 attempted to disengage itself from it, at least politically. Thus, the world was inherently unstable from 1919 to 1939 for lack of the full participatory acknowledgment of the most powerful unit in the system of that time, the United States. The consequence of this willful historical denial of its actual material situation was a disaster for millions of people. The United States retreated into its ancient stance of isolationism giving the other world powers (many of whom were autocratic/totalitarian) the impression that the greatest power on earth, was great in name only, and moreover very far away and uninterested in the power politics or international system of the day. This de-facto material vacuum allowed the other great powers to make the fateful miscalculations which they eventually did make. Such an interpretation suggests that the fragile peace after World War One, the chaos that followed and the rise of totalitarian states was in no small part the outcome of the unilateral disengagement of the United States during the interwar period. This crucial lack of participation was, from a causal point of view, to lead to the atrocities of the Second World War. Thus, in some sense, the blame for the highest moral crime of the last century can, at least partially, be lain at the feet of the only power that could have conceivably stopped it from ever happening: the greatest power on earth at the time, the United States of America.

Yet, from an Hegelian standpoint the United States had not yet realized let alone wanted the historical role that was thrust upon it. It would take yet another World War for it to begin thinking seriously about a practically sustainable world peace. Yet, right from the beginning of its participation

in the Second World War the United States began planning for a world in which economic and political stability would be brought forth through strong international economic, political, military institutions, rules, and alliances. The grand historical lesson was learned, "asociability" kills.

As is well known, the United States, immediately after and even somewhat before the conclusion of the Second World War began to create a world where the democracies, now many of the world's great powers, would work together to bind themselves within a system of rules, obligations, and reciprocal agreements that looked very much like the federation of republics Kant had envisioned almost two hundred years before.

Yet, a realist could say, and many did, that the alliance system of the democracies and their not so democratic allies was based on the fear of the Soviet Union and conversely that nation's fear of a mutual nuclear exchange.

There is at first glance much to this point of view. It is indeed true that the advent of the nuclear bomb, more likely than not, changed the nature of the international system in the sense that it made it improbable that any great power would be able anymore to invade another great power with impunity. Technology had made that possibility an instant anachronism. In a sense, the extraordinary technological outcome, the A-Bomb, that ended the last great power conflict was itself a quintessential Hegelian symbol. The greatest global conflict in history was ended, historically sealed, by the greatest conflict ending machine ever known: the atomic bomb. There is irony in this, but also a great indication of the power of Hegelian analysis. The vision of the bomb while making the face of utter destruction palpable, brought mankind to another threshold of self-awareness; that total war had become totally irrational; as in the parlance of the day it had become M.A.D: mutually assured destruction.

So, in this sense, the realists are right to point out the transformative revolutionary nature that the advent of the atomic bomb has had on international relations. Yet, this is only part of the story. Only a fragment of the Hegelian/Kantian narrative. For there is more that has occurred, particularly

after the fall of the Soviet Union that cannot be explained by either classical or neo-realism but fits well with a democratic world as first envisioned by Kant and by today's ever growing democratic peace theorists.

According to Realists of all stripes, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the international system that the United States built with its democratic allies should have started to fray and even fall totally apart. With the removal of the global existential threat that was the Soviet Union, the realist rationale for international cooperation between states should have been itself removed. Counter coalition building, active shifting alliances, a disintegration of cooperation should have followed. In the twenty-five years since the fall of the Soviet Empire, this has not happened. On the contrary the complex, reciprocal international system the United States built after the Second World War has not only not fallen apart, it has expanded and even strengthened. There have been no serious challenges to the system and no serious competing global ideology. True, the Russian and Chinese have often caused disruptions to the system, but they have been comparatively minor. For its part, Islamic fundamentalism continues to have limited, circumscribed appeal to only certain sections of the Arab world, as Fukuyama predicted in 1989. What's more important though, is that these three great power blocs seem more interested in integrating themselves within the system rather than toppling it. While not themselves democratic regions, they nevertheless both perceive and benefit from the world system the democratic states have built during the last seventy years.

The present world political outcome would not have come as a surprise to Immanuel Kant. He would have immediately grasped the world historical situation of today for what it is: the beginning of a kind of perpetual peace. A peace that was born in terrible conflict, a peace that was led and concretized by a powerful republic which was able to, initially, draw all democratic states into its domain while slowly growing in its democratic orbit. Statistically, empirically, the verdict is in: the democratic powers of this world have made a "separate peace" among themselves and are slowly expanding that peace around the world; while simultaneously increasing the number of states that wish

to emulate their system both internally and externally. Negotiation, trade, mutual recognition have progressively trumped the old scourges of man: war, famine, chaos, and anarchy. A semi-constitutional world order is slowly and effectively replacing the selfish, irrational anarchy of the old world order. In a sense, Norman Angell had seen through the "Great Illusion" in 1910 as an individual, but he was early in relation to the species, the world itself would finally see through the "Great Illusion" only a generation later. In a final defense of the historically oft much maligned Angell, it is frequently the case that sensitive individuals, such as artists and intellectuals, are somewhat ahead of their times, it doesn't, in the end, make them wrong, just victims of bad timing; Angell was early.

Yet, despite all this cautiously good news, there have been significant moral and material challenges to the system, even if not remotely on the scale of the first half of the twentieth-century. In a word: there have been instances of terrible genocide: Cambodia, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia are but three of the most prominent cases.

Arguably, the present international system began its long journey to self-realization with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Famously, this treaty enshrined the idea that each nation state was sovereign and inviolable. The international system at the time was still completely anarchic but the units had been declared safe in principle. They could do what they pleased inside their borders. They could mandate the religion of their subjects. Indeed, in theory at least, they could carry out internal genocide so long as that did not disturb the peace of their neighbors. This understanding of the international state of affairs lasted as long as the Second World War, until Raphael Lemkin brought the world's attention to the crime of genocide, a horror that had gone without a name until then. Not surprisingly the awareness of such a category of crime arose to consciousness, as did so much else, in the throes of the Second World War. Genocide was real and voices were heard for the first time that advocated its prevention. But what of the absoluteness of state sovereignty?

In what is ultimately John Rawls' modern version of Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, Rawls in *The Law of Peoples* argues unequivocally that in a just international order, genocide cannot be allowed.

Intervention, in this case, is warranted by democratic and or "order-loving" peoples. The spirit of the international order, and to a certain extent its actuality, is for Rawls, the upholding of universal human rights, as generally understood by the UN charter of 1945. For Rawls, and for many other contemporary observers, genocide trumps state sovereignty. When a state commits or is in the process of committing genocide, other states in the system are *politically and morally obliged to put an end to that state's activity*.

Thus, from a Rawlsian point of view it would have been within the international community's international right to have invaded Cambodia, Yugoslavia, and Rwanda in order to stop their horrific killing of their own citizens. Of course there will always be technical questions as to who determines when genocide is occurring, and which countries are to bear the burden of stopping it. Yet, today, there is ample international law which clearly defines genocide as well as a growing body of legal-institutional literature which helps describe and regulate a proactive policy or policies that can mandate its cessation.

Although it goes beyond what Kant was talking about, it would not be much of a modern world peace, if peoples, individuals could not be safe from the horrors of genocide. It is in the spirit of both Kant and Rawls, that the physical and moral integrity of individuals be safeguarded. Every effort must be tried by the world community to develop and sustain strategies for the prevention and, of course, ending of genocide.

The murder of the Jews was not a priority for the allies in the Second World War. That is a true, but sad fact. Subsequently, the world stood silently by as literally millions of innocent Rwandans, Cambodians, and Yugoslavians were slaughtered. It is not asking too much of a world that has reached such unprecedented levels of affluence and general peace to step in and safeguard those who cannot, for whatever reason, protect themselves.

On an important side note, we should bring in Robert Kagan's tongue and cheek assertion that "Europeans are from Venus, and Americans are from Mars". This bon-mot however points to some serious philosophical divergences between Europeans and Americans in the early Twenty-First century.

From Kagan's point of view, the Europeans, in the form of the European Union, have realized the Kantian polity of "perpetual peace" while the Americans still inhabit a Hobbesian world. There could hardly be two more dissimilar visions about how the world works.

However I think both parties are both partially right and both partially wrong in their viewpoints. The Americans' are correct in their view that without power, morality cannot be actualized. The Europeans are right in that the softer arts of trade, persuasion, and negotiation should be tried before the "big guns" are used. Kant knew that a "federation of peace" could never be realized if the leading powers of the world were not part of it.

In similar fashion, it is an open secret that the European Union was a project that was both planned and supported by Washington from its very inception. However, the European Union could never have come into being without the military alliance known as NATO. Military guarantees between the Western allies keep the integration and expansion process on track and steady. Threats from autocratic powers such as Russia and China have not totally disappeared and would almost immediately reappear if the US were to withdraw its commitment to Europe.

All that this means in the end, is that both the European and American Project need each other. That there is indeed a Euro-Atlantic civilization that is protected by US global military monopoly, much the same way the Americans themselves were protected in the nineteenth century by British military might (particularly sea-power). Both parties would be dangerously naive if they thought they could "go it alone" without the other. The world that the democracies built presupposes mutual aid and reciprocal commitment. From a practical standpoint this might mean that the US should give wider berth to some of the Europeans' diplomatic initiatives while the Europeans must wake up to the reality that an important and influential part of the world has not given up the use of brute force. Thus, in a

spirit of compromise between the two visions of the world, the Europeans should think more seriously about military self-defense while the US might give diplomatic solutions more of a try on the world stage. It seems a fair and reasonable bargain for both sides. As Kant knew all too well, morality may be rational in the end but it can only be upheld through the reality of strength.

Yet, are there any impending threats to the new "long peace"? Indeed there are some and they are mostly internal. Perhaps the most insidious among them are among the most ancient. First, there is what Francis Fukuyama has termed in his magisterial work, *Political Order and Political Decay*, "repatrimonialization". This, in essence, is the recapturing of the state/public space by particularist interests, especially family interests. This is an old phenomenon as old as the state itself. The state no longer remains a fair arbiter for all and becomes a distributive engine for particular families or elites. Closely resembling this category is Peter Dale Scott's concept of "Deep Politics" which is essentially the parallel existence of corrupt networks that unduly influence political outcomes and policies whether international or domestic. Needless to say both categories are highly undemocratic and necessarily worrisome, if true.

Yet again from Fukuyama's pen, is the idea of "deinstitutionalization". Basically, deinstitutionalization means that an institution's original function is no longer needed or necessary because the external situation which caused it to arise in the first place is no longer there. Hence, the institution continues and even, expands, under its own weight or inertia, serving only the ends of its members and/or bureaucracies. This is an old idea which partially finds its roots in the thought of John Stuart Mill and Max Weber among others.

Finally, perhaps, the most devastating critique of all institutions and organizations ever made no matter what their stated objectives comes from the work of Max Weber's star pupil, Robert Michels. Robert Michels, like his mentor, was an important German sociologist of the Twentieth-century who investigated what he called the "Iron law of Oligarchy". Essentially, this "law" states something similar to Fukuyama's concept of "deinstitutionalization" which is that every organization is doomed to be

taken control of by self-serving bureaucratic oligarchies. This means that whatever the organization, its fate is to be taken control of by a handful of powerful people either within or without the institution, usually both.

## Conclusion

### The Auschwitz Rebound

This dissertation was written in the shadow of Genocide. Of modern Genocide. Of regarding the fact of these horrible events as the ultimate task of explanation for all of the social sciences and humanities. It is the story of many stories. Perhaps first and foremost it is the story of how an ancient instinct and practice persisted into the twentieth-century. Of how, contrary to the received wisdom, an ancient world, a feudal world, persisted in both practice, structure and thought long after many had thought it vanquished. It is a story of how transition into political and social modernity was fiercely resisted, in similar as well as different ways, by both left and right. Of how man perniciously persisted in his ancient way of thinking in terms of friend/enemy. How an "other" became the "stranger" that had to be eliminated so that a "chosen" group might live and thrive. It is also and importantly the sad story of Western man's apprenticeship in the "heart of darkness" of colonialism and imperialism. It is the story of how religion was lost and secular political messianism was gained. How Hegel's "Kingdom of Freedom" returned while banishing, as impossible, a chiliastic escape from the "Kingdom of Necessity" of Marx. It, too, is the story of how Hobbes' "Leviathan" transformed itself into the counter-intuitive peace-maker known as the "bomb" before which all modern men cower and how Levinas called us to an impossible responsibility towards an ever unreachable other. And finally, and perhaps most provocatively, it is the story of how Auschwitz transcended itself, not in a new theodicy, but in the reaffirmation of the necessary assumption, in an age of dangerously liminal technology, that it is man that continuously makes the world--or destroys it forever.

Before we continue with the unfolding of our final chapter we would do well to recall our thesis in chapter four. There we said that the Europe of 1871-1914 was a complex of racist, xenophobic, imperialist, Darwinistic, and Nietzschean belief. We also said that this was a stage of consciousness and practice that was standing in the way of the further development of freedom and the dignity of man both in Europe and world-wide. This complex of thought we argued was challenged, or in Hegelian fashion its contradictions were partially resolved, by the outbreak of World War One. This was seen as the negation of the prior unstable synthesis of the world before the war. It was then argued that the developments following the end of that first great conflict in the 1930's and 1940's was the "negation of the negation" leading, at its end, in 1945 to the emergence of a new world synthesis, represented in part by the birth of the bomb, under which we all now still live.

In this chapter, we will briefly recall this important argument from another angle and that culled from Arno J. Mayer's groundbreaking book *The Persistence of the Old Regime*. In this book, Mayer argues persuasively that what he calls the Old Regime, or in other words the persistence of the Feudal Ages, did not end with the nineteenth century. On the contrary, according to Mayer, the forces, practices, and elites representing conservative, even ancient, modes of thought were alive and well in the Nineteenth century slowing even, for a brief time, retarding the forces of liberalism, democracy, and capitalism that were trying to make headway against them.

The carriers of these trends were the landed and service aristocracy well represented in the armies, bureaucracies, churches, and, in part, large agricultural interests of the time. They wielded a huge amount of prestige and influence on the other competing classes of the time, not least of which was upon the bourgeoisie who as often as not sought to join them, rather than vanquish them.

Ideologically they too developed involved ideas of elitist leadership and command that drew from archaic notions of blood, race, clan, and caste. Many of these ideas would later evolve, under the impetus of Nietzschean and Social Darwinistic thought, into varieties of Fascism both more traditional,

as in the case of Eastern Europe, and more modernistic as in the case of Italy and Germany. In all cases though, the feudal ideas of control by a minority, the passive management of the masses from above, and the retaining of ancient roles and ideas of masculinity, femininity, prestige, honor, and "them" vs "us" thinking we're kept and given carefully planned flourishes of modernity. Yet, in the end, what they were selling was an old ideological cart freshened up here and there with a fresh coat of modernist paint. Thus, in every instance, the new dictatorial, collectivist ideologies were anti-democratic, anti-liberal, anti-socialist, and, in a seeming contradiction, anti-capitalist.

But the last part was not a contradiction. For whether Fascist or Leninist, the new rulers had inherited a world that was highly conservative and shot through with feudal ways of thinking, even if they now expressed themselves in more "modern" ways through such ideas based, in the Fascist case, on Nietzsche and Darwin, and in the socialist/communist case, on Marx and Lenin. Large conservative states such as Russia and Germany and later China and their peasant agriculturalist populations feared the content and ideas of modernity. They sought refuge under the guiding hand of a leader or party that could assure them that they would be taken care of and lead to "the promise land" of the future, technologically changed perhaps but not too much culturally, politically and socially.

In short, the power of the old regime prior to World War One was considerable and, in the final analysis, pernicious. It was they who gambled on a world-wide conflagration in World War One. It was they, who when they lost the first world wide struggle, mounted a counter attack in the new forms of dictatorship. Their material and ideological bases were strong and were only finally removed during the "thirty years war" that made up the first part of the Twentieth-century.

Now we should take initial pause to reflect on this striking historical explanation of the calamities of the twentieth century and the reverberations they would have not least of which upon the outcome of the Jewish question in genocide.

There is an ancient way of thinking. We call it "binary aggressive thinking". Essentially, it is

the way of thinking that reduces the "other" into an implacable enemy with which we cannot negotiate and live side by side. In effect the "other" of the binary "we/they" must be destroyed. This is by no means a new way of thinking and may, like genocide, predate humanity itself.

But in the Nineteenth century this way of thinking was given a new lease on life by both forces of the right and of the left.

As Julien Benda was to note in his famous book *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals*, modern intellectuals had spent, beginning in the eighteenth century, more and more time organizing "political hatreds" rather than attending to the Enlightenment legacy of viewing mankind in a universalist manner. Battle lines were ever more sharply drawn.

Particularisms such as class, nation, race, and even gender were used to stigmatize and dehumanize whoever stood outside the circle of "we". Whether it was colonialist, social-Darwinistic, eugenicist, Marxist, even, to a certain extent, Freudian ways of thinking there was always an "other" that was to be reduced or, in the worst case, exterminated. "Jews", "Slavs" "Bourgeoisie", "Slave nations and races", "Emancipated Women", "Homosexuals", "The Weak" all these were just some of the categories of people that were to be "put down" by either supreme leader or the inexorable call of history or both. The "other" was not to be tolerated but eliminated so that the "we" the "healthy" collective was to be finally liberated from its pernicious temptation.

In a word, we can say, after five chapters of discussing it, that the West, particularly between the years 1871 and 1914 represented a growing intellectual, cultural synthesis which we can tentatively call a "culture of genocide" and thus an environment where the annihilation of the "other" was increasingly imagined and finally carried out. This way of thinking reached its Hegelian climax, as we have said, in the Nazi camps and finally in the detonation of the bomb, *the instrument that for the first time in history could guarantee the elimination of both "otherness" and "sameness" simultaneously. In a sense, with the advent of the bomb, the question of one being "other" became irrelevant since either all*

*of us are now the "other" relative to the bomb or that none of us can claim "difference" in the face of this ultimate terror. The bomb is the Hobbesian machine, par excellent; it is the perpetually terrifying Leviathan holding mankind in thrall. And it was the quintessential outcome of a culture of genocide that was to signal the beginning of the end of that culture based on something that was stronger than it; man's will for self-preservation in the face of certain annihilation guaranteed a return to more sober reasoning and rational council concerning conflicts of all kinds. The bomb initiated a "trickle down of terror" into the deliberations of men.*

This would also explain at least two important puzzles. The one is why since at least Benjamin Constant did some men argue that war was outmoded serving no purpose at all but it still persisted. Or why, later, men like Norman Angell famously argued that war was irrational in an age of globalization and international commerce. From a rational point of view both men were, of course, correct. But from a practical point of view, they were not. Because, in the end, they neglected the lessons and teachings of Thomas Hobbes.

It was not because mankind had reached an unprecedented level of globalization and commerce that Global War had ceased starting in 1945. Indeed, many have argued that the level of globalization and commerce reached in Angell's day was, at least, as great as today. No, the promise of easy wealth and luxury was to prove not enough. Quite simply, the answer as we have argued above, is that the current peace among the great powers is a direct consequence of the existential threat of the bomb. No one can attempt to conquer or vanquish their powerful adversary without risking their own annihilation. The Nuclear Leviathan holds them all in thrall. This is the "secret" behind what Steven Pinker calls the "long peace".

And this brings us to some interesting speculations or thought experiments that might be useful in charting where we have been and where we are going in our apparently exponential escape from our erstwhile "culture of genocide".

Imagine if you will that the original "culture of genocide" had not destroyed itself in the two world wars but had managed to muddle along by some miracle until one of them or some of them had developed the nuclear bomb. What might have happened? Well, either they would have used the weapons goaded on by their ideas of prestige and power or they would have had a sudden intellectual "epiphany" of the values of peace. My money would be on a self-destructive path since ingrained ways of thinking are hard to break and "epiphanies" of all kinds are seldom to rare. Granted such thought experiments bring up all sorts of interesting contradictions even absurdities, but they are not thereby less valuable.

An alternative world such as this arguably would not have had the prophylactic experience of the destructive power of modern technology; such as the Two World Wars and, especially, its coda demonstrated. This is crucial. Because man tends not to believe until he sees. It is no mere accident that the "Mushroom cloud" is an iconic symbol in our culture. It covers layers of meaning and practice which direct our daily lives and orient our eyes towards a certain kind of future.

In this alternative world, man would have not had any direct experience with the true nature of the destructive power at his command. And notions of power, struggle, prestige, glory, and heroic masculinity would most certainly have been a lethal mix. And all this speculation brings us back, via Kant, to the earlier speculations of Hegel, once more.

Ever since at least Kant, the question of man's freedom versus his place in nature has been at issue. Kant, rather unconvincingly, pointed out that man is both a part of the causality of nature but that his freedom occupies a place outside of it; that is to say that his freedom of choice is both uncaused and spontaneous. This is wishful thinking at its best and perhaps Kant at his worst. It is, to say the least, an unconvincing argument and I think that Kant knew it, too. He was constrained by his time to reserve a special place for man's "freedom" and thus to preserve the realm of his "moral choice". We feel ourselves under no such constraints. Our philosophical position is that man has no "freedom" and is

completely determined, albeit complexly, by a range of natural and social causes. In the final analysis, there is no freedom and no moral choice.

Now this brings us back to Hegel with whom we are more in accord. This way of thinking, of course, would exclusively suggest that history does follow a complex pattern and that it is not contingent and that all the new "counter-factual" history now in vogue does is show how improbable, indeed impossible, their scenarios are. For example, in a pre 1914 world that had reached a self-understanding of itself as a world divided between nations struggling for "survival of the fittest" and ultimate mastery of the world, would an imperial England seriously have considered "sitting out" a challenge from an imperial war-like Germany that would, in all probability, have assured German European hegemony of the continent. In a word, of course not.

As Hegel had taught us in his somewhat mysterious utterance "What is real is rational, what is rational is real" there is a reason for things; they do not just happen haphazardly and by pure chance. For man and his affairs are not governed by chance but by admittedly complex natural and social factors that lead him to make the decisions that he makes. Indeed, I am willing to wager a millennial bet that, if ever, we find more than a handful of extraterrestrial civilizations we would then be, for the first time, in a position to compare the civilizations and thereby elucidate similar patterns of development. For in the worst case scenario, if historians only have a sample of one civilization it would be premature in the extreme to say that there are *no laws of human/societal/rational development*. Even from a practical point of view, it is just too soon to draw conclusions without further examples.

At the very least, we can be somewhat grateful that man's self-understanding developed ever so slightly ahead of his technological capacity for self-destruction. Because if it did not, we, in all probability, would not be reading and discussing this dissertation.

Does all this mean that I am arguing that Hegel provides us with a new "theodicy" as someone

like Levinas might object to? Emphatically, no. The tragic events of 1914-1945 do not have anything to do with a universal struggle between "good" and "evil"; sadly they simply have to do with the evolving self-understanding of man in a tight dialectic with his technical development; or in a Hegelian strain; with his reason. For indeed, as Hegel has said "One can also know falsely". That is to say, what we have been saying. That a collective self-understanding of man can be dangerously off the mark to his very own survival and can only be corrected (if it can) by historical or actual demonstration. He must see to start to see to believe. Reason must be challenged by reality. Absolute war *can* lead to absolute peace.

So when we offer the phrase "Auschwitz rebound" we are not offering a new theodicy. We are not saying that the suffering of Auschwitz is redeemed by the somewhat more enlightened (chastened) position of mankind, at all. We are just stating the brutal, disconcerting fact (and it would have been so for Hegel as well as we discussed in chapter four) that what we perceive as great evil often has the opposite historical effect; it works as a corrective. In a sense, since we do not believe in "Freedom" and "Moral Choice" we are saying something far more radical and perhaps bleak; very far from any theodicy. That man has a path which he follows based on his desire for freedom and recognition and that these paths can, at times, lead through what we would call with Kant, "radical evil" but were, alas, factually necessary. Thus we are not saying that the "sacrifice" of "Auschwitz" was "necessary" to "save" modern man; all we are saying is that it turned out that way necessarily but without moral judgment. Admittedly it is a bleak view of the world.

According to this view then; nothing can "redeem" Auschwitz. And thus we are not looking for redemption. We are not seeking to put an historical value on the faces of the millions of victims. They are victims and will remain so till the end of time. Yet, what we *are* saying is that their victim-hood and historical experience did, as *an historical fact*, awaken mankind to the question and the practice of Genocide for the first time and made it at least problematic if not completely eradicable.

Man only lives his self-understanding of his particular moment in time. This again we have learned from Hegel. There are no excuses; there is just this self-understanding. And this self-understanding is always changing, shifting with his confrontation with his own self-motivated historical acts however dimly aware of them he might be.

We have already mentioned Levinas. We mentioned him in our refutation of what he might have said relative to our position of the necessary nature of man's historical development; that we are constructing a new theodicy. We have already emphatically denied the charge. Indeed, we would say that Levinas' own species of thinking is an outcome of that historical necessity. For in as much as the world pre 1945 discounted the "other"; Levinas goes to the other extreme and absolutizes him.

Levinas, as we ourselves, are transfixed by the genocidal events of the twentieth-century. Levinas built an ethic out of the ashes of these events. His philosophy as he himself says is a "First Philosophy" in which man relates to man as a fundamental way of existence. The "Other" and our responsibility towards him becomes absolute and never completed. We are, in a sense, morally enthralled to the other; to our duty towards him. Within the context of our dissertation it should come as no surprise that a completely opposite reaction should have come about, particularly in defeatist and defeated France, towards Western man's relationship to the other. That he should have risen higher than our own selves in an expiating sense; in a deep search for historical atonement as it were. The "Other" in the hands of Levinas has almost become an ersatz God to whom we should do humble service. It is an impossible ethic; similar to Christianity's more stringent requirements; but understandable once viewed in terms of the "negation of the negation"; of what we call the Auschwitz Rebound.

We have discussed aspects of freedom for Kant, Hegel, and our ourselves. But there is another aspect of freedom which we have left out but has accompanied our discussion like a shadow and that is freedom as understood by Spinoza, something which had a profound influence on Hegel and others. Put briefly, for Spinoza, there is no escape from causality/necessity save except for one;

understanding/knowledge. It is through an increase of knowledge both of the external world and ourselves that we achieve anything like freedom; for we understand what is happening around us and to us. Understanding opens the door to more understanding and, in a sense, makes wider our ability to act. We have more information thus we are better informed as to our next steps. In this, and only this way can man be said to be free. Knowledge is the true liberation.

Knowledge and perhaps imagination. To be more specific the radical imagination of Cornelius Castoriadis. According to him, the philosophical tradition has long neglected the power of the imagination and its ability to change our social circumstances. On the face of it, the power of the imagination to institute new social significations is appealing. However I think it suffers from the same flaws as Kant's attempts to institute freedom as spontaneous and non-caused. Indeed, I think that we can almost interchangeably use Castoriadis' "Imagination" with Kant's "Freedom".

Where does the imagination come from if not from concrete events in the natural world? Can the imagination truly be spontaneous like Kant's freedom? We have already touched upon this argument. At best, I can say that we somehow meld Spinoza's position with Castoriadis. How? Well, we can say that in achieving more knowledge about ourselves and our situation (Spinoza) this allows us the ability to propose new and novel ways forward (Castoriadis' "Imagination"). In this way, I can see how we can "imagine" our way forward towards new historical paths.

More novel however is Castoriadis' insistence that society is nothing but an institution of social meaning; a premise with which we partially concur. For instance, there is nothing that says we should continue with the discourse of Carl Schmitt and his insistence of viewing the world in terms of friend/enemy. We can adopt a new course and attempt to see/interpret the world in a new light. In the same way, there is nothing that says we should continue to view the world in racist, xenophobic, adversarial ways at all. Of course, I write these lines many decades after 1945 and a century after 1914; it would be perverse, and a species of historical and factual dementia, if I were to think

differently. Hence, once again we are trapped or liberated by the historical boundaries in which we find ourselves.

Yet going back once more to Kant, we could say that within the context of our own contemporary times it would not be too far fetched to call, as did Adorno, for a new contemporary categorical imperative which stated that the politics of the earth should be so orientated so as to eliminate the possibility of the act of genocide, barring totalitarian methods such as despotic world government (this caveat is important I think). The question of course is implementation. Who decides when genocide takes or is about to take place; who decides on what kind and how much force is to be used against the perpetrators; and then how does one "clean up" after the operation has been complete; establishing the appropriate punishments for the victimizers and the appropriate relief for the victimized. At the end of the day, all of these questions are for the jurists and politicians to decide; preferably under the aegis of the United Nations.

As was mentioned in chapter two, Genocide as a crime was only brought forth in human consciousness in the 1930's and 1940's; indeed it was a lack of this kind of consciousness that, in part, emboldened Hitler in his own plans ("Who remembers the Armenians?"). Yet we are the heirs of genocide and the citizens of the bomb. We have a duty to check the first and respect the lessons of the second.

We have now reached the moment where we must take stock of our general intellectual voyage and specific dissertation thesis. We have seen that genocide is an ancient possibility of human behavior, more often than not correlated with the existence of war. We have noted the crucial role, imperialism and colonialism and some of its adjacent ideologies rooted in Nietzscheanism and Darwinism had played in the outcome of modern genocides. We have stated that modernity, in itself, was not to blame, but rather a radical rejection of modernity, particularly political and social Enlightenment. We have argued that the experiences of late nineteenth century, early twentieth-century

Europe marked a transition phase of humanity's consciousness of itself. It was a violent mediation of its own growing powers of technology versus its social and political contradictions veering towards a more modern resolution of the latent desire for more political freedom and social recognition among a wide swath of society. We have noted that the second half of the twentieth-century represented the resolution of these contradictions of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth-century emerging in a liberal American led global political hegemony very similar to the one once envisioned by Kant in his work *Perpetual Peace*. And finally we have come to uphold our primary thesis that it was neither Modernity nor Enlightenment that was the cause of modern barbarity in the midst of European civilization but rather its partial rejection and attempted negation of the political, social, and moral elements of Enlightenment thought as ably depicted in the celebrated historical works of Jonathan Israel. In a deep sense, then, modern Genocide was an outcome of the rejection of the liberal political revolution offered by Thomas Paine for the aristocratic-anarchic rebellion of Friedrich Nietzsche.

Indeed, what is genocide if not man's denial of freedom, respect, dignity, and, in the final instance, life to another man. In this, it is closely tied to the scourge of war as we have seen. In this, it is also tied to insidious ideologies denying humanity to certain groups of people. And, historically, it should never be forgotten that it was also, as Hannah Arendt never tired of reminding us, closely tied to the practices of colonialism and imperialism of the nineteenth century.

If Julien Benda, rightly lamented late nineteenth and twentieth-century intellectuals particular participation in "organizing political hatreds" it is, in my view, the duty of the twenty-first century intellectual to organize peaceful and friendly solutions to the earth's current problems. To be guided by a rational ethic of love for one's neighbor if not as oneself than for oneself. For if anything is clearer in the present century is that we all share the same planet and thus all share at least a modicum of responsibility to remember the atrocities of genocide of the twentieth-century and to make sure they never happen again.

## Principal Contributions

- 1) Attempting to demonstrate that genocidal tendencies in the human race are ancient, if not necessarily natural. Throughout recorded human history and in the archaeological record preceding it there have been instances of genocide. Genocidal acts appear as a constant tendency in the human race as a whole.
- 2) Attempting to demonstrate that war is a necessary condition for genocide. There are many conditions and preconditions for genocide. However one stands out: war. It is the sine qua non of the genocidal condition. A state of war must exist for genocidal acts to occur.
- 3) Attempting to show that the Holocaust was intellectually prepared for through a mix of Darwinian, Nietzschean, and Volkisch ideology. The Holocaust is the most famous example of modern Genocide. From the very beginning the question has been posed as to how a cultured, civilized people such as the Germans were able to perpetrate such an atrocity. The answer, partially, lies in the fact that the Western world prior to 1933 was a cultural agglomerate that had a surfeit of genocidal elements within it: xenophobia, racism, and chauvinism as well as a whole host of other, ancient prejudices and paranoias. The German case was an extreme expression of a general cultural trend; a culture of genocide as it were. The elimination of difference. Darwinian, Nietzschean, and Volkisch ideas and concepts contributed mightily to such a "culture". This as well as the colonial experience best epitomized perhaps in the novel, *The Heart of Darkness*.
- 4) Attempting to show that the concept of "Utopia" played a part in the ideological construction and practical motivation in modern genocides. Various utopist visions drove the mass movements of the twentieth century. Fascism and Nazism were no exceptions. As much as they sought to decimate certain members of the human race, they also sought to raise or elevate their own members to sublime heights of power and prestige. Utopist visions played a central role in the sacralization of the destruction of the "other".
- 5) Attempting to demonstrate the restraining effect of the atomic bomb on great power rivalries and its further effects on global society as a whole. Many have asked what has kept the relative general global peace after the Second World War. The attempted answers have varied from the wildly optimistic "man has changed" to the more sober belief that new institutions and cultural practices have tamed man. This paper takes a more realist Hobbesian view and states that it is the monopoly of fear and the resultant impossibility of ultimate and sure conquest that has tamed man's greater demons. Put simply, there has been no third outbreak of global war since it is not winnable and thus there is nothing to be gained by it. Modern man, no less than his predecessors tends to be a rational mercenary.



