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The colonial darkside of democracy

Mexico
Australia
United States
The genocide of the Hereros, 1904-5
Conclusion: patterns of colonial cleansing
Bibliography

from the author's forthcoming book on Murderous Ethnic Cleansing

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The last two chapters gave a broad historical overview of murderous ethnic cleansing, suggesting that it had been relatively uncommon until the last few centuries. I traced religious and milder linguistic phases of cleansing in early modern Europe and then moved onto the emergence of more dangerous “organic” conceptions of democracy in 19th century Eastern and Southern Europe. This contrasted with the “liberal” or “stratified” notion of democracy dominating Northwest Europe. This recognized class differences and downplayed ethnic ones. European liberalism practiced milder **Institutional Assimilation** of ethnic minorities.¹

Yet most liberal countries also had colonies. There organic, not stratified, conceptions of “we, the people” dominated. Though the settlers saw themselves as divided into diverse interests and classes, as a collectivity this “people” was singular, organic in being “European”, “civilized”. It did not include “natives”, “savages”, “orientals” etc. The difference was later recast as racial. The “lower races” were not a part of “we, the people”. Thus some of the states I called “liberal” in the last chapter were in reality dual, with an extremely dark side many miles away in their colonies. Class compromise, liberal democracy and tolerance among Europeans were constructed above terrible atrocities committed against very large out groups. The worst cases amounted to the most “successful” murderous ethnic cleansing the world may have ever seen. They were committed by “settler democracies” in the United States and Australia. Such is the doubly doleful content of this chapter. Why did colonies see so much murderous cleansing? Why were the more democratic ones the worst offenders?.

Let me recall the four principal theses of this book: (1) Ethnic cleansing became more deadly in modern times because it is the darkside of the democratic nation-state, a modern political form. (2) “The danger zone”, from which ethnic conflict **may** turn murderous, is reached when two rival ethnic movements lay claim to political sovereignty over the same territory; and where both claims appear legitimate and realizable. There are then two alternative elaborations of this. In (2a) the less powerful side is bolstered to fight rather than to submit by aid from outside. In (2b) one side has military power and ideological legitimacy overwhelming enough to achieve a cleansed sovereignty at little physical or moral risk to itself. (3) “Going over the brink”, into actual murderous cleansing, occurs where states are destabilized and factionalized amid an unstable local geopolitical environment -- out of which crisis “radicals” emerge calling for “tough” treatment of the out-group. (4) Radicals’ plans reflect this instability. Murderous cleansing is not their initial intent, but typically

¹ The different types of relationship between ethnic groups, presented systematically in Table 1.1 (included at the end of this draft), are given in **bold type**, as are the stylized “Plans” I identify among the perpetrators.

constitutes a “Plan C”, suddenly developed only after Plans A (the carefully considered one) and B (the first adaptation to failure and destabilization) both collapsed. How well do my four theses fit the distinctive colonial cases?

A General Model of Colonial Cleansing

The first humans to see the Earth as a globe and to seek to encompass it were late 15th century Europeans. They began a process of globalization which continues to this day. It has been extremely murderous, especially in its early centuries. Virtually all European colonial regimes inflicted massive violence in the stage of conquest. However, war and conquest are not the same as murderous cleansing (as Table 1.1 makes clear). Only a few

Table 1.1: The Extent of Cleansing and Violence in Inter-Group Relations

	Extent of Cleansing		
Extent of Violence	None	Partial	Total
1. None	1. Multi-culturalism/ toleration 2. Consociational/ Confederalism	Partial abandoning of identity eg thru voluntary official language adoption	Voluntary assimilation
2. Institutional Coercion	Discrimination	1. Official language restrictions 2. Segregation	Cultural suppression
3. Policed Repression	Selective policed repression	1. Policed partial repression of out group language & culture 2. Policed out group settlement/ displacement	1. Policed total suppression of language & culture 2. Population exchanges 3. Policed deportations & pressured emigration
4. Violent Repression	Generalized Policed repression	1. “Pogroms”, communal riots, some forms of rape 2. Violent settlement/ displacement	1. “Wild” deportation & emigration 2. Biological: sterilization, forced marriage, some forms of rape
5. Unpremeditated Mass Deaths	“Mistaken” war, civil war & revolutionary projects, fratricide	“Callous” war, civil war & class war & revolutionary projects	Ethnocide
6. Premeditated Mass Killing	Exemplary & civil war repression, systematic reprisals	1. Forced conversion 2. Politicide 3. Classicide	Genocide

NB: Darker shading indicates the core of the zone of murderous cleansing discussed in this essay; lighter shading indicates a

borderline zone in which it may occasionally occur.

colonial regimes went on to commit the latter. I will first seek to explain broad global variations in colonization in terms of my model of the four sources of social power -- ideological, economic, military and political. There was one predominant cause of conflict -- a particular economic power struggle over land. But this also involved a political power struggle: which authority should be sovereign over this land. Ideological power exacerbated both these power struggles, since this was a fairly unique clash in human history, between "alien civilizations", in which extreme treatment of the outgroup seemed morally and historically legitimate. Finally, there was one predominant means of settling the conflict -- military force. Obviously, to understand this prolonged murderous cleansing, we must analyze all four sources of social power. The main part of the chapter will do this in four case-studies: Spanish Mexico, Australia, the United States and German South West Africa. Only two are discussed at any length, the United States, a rolling, centuries-long series of cleansings, and South West Africa as a single terrible incident.

Economic power. At the core of this clash -- unlike almost all other cases discussed in this book -- lay a direct economic conflict: who should own and expropriate the resources of the land, the natives or the European colonists? As has long been recognized, economic power explains more of the colonial cases than any other type of cleansing. Roger Smith (1997:229) calls them "utilitarian genocide". The main colonial actors involved were not states, but settlers -- groups of farmers, artisans, labourers and merchants. Since economic power relations were primary, their differing forms tended to determine different outcomes. I distinguish five main types of economic conflict, bringing ascending levels of violence committed by settlers against the natives.

(1) **Trade.** Where Europeans merely traded with natives without settling their land, they were few in numbers, unable to impose much force upon the natives. Where trade did lead onto conquest, paucity of numbers still usually meant that colonial rule was mainly indirect, exercised in each locality through native elites retaining many of their former powers. Such was often the case in Asia, near the rim of the European logistical reach. Trading settlements do not typically involve much ethnic cleansing, though imposing them in the first place may require much violence. At the worst, this might degenerate into limited **Politicide**, the elimination of a substantial part of the native leadership class. But this was normally very limited, since other local elites were still needed as trading partners. I will not discuss trading colonies further.

(2) **Plunder and tribute-taking.** This was important in early stages of colonization. Spanish incursions into America involved massive looting of gold and silver. This could result in terrible slaughter in order to get at the loot, but not subsequent ethnic cleansing. And for tribute the conqueror needs live subjects, not removed or dead ones. In this chapter I will discuss Spanish plunder and tribute-taking in Mexico. My first two types roughly correspond to the first of the four colonial regimes distinguished by Fieldhouse (1965) and Fredrickson (1988), -- the "occupation colony", where the colonial regime seeks military and political

control, and exploitation of the existing economic order, but it does not seek direct control of land and labour.

(3) **Settlement using a dispersed labour force.** Dispersed economic activities like small farming involve seizing the land, but labour will be scattered thinly over a large area. Though the initial land seizure might involve murderous violence, close repressive policing is thereafter impracticable. Free, indentured or even slave labour will be under a comparatively mild regime, with little interest in cleansing. This type of economy will figure little in my discussion. It roughly corresponds to Fieldhouse's and Fredrickson's "mixed" type of colony which, like their first type, they see as typically associated with Spanish colonization.

(4) **Settlement using a concentrated labour force.** Economic activities like mining or plantations involve large concentrated labour forces. Here the labour regime tended to involve close, coercive and often brutal supervision – as in Fieldhouse's and Fredrickson's "plantation" colonies, pioneered, they believe, by the Portuguese. If there was a labour surplus, as there often was initially, the natives might be callously worked to death. If labour was scarce, the colonists would (rationally) need to show more restraint. Again, therefore, despite its brutality, this type of settlement does not usually lead to deliberate murderous cleansing. But it may involve **Ethnocide**, unintended but resulting from callous labour practices, requiring that plantation regimes import slave labour from elsewhere. I will touch upon this type, but not focus upon it.

(5) **Settlement not requiring native labour:** the settlers desired to use the land and its resources -- but using their own or some other labour, not the natives'. This is Fieldhouse's and Fredrickson's "pure settlement" colony, pioneered, they believe, by the English. Max Weber made a more general observation that throughout history "conquering peasant communities" have typically sought to "wipe out" native populations (1958 edition: 165). Such colonies are the main focus of this chapter.

The economic conflict centred on land, the most monopolistic economic resource. Compromise was possible where only small numbers of settlers invaded. But Europeans only wanted land that was fertile -- and therefore already inhabited. Where natives were thinly spread over the desired land, they were usually hunter-gatherers needing very large spaces for their subsistence. There was a natural abundance in regions like North America, but large settler populations always put pressure on the natives' habitat, displaced many natives and caused great hardship amongst them. Since the colonial economy was usually much more productive than the natives one, it could soon generate large economic surpluses capable of provisioning further conquest and cleansings (if sought). Thus the settlers' superior economic power resources became increasingly important in helping determine their eventual victory. No egalitarian compromise was possible to this economic clash over the land. But there were two relatively peaceful inegalitarian ones. First, negotiate a division of the land between the two communities whereby they could live **Segregated** from each

other. Given the disparity in power, the Europeans would likely take most good land, but survival might remain possible for both. This policy involved what colonials termed “protection” or “reservations”. Second, **Assimilate**. Given the power disparity, this would tilt toward the Europeans. They would constitute most of the property owners, with the natives as labourers. The natives would also assimilate more into European culture than vice-versa. However, if native economies were class-divided -- and so were regarded by the colonists as partly "civilized", then the two sides might seek what I called "**lateral aristocratic assimilation**", assimilating elites but not the masses. These were the relatively "moderate" "Plans" developed in colonial situations.

Political power. Small settler and trading groups might sometimes make no formal political claims on the land. But desire for monopolies tended toward political claims, and most settlers arrived in the name of states. On landing, Europeans would plant a flag, round up some natives and make a long and convoluted speech to them in an utterly unintelligible language, claiming the land and its people for the Crown (or the Republic). This political claim to the land and people was in principle monopolistic, likely to bring determined resistance. But Europeans often recognized that they could not enforce the claim. We can distinguish three degrees of enforcement of political power which brought ascending levels of violence against natives.

(1) **Extra-territoriality.** Against the most powerful rival states of the world, like the Chinese or Japanese or Ottoman Empires, they could not attain conquest. But they could achieve varying degrees of “extra-territorial” powers over trade. Their merchants would not be subject to local law and would enjoy certain privileges or monopolies. Only occasionally did this bring much European violence to the land -- as in the Chinese Opium Wars. But it did not bring cleansing, since the locals were regarded as useful trading partners and consumers. I only touch upon extra-territoriality when dealing with the Ottoman Empire in Chapter 5.

(2) **Indirect rule.** The medium level of political control was where the Europeans could conquer -- usually with the help of native allies -- but not rule on their own. They had to be content with indirect rule, or at most with “protectorates”, permitting native rulers to continue, while paying obeisance and tribute to the colonial authority. Indirect rule involved compromise and only limited violence and cleansing. Yet this was unstable where further settler waves put pressure on the colonial administration to go for more direct rule.

(3) **Direct rule.** Where they possessed considerable power preponderance, the Europeans insisted on direct rule, involving the complete submission of native rulers and masses to their powers and laws. This invariably happened where large numbers of settlers arrived and stayed, claiming their state – “rule by the people”, but not including natives. There now resulted a clash of rival sovereignties over the same territory (theses 1 and 2 above).

Thus state and political elites impacted on colonization. They almost **never** thought of destroying the land or killing the people, beyond what was necessary for conquest. They

wanted live natives, to tax and conscript. Yet they also needed to keep the settlers loyal. Where settlers wanted to eliminate the native population, this presented state elites with a dilemma. Thus state elites tended to be middling, wavering actors, between more extreme settlers and more moderate churches (see below). I will loosely term a colony largely controlled by settlers as “settler democracy”, more of a de facto than a de jure, constitutional concept. But we see immediately that settler democracy might be bad news for the natives.

Political power resources generally favoured Europeans. Theirs were more complex states, able to mobilize more resources than native polities. Aztecs and Incas could also mobilize, but only through loose and fragile federations of peoples and city-states. Europeans could divide and rule, offering allied elites indirect rule and **lateral aristocratic assimilation**, culturally assimilating elites but not masses into a “civilized” identity. North American confrontations differed. Natives were usually fragmented into many “tribes”, “clans” or “nations”, each rather fissiparous. Chiefs had great autonomy but little power. Indian chiefs could not make deals involving “lateral aristocratic assimilation”, since they could not provide stable indirect rule. U.S. government agencies did develop a debased version of such policies. They would claim to have made “treaties” with an Indian nation on the basis of a deal made with a small, unrepresentative group of desperate chiefs prepared to sign away extensive tribal lands in exchange for paltry rewards. Imperial sociologists like Herbert Spencer saw this as the operation of social evolution through “the survival of the fittest”, which in this case was the more politically differentiated societies (1876, I). Indeed, low political capacity did prove a major cause of the destruction of native groups. Conversely, native survival was greatly helped where Europeans fought against each other and had to recruit native auxiliary forces, to whom they granted indirect rule.

Military power. The clash was generally solved by war. The Europeans came armed, seeking conquest. The balance of military power varied according to numbers and technical and organizational capacities. Where Europeans were few, they could not easily conquer. Relative numbers explain much of the variation in colonial outcomes. But Europeans could increasingly make up for numerical weakness through more powerful military organization and technology. Some wars were costly, natives might long remain dangerous, but the outcome of battles **if** colonial resources could be focussed on them was not generally in doubt, especially in 19th century colonies after the development of quick-firing guns. Increasingly, therefore, if the Europeans wished to cleanse murderously, they could so with little risk to themselves -- more easily than any other group of conquerors in history (thesis 2b). But military power also involves tactical matters. As noted in Chapter 1, certain types of warfare are more likely to tactically “lure” soldiers toward more campaigns aimed against civilians. We must analyze the nature of colonial campaigns.

A combination of economic, military and political power relations would add up to what might be a “materialist” explanation of colonization based on settler economic goals, secured by military and political means, supplied by growing economic surpluses. We should add a **biological** power superiority of the Europeans in the temperate zones of settlement. There Europeans unwittingly carried lethal disease microbes. Natives in first

contact succumbed to everyday European diseases, since they had built up no immunity to them. Many have argued that diseases were easily the biggest killers of the native population, but the scale and nature of the epidemics has been recently disputed, with some suggesting that disease mostly worked in conjunction with food shortages and fertility declines more deliberately induced by the Europeans (Thornton, 1997). Disease epidemics certainly did accompany European penetration. New England colonists found expansion easy amid sick and dying natives, unable to work or fight, pleading, arms outstretched, for help. This was a very potent reinforcement of Europeans' sense of their power superiority.

For this was a clash of civilizations that had no prior contact. In Chapter 2 I quoted Peter Brown noting that barbarians invading the Roman Empire were actually neighbours, not "aliens from space" -- as in most historical conquests. But these Europeans had suddenly come from afar by means of a navigational revolution. They often seemed at first like aliens. Aztecs debated whether the first *conquistadores* were gods and fatally delayed their initial response; Hawaiians debated whether Captain Cook might be the god Lono -- though this might have proved fatal for him, not them. These were examples of native explanations of the great difference and the superiority of the Europeans in economic, military, political and sometimes biological power.

This provided the main thrust of **ideological power** among the Europeans. The two peoples in contact were clearly different ethnicities, in all of Anthony Smith's six senses listed in Chapter 1. Little "social construction" of ethnicity was needed here. No European doubted who was native and who was European. Natives did have to modify their sense of identity. They had not previously regarded themselves collectively as "natives" -- they were of diverse clans, lineages, nations and states. They were now forced to construct themselves as collectively distinct from "white" Europeans. Yet colonial ethnic conflicts had a degree of facticity to which the "constructivist" theories discussed in Chapter 1 are less appropriate.

"Superiority" is different. It was not "objective", especially since colonists behaved savagely and treacherously. As Trigger (1994) notes, their behaviour ensured that they were not regarded as gods for long. But in terms of economic, military and political resources, colonists' superiority was objective. The colonists explained this in terms of models drawn from their own history, models of "higher" civilizations overcoming "lower" ones, and of "civilization" overcoming "barbarity" or "savagery". This was the meaning of "history" and "progress", inevitable, what God intended. Nor were this mere abstraction. Being civilized involved notions of personal hygiene, clothing and manner which could make repugnant inter-personal contact with "dirty", unclothed and "unrestrained" natives. Natives were often dying of disease in front of them, seemingly physically unfit to live amid a higher civilization. Civilizational models of history and progress meant that it was highly plausible and relatively easy for settlers to develop ideologies of superiority to justify whatever treatment they meted out to the natives. They could insulate themselves from "moral risk" (as thesis 2b suggested). Like all ideologies, these were "constructed", but for most Europeans they seemed extremely plausible, even self-evident.

Of course, Europeans, like natives, were careful observers, and noted differences. If they found complex cities, monuments, irrigation agriculture, or even peoples of “proud bearing”, they varied their judgement. Pragmatic needs also generated ideology. If they needed to rule indirectly through native elites, or if they needed natives as stable sexual partners, they moderated their views. Christianity also complicated models. It reinforced the savage/ civilized dichotomy, since Christians alone had truth. The Church said that Christians had the right to dispossess non-Christians of their land, by “right of discovery”. Yet even savages were believed to have souls. Natives were literally in a “state of nature”, *naturales*, but they could be led to the true faith -- and thence to civilization. Conversion involves **Assimilation**, the cleansing of culture but not of lives. Thus Christianity strengthened dispossession but weakened murderous cleansing of natives. Later, the Enlightenment, liberalism and socialism brought secular moderating ideologies. The stronger the power of religious/ humanitarian groups, the less the murderous cleansing. This gives us a third colonial actor, professional ideologists -- churches, religious orders, missionaries, humanitarian movements. After initial conquest and land seizure, they were usually more restrained in their treatment of natives, though they were not immune to ethnic stereotypes or their own material interests.

What was the scale of European murderous cleansing? Let us first note where it was. Only the temperate zones of the new continents were very hospitable to European settlement, and this primarily meant the Americas, Australasia and small zones in the extreme north or south or in upland zones of Africa. This is where Europeans imposed what Crosbie (1993) calls “ecological imperialism”, domination by European humans, European weeds, European animals and European disease microbes. In human terms, the end-result in the temperate zones was cataclysmic, the most nearly-completed eliminations of populations ever recorded. In Australia the aboriginal population before the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 was probably just above 300,000 -- though there could have been as many as 500,000. Massive losses began after about 1820. By 1901 only about 93,000 remained. The low point was reached in 1921, about 72,000. Over a hundred years the attrition had been somewhere around 80%. Then the population stabilized, and after 1961 it even began to grow (Smith, 1980: 12, 69-70).

The Americas saw great variations according to regional rates of European settlement. Most regions with large settler populations lost about 90% of their natives -- bigger than any 20th century genocidal outbursts. The total pre-Columbian population of the continent was probably 60-100 million. Over half died. Thus the number as well as percentage of the dead far exceeds even the most notorious 20th century parallels (Stannard, 1992: 74-5, 81-7, 118, 146, 266-8). Within the Americas I focus most on the area of the present United States. Most scholars estimate its pre-Columbian Indian population between 4 and 9 million. By the time of the US Census of 1900 there were only 237,000 Indians, a loss rate of at least 95% over the 300 year period of colonization. Extermination happened last, and so is most visible to us, in California. The Spanish missionaries estimated 310,000 natives on their arrival in 1769. By 1848 when the gold-rush began, the population had halved. Thereafter it fell even faster as European settlement expanded. By 1860, after ten years of statehood, Californian

Indians were only 31,000 -- an 80% loss-rate over only 12 years! The Nazi regime also lasted 12 years and killed 70% of European Jews! Was this a Golden State Holocaust? Finally, things began to ease. By 1880 there were still over 20,000 Californian Indians and their numbers were stabilizing. They grew a little during the 20th century (Thornton, 1997; Almaguer, 1994: 107-130).²

How this cataclysm happen, how intentional was it and who perpetrated it? I explore variations between those wielding political power (colonial and post-colonial political elites), ideological power (mainly churches) and economic power (settlers). Military power might be wielded by either states or settlers. My four cases are drawn right across temperate zone colonization.

Mexico

The Spanish were the first major conquerors, initially of Caribbean islands where they did not face organized states. Most of these island expeditions were privateering ventures by rivalrous cut-throats, showing little restraint. They killed most of the native elite and coerced most of the rest to pan and mine for gold and silver, so that native agriculture was neglected. They recklessly over-worked natives on their estates and mines. They forcibly took native women into sexual relations so that Indians did not reproduce Indians. Their pigs and sheep destroyed the vegetation. European diseases then finished off a native population that was already declining rapidly. These were terrible **Ethnocides**. The native populations were wiped out -- unintentionally though with extreme callousness.

When they reached the mainland, things were different. They could see they confronted an advanced civilization. Cortes himself noted that these Indians were “of much greater intelligence than those of the other islands. Indeed, they appeared to us to possess such understanding as is sufficient for an ordinary citizen to conduct himself in a civilised country.”. He was also daunted by the size of the armies that the Aztecs could bring into the field. But he also recognized the severe divisions inside the Aztec Empire. He quoted St. Mark “Every kingdom divided against itself will be brought to destruction” (quotes from Thomas, 1995: 576, 245). Their initial “**Plan A**” was to impose state sovereignty, plunder gold and silver and then settle the land, and convert souls. The soldier-chronicler Bernal Diaz del Castillo cheerfully admitted to two of these: “To bring light to those in darkness, and also to get rich, which is what all of us men commonly seek” (quoted by Farris, 1984: 29). But this would only be possible by exploiting divisions among the city-state confederacies

²All figures on both continents must be treated as very rough estimates. Our sources on earlier periods are sparse, while in later periods the problems of deciding who is to be counted as an Indian or aborigine have increased, because of inter-marriage and assimilation. Most of those generally classified today as indigenous are of mixed blood.

that made up the Aztec Empire. He recruited as allies city-states which were restive under Aztec rule. This also meant that after conquest he had to share power with them. Spain might only rule indirectly over their lands.

During the Conquest there were many Spanish atrocities. They mainly consisted of **selective repression**, amounting at worst to **exemplary repression**. About twenty Mexican towns suspected of betrayal had their men killed, their women and children enslaved, their buildings burned. Dogs were occasionally used to tear victims apart. More commonly, the Spaniards would turn aside while their native allies tore them apart their former rulers and ate them. Such were the terrible accusations of Bartolome de las Casas, Bishop of San Cristobal, Chiapas, and the *conquistadores* only denied details of his charges. One of them defended the destruction of Cholula (believed to be hatching a conspiracy), saying it was “suitable to carry out the said punishment in order to put fear into the land”. Another said of the destruction of Tepeaca (in retaliation for the murder of twelve Spanish captains): “It was convenient to impose the said punishment for the pacification of the land ... and in order to put fear into the *naturales* so that they did no hurt to the Spaniards”. The Spaniards especially lost control when they believed someone was concealing gold. Rich Aztecs were tortured to reveal their supposed hiding-places, a few were ripped apart in search of swallowed jewels. These were the worst deeds in Cortes’ generally calculative, instrumentally-rational campaign. After the fall of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, many of its captains were executed. Yet the other inhabitants were allowed to leave the destroyed city in peace (Thomas, 1995: 243-5, 262, 434-9, 459, 527, 544).

It helped that Cortes was cool and patient. His lieutenant Alvarado could get panicked and inflamed and so commit worse atrocities. But in terms of military power there was a “tactical lure” away from murderous cleansing, and toward making distinctions between friendly, neutral and hostile natives, since allies were desperately needed. This campaign requirement was decisive in luring the *conquistadores* away from undifferentiated murder. At its worst this was the **Exemplary Repression** we saw in Chapter 2 being practiced by conquerors throughout history: making an example of those who resisted. The *conquistadores* were not “moderns” but traditional imperial conquerors. And so their “**Plan A**” of conquest, plunder and conversion did not aim at ethnic cleansing. Nor did its modification into full-scale settlement. This involved lording it over natives who would do all the work, if necessary by coercion. But they had learned from the Caribbean experience and in Mexico they developed the *encomienda* system. The Crown granted to Spanish settlers the land and the people on it, as virtual serfs. They were not allowed to drive the natives away, and they should protect them, though labour conditions could be very harsh.

They also had other motives for moderation. These settlers were overwhelmingly male and needed women. Maybe relative numbers alone, maybe a greater Spanish tolerance of ethnic diversity, ensured that many native partners became wives, begetting children in stable bi-ethnic relationships. But the numbers -- far more natives than Europeans -- meant that native marriages and procreation could continue alongside mixed marriages, meaning no

pronounced fertility decline. The conquest had also been clothed in religious legitimacy by “their Most Catholic Majesties” and accompanied by clerics saving souls -- assimilating natives into Christians. Priests and religious Orders were powerful at the courts of the monarchs and the Viceroy. The Spanish gentry were fighting for command posts in New Spain, and accusations of maltreatment of natives could get their rivals barred from office (the charge was raised against Cortes himself). Clerics also had powers of absolution and brought mixed and native marriages within the same sacred Church rituals. They helped moderate the worst excesses of conquerors and settlers.

Spanish commanders used non-Aztec elites as client rulers. These complied since they wished to keep some of their power and wealth. They had to convert, but this was often outward show. Local lords practiced whatever rites in private they chose; the Spanish avoided the idol-smashing which Cortes had initially practiced against the Aztecs. All this encouraged assimilation between Spaniards and native elites. Native rulers joined in military expeditions, received *encomienda* and Spanish grandee titles and their daughters were married to Spanish officers. Natives became priests and church musicians, and they used the law courts, often suing Spaniards. Their descendants became in habits and speech indistinguishable from those of the *conquistadores* (Thomas, 1995: 559-60, 577, 589-90). There were regional variations, mainly determined by numbers. Spaniards were 50% of the population of Mexico City by 1800, and so ruled it and some areas directly. But they remained under 4% of the central plateau and in the Yucatan, and so needed indirect rule, offering generous terms to Mayan lords which left their local power intact. Some Mayans believed that they would assimilate the Spaniards, rather than vice-versa (Farris, 1984: Chaps. 1 & 2). In the Yucatan, they did.

Thus the effective Spanish “**Plan B**” of long-term settlement involved the traditional technique of imperial rulers, “**lateral aristocratic assimilation**” -- assimilation of elites. In some regions this involved highly coercive rule by them both over the native masses, with high levels of tribute-taking and unfree labour regimes. There was a continuing process of Spanish expansion which lasted many years. The southern and central Yucatan was not conquered until the mid-19th century (as were several other *republicas indias* scattered across South America). In some places and periods the Spaniards ruled directly; in others the two communities were rather segregated under indirect rule, with few bilingual people. There were also backlash periods of rebellion, repression and increasing enforcement of a racial sense of caste purity. Nonetheless, in the long run over much of Mexico there emerged a *mestizo* (mixed-race) ruling class/ caste over diverse *indios* below. By 1821 20% of Mexicans were classified as *mestizo*, 20% as white, 40% as Indian and 20% as *casta*. Columbia had 43% *mestizo* (Centeno, 2000). Countries like Mexico, Guatemala and Peru saw phases of ethnic cleansing in which peripheral *indios* have been brutally displaced, even exterminated by white or *mestizo* elites. But overall a much higher proportion of the native population has survived than in North America.

The ferocity of initial conquest, pillaging and labour exploitation puts the Spaniards among

the deadliest of historical conquerors. The accompanying diseases may have made this the deadliest than any prior conquest. Yet the Spanish sought rule over natives, they were often forced to rule through native elites, and they wanted native labourers to do the work. The Spanish government and the Church were generally more moderate than the settlers. But none of them intended murderous ethnic cleansing. Where mass deaths occurred, this resulted primarily from **ethnocide**. And it then moderated. Australia and the United States followed a different trajectory.

Australia

Australian colonization began in 1788 and was consolidated through the 19th century. By then, British military and political power was far superior to the natives. Aborigines could mobilize only small bands with primitive weapons. Mid 19th century settlers were also ideologically equipped with racial theories.

There was a rather peculiar “**Plan A**”, the establishment of a convict settlement whose sustenance would require local agriculture. It was assumed the natives would trade with the settlers, help them work the land and be gradually taught civilization. There might have to be a show of force, perhaps even a few battles, but no-one initially conceived of extermination. This first phase was state-dominated, since British armed force was needed within the penal colony as well as outside it. But further waves of convicts and settlers, labourers and farmers, meant that the colony needed little native labour. Since the terrain favoured the grazing of animals more than arable farming, settlement spread out over very large areas. The aborigines were hunter-gatherers, requiring even more extensive lands for their subsistence. Thus there was a fundamental conflict over subsistence and the land, focussed on its rivers, water-holes, game and edible grasses. Aborigines did not have the military or political organization to fight “wars”, but they did raid in search of food, spearing cattle and sheep, stealing sacks of flour, and occasionally killing whites.

To Europeans wandering hunter-gatherers also seemed extraordinarily primitive. They were almost naked, dirty and they lacked states, one god and literacy. Many settlers viewed them as intelligent animals; others saw them as children in the body of an adult; others radicalized toward seeing them as vermin, the source of pollution and disease. Phenotypically, the two groups did differ and after the popular distortion of Darwin’s theories into “Social Darwinism” after mid-century, Europeans were in no ethnic ambiguity: these were two different races (Markus, 1994: Chap. 1; Haebich, 1988: 54, 80). Since aborigines “bestowed no value on the land” through labour, they also had no right to it. Since they were unused to agriculture, most settlers declared that they could not use their labour. Not until the late 19th century did labour shortages force settlers to really try. Before then, aborigines were “idle”, “shiftless”, without sense of clock time or fixed place, unable to accept labour discipline. Since they appeared to have no class differences, none could be regarded as more civilized than the others. There could be no policy of “**lateral aristocratic assimilation**”. No aborigine had any economic or political value. They could be not used, only driven off. So

the settlers responded to resistance with “**Plan B**”, the driving away most of the natives from the area of settlement by force. This was initially conceived of as mere “dispersal”, ie **Policed Deportation**, not something worse. For was not this vast continent big enough for both communities to share?

Yet settlement coincided with the Industrial Revolution in the mother country. This fuelled great expansion of sheep (for wool), followed by cattle (industrialized war meant that cattle reared amid even poor quality grass could produce tallow fat for the greasing of guns). The sheep and cattle ate the edible grasses, drained the water supply and destroyed the game. Aborigines were driven into the more barren interior. They faced starvation. They regarded the land as theirs, they felt entitled to share in its produce. They continued to steal cattle, sheep and whatever else they could find. Sometimes they just destroyed them, hoping to force the whites into going away. Occasionally they murdered them. These forms of resistance brought “retaliation” on an exponential scale by whites calling for “the extermination of the black fiends”. At least 20,000 aborigines, perhaps many more, were killed by the settlers in sporadic frontier skirmishes throughout the 19th century and lasting into the late 1920s. No-one seems to have tried to estimate the number of dead whites, but they cannot have numbered as many as two hundred. At the worst, this involved deliberate “killing sprees” by the whites.

So “**Plan C**” emerged among some outback settlers as **Deportations** became “**Wild**” and degenerated into local bouts of **Genocide**. Settlers usually felt they themselves had been “driven” rather suddenly to such expedients by aboriginal resistance and encroachment. They were defending themselves and their sacred property rights. Their own local settler organizations were able to accomplish escalatory “retaliation”. These were areas of low political institutionalization in which settlers could act first, without seeking political legitimation from above, and with little likelihood of risking death themselves.

There were also **Ethnocidal** elements, both unintended and consequential upon exploitation.. Disease was not the immediate killer that it had been in Spanish America. Some aborigines contracted diseases on immediate contact, but most resulted from prolonged contact with settlers. Leprosy proved a distinctive problem, but the deadliest diseases were social ones. In most frontier areas white males dominated and settlers forced sex from aboriginal women. There were a few marriages, more stable common-law unions, but even more forcible abduction, rape and hunger-induced prostitution. Soon there were far more settlers than natives. All this combined to retard aboriginal reproduction. Young aboriginal women were kept away from their men, ensuring the birth of fewer full-blood, more mixed-race infants. Venereal diseases also swept through aboriginal camps located on the fringes of white settlements, producing serious physical degeneration and early death. Malnourished aborigines succumbed to disease more generally, while degradation led to and was worsened by alcoholism. By 1850 most whites believed the race was dying out.

This was contrary to colonial administrators' intentions. All governors declared benign

intentions toward natives, urging settlers to “conciliate their affections” and finance “protectorates” (reservations) for natives, and they offered natives the full protection of the English law. The British only allowed limited settler self-rule until mid-century and the colonial administration persistently tried to restrain cleansing. When Britain finally granted Western Australia self-government in 1889, it tried to keep control of native affairs to ameliorate the treatment of aborigines. Yet far across the globe the Westminster Parliament took little interest in the colony and provided the colony with only a tiny civil service and military. The settlers had de facto local controls, especially in outback regions. A rancher and goldminer became Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia state and suggested “if the government shut their eyes for six months and let the settlers deal with the natives in their own way it would stop the depredations” (Haebich, 1988: 97) The administration lacked both the funds and the local support for benevolent paternalism, and in practice was soon forced to abandon it. Official colonial policy could not be implemented (Markus, 1994: 23-9; Rowley, 1970: Part I).

There was an enormous military difference between local settlers and natives: between guns and spears, between young white men riding horses and fleeing aboriginal families of all ages. Across the continent came a common form of settler “retaliation” for thefts of stock: surround an aborigine camp at night, attack at dawn and massacre men, women and children alike. Sometimes the “retaliation” was completely misdirected. After a theft incident, said a witness, one camp was stormed “and men, women and children were shot indiscriminately. Some took to the river and were shot as they swam. Their dead bodies subsequently floated down past the Settlement”. The theft was later traced to a white employee (Rowley, 1970: 112-3). When hungry aborigines stole flour, the settlers would leave poisoned sacks of flour for them to find. So settlers rarely had to call in soldiers to help them remove aborigines. A Queensland aborigine gave the native view of the whole frontier sequence:

“We were hunted from our ground, shot, poisoned and had our daughters, sisters, and wives taken from us ... what a number were poisoned at Kilcoy ... They stole our ground where we used to get food, and when we got hungry and took a bit of flour or killed a bullock to eat, they shot us or poisoned us. All they give us now for our land is a blanket once a year” (quoted by Rowley, 1970: 158).

For more routine force, settlers relied on local paramilitaries. Native Police Forces were officered by local whites, manned by de-tribalized aborigines. A unit would have two white officers and five to ten aboriginal troopers to do all the dirty work -- their main motive being pay and security unparalleled among aborigines. This tactic enabled offloading much of the moral blame onto aborigines themselves, thus confirming some of the stereotypes of “savagery” which fuelled their activities in the first place. Native Forces were set up across the country as an early part of the introduction of “responsible statehood”. Full statehood was formally achieved in 1856 in eastern and southern Australia, with the west following in the 1880s.

The Queensland Native Police Force of between 100 and 250 men was set up in 1848. In 1861 the state's Legislative Assembly was forced by vocal humanitarians to appoint a committee of inquiry to investigate charges of unnecessary cruelty. It predictably exonerated the force, blaming any excesses on a few unnamed "intemperate" officers. But the evidence (reproduced by Rowley, 1970: 158-63) reveals terrible routine police procedures. One officer, described by the Committee as "valuable and zealous", testified that he enjoyed considerable discretion while engaged in law enforcement. His most general instruction from headquarters was to "disperse" the natives when faced with trouble. The order ran "It is the duty of the Officers at all times and opportunities to disperse any large assemblage of blacks; such meetings, if not prevented, invariably lead to depredations or murder ... retributive justice shall speedily follow the Commission of crime...." He gave an example of how he interpreted this instruction while investigating white shepherds' complaints of cattle and sheep stealing. The shepherds said that the guilty aborigines had come from the Telemon side of the local range. The officer found a group of blacks in roughly the right area and instructed his troopers "to surround that camp of Telemon blacks, and to disperse them". Questioned "What do you mean by dispersing?", he replied

"Firing at them".

"Do you think it is a proper thing to fire upon the blacks in that way?"

"If they are the right mob, of which I had every certainty."

"What induced you to give those orders?"

"The letters I had received from several [white] squatters".

Asked if he had seen any evidence of cattle killed, he replied

"I could not waste time to see whether a cow or a bullock had been speared."

"Do you not think there is any other way of dealing with them, except by shooting them?"

"No, I don't think they can understand anything else except by shooting them."

There is no conception here of individual guilt or innocence, only of collective racial responsibility attributed to an entire aboriginal group. Nor did he explain how dead aborigines can understand better! But he was candid about his own understanding of aborigines. Asked whether his force had helped "civilize" aborigines, he replied "That is a question I am not prepared to answer, I know so little of the blacks. They run before me -- I never see them."

It cannot surprise us that they would flee from him, since he took whites' reports alone as reason enough to shoot any aborigines found nearby. One of the force's critics says he examined a trooper's rifle and saw on it twenty nine notches, each representing an aboriginal victim (1994: 34-5, 40). The Chief Inspector of the Queensland Native Police, sent to report on a larger massacre, whitewashed his force: "I cannot see that the officer could have acted otherwise ... it is very much to be regretted that he did not do so more quietly." (Rowley, 1970: 169). Markus calls this "the great Australian silence". Killings were described by euphemisms like "dispersal" or even grotesquely "having a picnic with the Natives", unlike North American colonists who were usually blunt in admitting their "exterminations".

The settlers could avoid justice for such crimes, since they controlled the law courts. Until the 1840s the courts deemed aborigines incapable of understanding the law. They required white witnesses for any alleged offence by a white against an aborigine (normal in the North American and African cases discussed later). The colonial administration did then insist on legislation to allow aboriginal evidence, but in practice settler juries discounted it anyway. Whites were almost never brought to justice for their atrocities. We have data on accusations against officials: only eight cases between 1788 and 1940, only one official found guilty, very early on, in 1799 -- and he was pardoned. Of all known cases against whites during the 19th century, only ten men were executed, all in the colonial period, of whom eight were convicts, seven in a case where the Crown persisted in a retrial after the local jury had first acquitted them (Markus, 1994: 46-8). So perpetrators of atrocities against aborigines could almost never be brought to justice -- a universal complaint among native peoples in the European colonies.

However, some settlers and many churchmen regretted “dispersals” and especially exterminations. Rather few in numbers they could mobilize far more publicity, demand inquiries, and occasionally get them. Their influence probably derived from the fact that once the frontier moved on, leaving the land and all institutions securely in the hands of the whites, locals had no reason to support further atrocities. Missionaries railed in public against atrocities. They favoured conversion: aborigines could survive if they renounced their own culture and assimilated. There developed what Rowley has termed a “triangle of tension” between settlers, missionaries and British government. Australian state assemblies were affected by a cycle underway in each area. Settlement, then resistance, then “dispersal” culminated in secure institutionalization of white control and expulsion combined with urban fringe dwelling by the aborigines. So at any point in time, settler experiences differed enormously. In Queensland extermination was completed by the 1890s except in the far north. There remained only the difference between “mayhem and violence in Cape York ... [and] ... the streets of Brisbane and the country towns where Aborigines and part-Aborigines had come to be regarded as harmless nuisances”. As for the future, the assumption, was that there would not be one. The aborigines would disappear (says Rowley, 1970: 170-1). In the Brisbane Parliament Cape York representatives demanded “firmness”, while those from secure Brisbane might be more responsive to religious and humanitarian concerns. “Experts”, who “knew the aborigine” usually carried the day, and they generally “he needed a firm hand”. The colonial secretary of the Queensland Parliament said in 1880 that experienced frontiersmen

“knew that the native black of Australia was essentially a treacherous animal -- that he would spare neither man, woman, notr child, cattle, sheep, horses, nor pigs They were only guided by fear ... it was only possible to rule a svage race ... by brute force, and by showing him that you are his master.”

Another MP declared that on the basis of thirty years experience “the only way to deal with the aborigines was to establish a wholesome fear in them before you had any dealings with

them". Social Darwinism also supported the world-historical inevitability of aboriginal decline: they had no future, so we might as well be rid of them. B.D. Moorehead was later elected prime minister partly because he expressed this popular mood well:

"What was being done in Queensland was being done in every country ... The colonist had come here as white men and were going to put the black man out ... The lower race must give way before the superior race ... [It was a mistake] ... to try and initiate a course of action by which these poor creatures would be enabled to linger out an existence which was bound to cease on the advance of the Anglo-Saxon ... The blackfellows had to go, and go they must ... the aboriginal race was [not] worth preserving. If there were no aboriginals it would be a very good thing." (Quotes from Markus, 1994: 36-7)

In 1849 another politician declaimed "Nothing can stay the dying away of the Aboriginal race, which Providence has only allowed to hold the land until replaced by a finer race." A third said "it is in the order of nature that, as civilization advances, savage nations **must** be exterminated". (Hughes, 1987: 7, 91, 273-8). Not only settlers thought this way. It was a perfectly conventional European view. The novelist Anthony Trollope visited Australia in the 1870s and declared "an increasing number of aborigines in the land, -- were it possible that the race should increase, -- would be a curse rather than a blessing ... their doom is to be exterminated; and the sooner that their doom is accomplished, -- so that there can be no cruelty, -- the better will it be for civilization." (Cocker, 1998: 178). A more moderate Western Australian "expert" counselled humanity until doom came: "All we can do is to protect them as far as possible and leave nature to do the rest. It is a case of survival of the fittest but let the fittest do their best" (Haebich, 1988: 80). Of course, Darwin himself was appalled when he witnessed General Rojas' war of extermination launched against South American natives in 1832 (when on his way to the Galapagos Islands). He would have been appalled again by what was being later done in his name in Australia. So would Spencer, from whom Darwin borrowed the term 'survival of the fittest'.

Survival was possible in hunter-gathering in the interior, where white men did not settle, and in the far north, where settlement came late. This accounted for many full-blooded survivors into the 20th century. More (mostly of mixed blood) lived on the margins of white settlements, somehow eking out livings, despised, often demoralized, coping with poor health, diseases and alcoholism. Where more intensive agriculture or industry developed after about 1870, surviving aboriginal communities found some opportunities for steady if exploitative work. White immigration was slow. Sugar plantations, maritime activities like pearl-diving, mining and pastoralism felt labour shortages. Except for pastoral work, owners still preferred to hire labourers from Melanesia or elsewhere in Asia, such were their negative views of aborigines. However, after 1900 the "white Australia" immigration policy, devised to "Keep the Race Pure", dried up foreign sources of labour. Though unions and Labour politicians tried to exclude aborigines from the labour market to keep white wage rates up, northern employers were forced to turn to aborigines. They and their aboriginal workers eventually worked out tolerable labour practices.

By the early 20th century, some ranchers and mine managers were not unresponsive to missionary pressure for regulation of labour conditions or state-subsidized protection for the remaining aborigine communities. "Protection", ie some **Segregation**, remained official policy until World War II -- a kind of "**Plan D**" -- coercive and insufficiently funded. Many reservations saw malnutrition, disease and death. Laws might prevent aborigines from entering towns and cities without a permit from an official; some states' officials had powers over marriages, preventing aborigines from marrying each other or half-breeds from marrying whites. But all these powers were variably implemented and aborigines now lived in very varied living conditions. During this period population revival brought recognition that aborigines were not going to die out. Since mass killing was now out of the question, this was a "problem" here to stay.

So this policy was succeeded by attempts at **Coercive Assimilation** ("**Plan E**"), dominating from the 1940s until the 1970s, a product of global decolonization and de-racialization. In Australia this meant that assimilation was at last seen as the solution, though those of mixed-blood were still seen as being easier cases. Aborigines could become citizens -- provided they renounced all tribal associations and culture. The notorious powers to remove aboriginal children from their parents remained (only the state of Victoria did not allow this), to be brought up as "orphans" in white institutions or homes. Astonishingly, this phase only ended with the election campaign of 1972 and the election of Gough Whitlam's Labour government. Whitlam proclaimed full citizenship plus the restoration "to the Aboriginal people of Australia their lost powers of self-determination in economic, social and political affairs". Aborigines now have full citizen rights plus the freedom to retain what they like of their culture and organizations -- a formal policy of **Multi-Culturalism** -- combined in practice with **Discrimination** (for later developments, see Markus, 1994, and Rowley, 1972; for Western Australia see Hunter, 1993 & Haebich, 1988). This is far from perfect but it is a lot better than aboriginal history.

But the southern island of Tasmania took no part in this improvement. Its ecology differed. The island is everywhere hospitable to European small farming, and this occurred early. Here we can see what happened when there was no escape from the settlers and no desire by the settlers to use aboriginal labour. About 4,500 aborigines lived on the island when the settlers arrived in 1804 (Smith, 1980: 70). Every full-blooded aborigine was wiped out inside eighty years. The last man died in 1869, the last woman in 1876. A few of mixed blood seem to have survived, joined later by mixed-blood immigrants. Shooting on sight, "hunting parties" and poisoning flour were more common here from the beginning. Again, the island's colonial administration initially urged conciliation. But in 1830 Lieutenant-Governor Arthur succumbed to settler pressures on his Legislative Council and declared a massive "drive" launched across the entire island which would round up all the remaining 2,000 aborigines and place them in reservations. This was a failure, since the aborigines evaded their pursuers. Policy was now entrusted to George Robinson, known as the "Conciliator", who had lived unarmed among the aborigines and believed they presented

no threat. Robinson advocated a “reservation” policy and his influence among the aborigines enabled him to secure a largely voluntary rounding-up in 1834. Indeed, had they stayed around the fringes of farms and sheep stations, the settlers would probably have killed them all. But the consequence of Robinson’s **policed deportations** was sadly the same. The last aborigines were transported to a small island and crowded together with too little food. Disease and malnutrition carried them off over the next two decades, to the almost complete unconcern of the white community (Rowley, 1970: 43-53; Hughes, 1987: 414-24; Cocker, 1998: Chaps. 7-11).

Tasmania was the extreme case of settlers requiring the land but not the labour. There were initially many British convicts providing all the needed labour. Most settlers wanted the aborigines removed and they provided the main thrust for deliberate murderous cleansing. "Plan A" was for **policed deportations**, removing them by force of arms, becoming **wilder** ("Plan B") by shooting any who sought to evade deportation, some who were just running and some just for the “fun” of it. The survivors were then left to rot in grossly inadequate conditions, while Tasmanians were pursuing their own lives, with aborigines now merely an absence, out of mind. The whole process was more than callous and was too intentional to be called ethnocide. It was really a rolling **genocide** which nobody quite planned but to which most contributed their bit. An effective "settler democracy" perpetrated it, when the the colonial government caved in.

And this was so right across Australia. From the 1850s settler democracy was effectively in control. Rowley says “no indigenous peoples have been more completely at the mercy of typical settler democracies, where the standards of parliament are those of the settlers” (1972: 23, 72, 132, 137). Elimination came in many short-lived rolling waves of settler penetration, resistance, deportations -- sometimes followed by sudden, mostly unpremeditated genocidal bursts. The language of planning -- of "Plan A, B, C" etc. -- might not be appropriate to the fluid circumstances of the outback before the onset of stabilized political institutions. This combination continued until labour shortages, followed by changing global political and humanitarian climates, forced more assimilatory and eventually more multi-cultural practices..

The United States

In several respects North American colonization lay in between the Australian and Mexican cases. The natives posed an intermediate level of threat, formidable in battle, persistent in campaigns, but fighting only in smallish groups. Their level of civilization was also intermediate (as seen by the Europeans). There was more trade with natives than in Australia, but there was no native Empire worth the pickings, as in Mexico. There was neither dire initial conquest and enslavement nor the later widespread assimilation of the Spanish Empire. But settler pressure on the land proved the most relentless here. Thousands upon thousands of settlers seized the land, worked it with non-Indian labour and removed the Indians. They possessed the military and political power to accomplish this and the

ideological means to legitimate it.

But this happened gradually and cumulatively, without long-term premeditation. As in Australia this was a mixed ethnocide/ genocide of many rolling waves breaking westward over the country. Early on, settlers were few and poorly armed (Bellesisles, 2000). They had to co-operate and trade with the natives who could also exploit their geopolitical divisions. The Iroquois and Huron increased their power by fighting as auxiliaries for the French or British. But British victory in 1763 ended this geopolitical space in the east, as later in the west did the American victory in California and Texas over the Spanish. As I argued earlier, trade rarely produced terrible consequences for natives. Nash (1972: 133) notes that images of the Indian developed through trading were milder than those of permanent settlement. Trade brought stereotypes of natives as primitive but winsome, perhaps ignorant and sometimes dangerous, but nonetheless viewed as receptive to European ideas and goods. Indians who traded were also useful, not to be removed. And it benefited them too, Iroquois power notably increasing while the fur trade flourished.

But settler farmers, not traders, eventually predominated in all areas. They needed labour, but Indians were not used to dependent labour. To the settlers, these hunter-gatherers "wasted" the land; Indians as simple agriculturalists did not work it efficiently. Indians did not "improve" the land, they were "idle". From John Locke to contemporary Israeli stereotypes of Palestinians, Europeans have argued that those who work and improve the land are entitled to it. The New World was thus *vacuum domicilium* or *terra nullius*, an "empty" home or land, the bounty of God to the civilized peoples. Thus they made lesser attempts to employ the natives, convert them to Christianity, intermarry with them, or culturally assimilate them. The Puritans wished in theory to convert them but felt they had not the resources to do so. They compromised by attempting to bring them within Christian civil government, and that meant breaking them by all means necessary. The Puritans were capable of describing the most frightful forms of warfare -- like the frying of Indian men, women and children in villages they had torched -- as "God laughing at his enemies" (Nash, 1992: 84).

The settlers kept on coming, waves upon waves of them. Some ploughed Indian lands, others grazed cattle, some mined. Merely crossing the land with roads, railroads and staging-posts scared away the game. But they also hunted the game to extinction, selling meat and hides for the insatiable appetite of the cities. The Indians' environment degraded and they died, even without wars. Survivors depended on government handouts of essential supplies for which they traded off their lands, sometimes unwittingly. They were crowded onto smaller hunting lands and reservations. The Europeans were well aware of the relentless **ethnocide** this involved. Some realized it provoked some braves to raid settlers' farms out of hunger and anger, and to intermittently rebel. When Indians resisted, Europeans responded with "retaliation", which was actually fearsome escalation. Among them were always some frankly avowing **genocide**.

They had the political and military power to achieve these dire ends without much risk to

themselves. Political power was necessary to establish legal title to the land, not only against the Indians but also within the normal transactions of an agrarian capitalist economy. The colonial state needed legal sovereignty, and the Indians ceded it, sometimes coerced, but often without realizing it. When they did realize just how much they were being "legally" deprived of, they rebelled. But the colonial state, and then the settler state, had the military power to inflict a long series of crushing military defeats on them.

European ideology perceived an enormous difference in civilizational level between themselves and natives. Natives could not work the land as "productively" as Europeans, and did not know private property, they were also illiterate, "idolatrous", "heathen", half-naked and "dirty". Their weapons were inferior, they had little capacity for extensive organization. The Europeans said that before their arrival, this had been a land "full of wild beasts and wild men", "a hideous and desolate wilderness". The settlers could distinguish between horse-riding, well-clad Plains Indians, with "proud bearing" and military skills and the lightly-clad hunter-gatherers of California, described as "beasts", "swine", "dogs", "wolves", "snakes", "pigs", "baboons", "gorillas". But ultimately, Indians were "savages". And divine Providence was there for all to see, in the form of disease. This was the hand of a providential God, reasoned John Winthrop, describing the smallpox epidemic of 1617 as God's way of "thinning out" the native population "to make room for the Puritans". William Bradford wrote "It pleased God to visit these Indians with a great sickness and such a mortality that of a thousand, above nine and a half hundred of them died." Followers of the Lord, he said, could only give thanks to "the marvelous goodness and providence of God" (all quotes from Nash 1972: 136; Stannard, 1992: 238). It was thus difficult for 17th, 18th or 19th century Europeans **not** to conceive of North American natives as "savages", whom God had not favoured. Whatever they did to the natives, they could justify ideologically. Some scholars believe that the English were already influenced by prior experience of the "savage" Irish. But this is misleading. As Chapter 2 showed, the English wished to forcibly assimilate, not eliminate, the Irish. Cromwell murdered surrendering soldiers, occasionally noncombatant men, but never consciously women and children. But the New World natives were "unclean". To live amongst them would pollute, a fear which endured through the centuries of colonization. This meant that Indian women and children were also at risk. The ideology had genocidal elements. But it changed its form during the 18th century. Labels for the natives shifted away from "savage" or "heathen" or casual analogies with animals to labels of race, influenced by experience with African slaves. Scientific classification systems of races as distinct species or as thousands-year-old adaptations to climate, ecology, disease etc. then added rigidity to races, linked them hierarchically, conjoined physical, temperamental and moral qualities, and described the whole ensemble of races as natural and God-given (Smedley, 1993: Chaps 4-7). Civilization might be learned, but race was fixed. The ideology of God plus science reinforced economic, military and political power to make it difficult for Europeans and Indians to live amongst each other.

Ideology could justify the forcible mass deportations of sick and hungry natives, whose chances of survival outside their traditional lands were poor. Often it included murderous

outbursts. Over long stretches of time, the effect was almost complete **ethnocide** with enough intermittent intentionality to be termed **genocide**, even though few perpetrators individually intended more than local extermination. Assimilation played relatively little role in this monstrous cleansing until the 20th century when highly coercive **cultural suppression**, like the forcible removal of Indian children to Christian boarding schools, began to be practiced. This milder policy was known as “kill the Indian, spare the man”.

Counter-tendencies were weaker than in the Spanish colonies. The British colonial state tended to be more moderate than settler communities. This partly resulted from geopolitical calculations in a period of imperial rivalry. Since they wanted Indian auxiliaries, the British (and French) were keener to honour Indian treaties than were the settlers. But the British Crown had less control than had the Spanish Crown. Nor was the Anglican Church ever in a monopoly position. The various churches were much closer to the white settler communities they served. Though local priests and ministers might be more moderate than their congregations, they had little power over them. As in Australia they played second fiddle to missionary movements, the main early pressure group for assimilating, rather than eliminating natives.

However, a distinctive feature of the North American colonies was the emergence of a secular "Enlightenment" ideological movement penetrating settler and then US elites. Like the missionaries, many of its adherents wished to assimilate natives through education. Indians might be “savages” now but they were of the same single human race. They possessed reason and some seemed noble, dignified, brave, intelligent and adaptable to their environment. Through education in English they could surely be brought to appreciate private property, work, literacy and religion. This “philanthropic” view, as Sheehan (1973: 10) notes, required that Indians must abandon the hunter-warrior culture, the tribal order and the communal ownership of land (enlightened Australians made the same requirements of the aborigines). Inter-marriage was in principle favoured, but there was to be no cultural compromise, no multi-ethnicity. Savages would embrace **voluntary assimilation** -- they would want to be civilized. Presidents Washington and Jefferson, several secretaries of war and federal Indian agencies worked closely with missionaries and schools in this assimilation project. They also warned that resistance would meet with certain defeat, but did not conceive of assimilation as coercive -- which would not have been popular with the settlers, opposed to all assimilation.

The programme attracted a few Indians, but was puny compared to the continuous economic, political and military pressure on them. When most Indian experience of settlers was of greed, exploitation and betrayal, they came to regard them with quite as much contempt as flowed in their direction. Nor did assimilation have material gains for them until after they abandoned the very institutions of tribal collectivism which nourished them. Unlike Mexico, North American Indian society was egalitarian. Chiefs had little property which they might be anxious to preserve by seeking “**lateral aristocratic assimilation**”. Neither community was much interested in inter-marriage. Prominent colonials fathered

children by Indian women, but rarely legitimized them. Permanent inter-racial unions were commoner among frontier traders and labourers in those southern colonies with a large surplus of males. There was mixed blood, and this was accepted in Indian communities. But few Indians or half-breeds tried to join white society, and most were rejected (Nash, 1992: 280-5). Cherokees who had become private propertied planters were rejected en masse in the 1820s, and when Cherokees acquired permanent political institutions, the state of Georgia reacted with hostility, insisted on its absolute monopoly of political power at the regional level. It lobbied hard for the deportation of the Cherokee, and achieved this in 1834 (Champagne, 1992: 133, 143-6).

Indeed, by the 1820s the philanthropists were recognizing the failure of their policies. So they switched to advocate "protection", the **policed deportation** of all Indians to new tribal lands west of the Mississippi. This, they reasoned, was better than piecemeal elimination through land-grabbing, murder and degradation. It would allow time, they hoped, for assimilation to occur later. But when the deportations occurred during the 1830s they proved "**wilder**". Many died in the treks and the survivors only put more pressure on Indians further westward. The reality was that ordinary settlers, supported by their local state governments, refused to have Indians as neighbours, assimilated or not. Nor did many Indians want assimilation on the terms offered.

California initially contained a more complex mix of Spanish and American practices. It was settled for 80 years by the Spanish and then conquered by the United States. In the Spanish period the state's presence was very weak, comprising only a handful of soldiers and administrators protecting a few settlers and missionaries. But the Church, or rather the Franciscan Order, was much stronger. The central institution dealing with the Indians was the chain of Californian Missions. They were concerned primarily to save souls, but they also set up entire communities and systems of agriculture to sustain those souls. They sought a benevolent goal with highly coercive means.

The second head of the Missions was Father Fermin Lasuen, a Basque who had taken holy orders at age fifteen. He was a Franciscan missionary in Mexico at age 24, and then served in the California Missions for thirty years (almost half his life) until his death in 1803. His intentions were benevolent. He wanted to save the Indians through conversion and assimilation. He knew this was difficult. Indians were "without education, without government, religion, or respect for authority, and they shamelessly pursue without restraint whatever their brutal appetites suggest to them". How could he could transform "a savage race ... into a society that is human, Christian, civil and industrious"? "This can be accomplished only by denaturalizing them. It is easy to see what an arduous task this is, for it requires them to act against nature. But it is being done successfully by means of patience and by unrelenting effort". Indians were in a "state of nature", different from the Spanish *gente de razon*, people of reason. While in their state of nature, created by God, they were to be treated benignly as free men. Though savages, they could not be exploited, still less driven away or killed. This was benevolent.

But once Indians were baptized, everything changed. Then they came under the authority of the Order, and the Order was in effect a prison. Long hours of enforced arduous work in the fields were followed by hours of forced prayers, in Latin, a language of which they understood not a word. Indian girls were locked up at night. If the Indians showed any independence, or refused to work or pray, they were shackled and whipped, and forced to recite more Latin. If they ran away, the soldiers forcibly brought them back, shackled them and whipped them more. Sometimes they would even crop off an ear or brand a lip. The Indians had difficulty escaping anyway, since independent Indian villages would not take them in. This was a religious prison, a concentration camp driven by an ostensibly benevolent ideology.

Inside the prison, Indians and Spanish were tightly crammed together, and the Indians were forced into heavy labour with inadequate nutrition. European diseases rampaged terribly through them. Their caloric and vitamin intake was insufficient for people doing heavy labour. The bones of Mission Indians are much smaller than those of free Californian Indians, and they were much less likely to survive (Stannard, 1992: 138-9). This was an example of what Table 1.1 called **revolutionary mistakes**, attempts to effect wholesale social transformation, driven by over-riding commitment to a value (value-rationality, not instrumental rationality), which instead brought disaster. We meet them again in Chapter 11, when dealing with Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot. The Franciscans committed a local **ethnocide**, unintentional but devastating. Half California's Indians died during the Mission period, almost all from diseases introduced there amid a population weakened by too much coerced work, too little food.

This also destroyed their spirit. European travellers said they appeared apathetic, aimless, without hope. Sir George Simpson had formerly been head of the Hudson's Bay Company, where he had shown benevolence to local Indians and had encouraged intermarriage between them and his employees. But in California in 1841 he noted: "These sons and daughters of bondage -- many of them too sadly broken in spirit even to marry -- are so rapidly diminishing in numbers that they must soon pass away from the land of their fathers, a result which, as it seems uniformly to spring from all the conflicting varieties of civilized agency, is to be ultimately ascribed to the inscrutable wisdom of mysterious Providence." (Mission quotes from La Perouse, 1989: 18-19; Paddison, 1999: 249-50). Even a moderate white perceived their end as divine Providence. Actually, it was human Providence, the unintended consequence of ideologically-driven humans. Franciscans were the Maoists of the 18th century, intending the improvement of the world but achieving its devastation.

The Spanish ranchers in California were more economically- than ideologically-driven, and behaved more like their compatriots in Mexico. They expected the work to be done by natives. Many dispossessed Indians could come back as labourers. There was also more inter-marriage, though this never amounted to a genuine *mestizo* outcome, since there was no Indian elite with whom they wished to assimilate. But there was little murder, rather a "Plan" combining **coercive assimilation** with limited **Segregation** of remaining Indian

communities. Things seemed set to improve further after Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1821. The new Mexican government, influenced by Enlightenment ideas, proclaimed in 1826 the "Emancipation" of most Mission Indians and secularization (virtual abolition) of the Missions followed in 1833. Half their lands were to be distributed to the Indians. Unfortunately, benevolence by a distant state was undermined by rapacious local settler officials who took most of the land themselves -- settler democracy again (Phillips, 1975: Chap. 2). By this time, however, incoming settlers were almost all Anglos. Fifteen years later they seized California from Mexico and made it a U.S. state. California became more like the rest of the U.S., ensuring that the rate of deliberate killing of Indians increased markedly.

What was happening in bursts across North America came at times much closer to the very worst type of cleansing, **genocide**. But was this intended? Most native deaths did not result from murder. Though we lack accurate numbers, the largest killer was disease. In California the interlinked categories of disease, malnutrition and starvation killed somewhere around 60-80% of natives, direct killing about 10%, with most of the remainder attributable to "reproductive failure". Deliberate killings were usually in cold-blood or in situations of such an imbalance of force that the appellation "murder" is applicable. But none of these categories are entirely separable from each other. Malnutrition, starvation and low fertility often resulted predictably from settler policy, while diseases were not entirely accidental. Diseases spread most rapidly where malnourished natives were herded closely together, as in California Missions and the many U.S. Indian Reservations located on marginal lands. The settlers were not ignorant of the disease mechanisms involved, yet they rarely took steps against epidemics to which they themselves were immune. Nor were they unhappy as to the results. Nash (1992: 300-1) compares the white responses to the spread of disease among Indians and black slaves. Since slaves were valuable, the white community tried to combat epidemics among them. Slaves were inoculated against smallpox. Indians were not. Indeed, some settlers fomented the spread of disease. Donations of disease-ridden blankets to Indians have become notorious, though they were rare.

More important (as in Australia) were gender abuses and diseases. Indian women were raped or reduced by poverty to prostitution. So they transmitted venereal disease, much more deadly to Indians than whites. No controls were attempted. Alcoholism demoralized and killed Indian men. Yet despite attempts at control by government agencies and missionaries, settlers routinely used alcohol as payment for Indian lands and labour. The **callousness** is clear. They either intended Indian deaths or they welcomed or were indifferent to deaths resulting from their own actions. Disastrous falls in Indian birth-rates were also caused by settler sexual practices. Between 1848 and 1860 the Indian population of California fell from 150,000 to 31,000, while the white population rose from 25,000 to 350,000. Census data for 1860 households reveals that the Indian decline resulted substantially from the forced segregation of the Indian sexes. Young Indian male survivors could work for a bare subsistence living, while the more numerous young women could reproduce -- but with whites. Young Indian men and women could not live together so as to reproduce Indians. The final blow to reproduction came in the 1850s and 1860s with a great

influx of Anglo miners, demanding all the women. Indian males in the mining districts were now more likely to be exterminated than employed (Hurtado, 1994). But before then, Californian death-tolls had blurred the boundary between ethnocide and genocide.

So who perpetrated this deadly mixture? Let us first consider political elites. The British colonial and then the US federal government were initially committed to a “**Plan A**” of **limited deportations** plus **partial assimilation**, moving some Indians away, converting all to Christianity though usually maintaining racial barriers against full assimilation. When the massive waves of settlers rendered even this impossible, they moved toward a “**Plan B**” of **forcible deportations** combined with **segregation** in Reservations which in theory would be adequate for the reproduction of Indian life and culture. But U.S. government involved various levels. The federal government was usually more conciliatory and humane than state/ local governments in the frontier areas, more responsive to the interests of the settlers. The Supreme Court was also more moderate than state governments, eventually recognizing that properly constituted Indian governments might have sovereign power to enter into treaties over their lands. The differences increased after the north-east was pacified. Now most federal politicians depended on electorates for whom Indians were no longer salient. They could maintain a disinterested enlightenment in relation to natives. The federal government had early set up an Indian Bureau. Its officers had to implement official policy, but often applied it in relatively humane ways. Some local Indian agents appropriated Bureau funds and supplies for their own use, did corrupt deals with settlers and merchants, and generally sold out the Indians in their charge (Nichols, 1978: 10-19). But most higher-level agents lobbied for moderation. After the Civil War the Indian Commissioner was a full-blooded Indian, Ely Parker, who had worked on Grant’s staff in the War. But he was soon forced to resign by Washington lobbyists and Congressmen representing settler, mining and railroad interests, who simply wanted Indian land. Nor did it help Parker that his support for Indian religion alienated his clerical supporters.

At the state level, most elected officials in newly-settled areas were more extreme. The cycle of land encroachment and resistance drove them toward developing more coherent policies. In the 1820s and early 1830s Southern legislatures pressed successfully for **deportations** and did not care what happened to the Indians at the end of their journey. Few local politicians supported grants of land or taxes which would make **segregation** viable for the Indians after they were deported. They came to believe that deportations, accompanied by exterminist rhetoric, would get them re-elected, not pleas for toleration and “protection”, and especially not taxpayer subsidies to reservations or land-grants to Indians. Settler democracy was again bad news.

This was very clear in California. Its Constitution of 1850 enshrined full white male suffrage, the most advanced form of democracy of the age. But it also authorized the forcible detention and placing in indentured labour for perpetuity any Indians who fled the reservations or were found wandering. This included children. The legislature authorized settler militias to enforce the rounding-up, paying them \$1.1 million in 1850 and 1851. Since

the reservations, small and on marginal land, could not support the Indian population to be supposedly deported there, in practice the militias killed as many Indians as they deported. The legislature never objected. The Californian legislature and the Californian delegation to Congress stymied several Presidential and Bureau attempts to offer half-decent treaties to California Indians involving substantial grants of land, plus subsidies and technical assistance for their improvement. The California legislature actually opposed recognizing **any** Indian rights to land in the state. But they then had to face the final consequences of such obduracy, since there was nowhere further west the problem could be sent to.

Governor Burnett, having rejected the path of conciliation through adequate reservations, confronted a difficult situation. The settlers were few and poorly armed. Their continual encroachment onto Indian land had increased resistance. Indian groups who had been hitherto very loosely-organized were ceding more powers to war chiefs (Phillips, 1975: Chaps. 3, 4 & 5). The Indian threat seemed growing. Burnett's response was not to conciliate, but to escalate to **genocide**. He declared "a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the two races until the Indian becomes extinct". His successor, Governor McDougall, agreed: the war "must of necessity be one of extermination to many of the tribes" (Hurtado, 1988: 134-6). His successor, Bigler, writing to the army, gave his own view of Indians:

"the acts of these Savages are sometimes signalized by a ferocity worthy of ... cannibals ... They seem to cherish an instinctive hatred toward the white race, and this is a principle of their nature, which neither time nor vicissitude can impair. This principle of hatred is hereditary ... The character and conduct of these Indians ... [means]... that Whites and Indians cannot live in close proximity in peace".

Bigler ended this letter by asking the army to evacuate **all** Indians from four counties. Where to, he didn't say. But he offered the California militia to help (Heizer, 1993: 189-91).

In frontier states many politicians, settlers and their press agreed with such sentiments. Minnesota Governor Ramsey declared "The Sioux Indians must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the state." This became a popular slogan "Exterminate or Banish". His militia commander was General Sibley, a former fur trader known for swindling Indians and federal government alike. He launched a successful war of extermination against the Santee Sioux. 770 surviving Santee were deported in 1863 by steamship from St. Paul. White Minnesotans lined the river bank, hurling stones and abuse at the Indians (Brown, 1970: 50-65). Colorado's Governor was no better, as we see below. He was supported by the Denver press. During 1863, 10 of all its 27 stories about Indians openly advocated "extermination" (Churchill, 1997: 172). In response to two 1871 Indian raids stealing horses and cattle and killing four whites, a party led by two leading Tucson citizens attacked an Apache village with no connection to the raids. They massacred 144 Apaches, of whom only eight were men. Many of the female victims had first been raped. The Denver *News* congratulated the killers, adding "we only regret that the number was not

double.” A furore back East caused President Grant to describe this atrocity as “purely murder” and to apply pressure to bring its ringleaders to trial. Much incriminating evidence was produced in court. It took the jury nineteen minutes’ deliberation to acquit them. (Brown, 1970: 202-5; Cocker, 1998: 220-1). Juries almost never did find Indian-killers guilty, since they were run by the local settlers and in most states Indian testimony was not accepted against whites (for California, see Heizer, 1993: 11-14).

The federal government and the army often protected Indians, the missionaries protested loudly, as indeed did some settlers and a few local politicians and newspapers. Yet almost all divisions among the whites could be healed if Indians resisted and killed white men or women. Some Modoc Indians of the Oregon/ Californian border tricked General Canby into a parley and killed him. There followed a national cry for vengeance, which General Sherman was able to give expression to. He demanded not just the deaths of the small group of offenders but the killing and scattering of the whole tribe “so that the name of Modoc should cease”. After the Lakota Sioux rebelled and killed 80 US soldiers in one skirmish, Sherman was able to do the same. He wrote “We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux ... even to their extermination, men, women, and children.” The death of Custer at Little Bighorn in 1876 produced a similar national outcry. There followed a ruthless war, the expropriation of all Sioux lands, and the final surrender of Sitting Bull in 1881 (Uttley, 1994). The word **genocide** was only coined in the mid-20th century. But “extermination” and “exterminism”, used so widely across the frontier, meant precisely that, on a local scale, when the Indians resisted.

The effect of Indian resistance on even the most enlightened Presidents drove them toward accepting a “Plan C”, the perpetration or at least the credible threat of **genocide**, if deportations were not accepted by the Indians. Consider the five most famous Presidents before the 20th century. Washington and Jefferson forgot about the Enlightenment when the Indians sided with the British. Washington instructed his generals to attack the Iroquois and “lay waste all the settlements ...that the country may not be merely overrun but destroyed”, and not to “listen to any overture of peace before the total ruin of their settlements is effected”. He likened Indians to wolves “both being beasts of prey, tho’ they differ in shape”. He declared that the Indians must be forced west of the Mississippi, and any remaining must be broken by force. Jefferson, great democrat and philanthropist, also changed his tune during wars. He repeatedly recommended either the root-and-branch destruction of hostile tribes or a decisive effort to drive them beyond the Mississippi: “nothing is more desirable than total suppression of Savage Insolence and Cruelties”; “This then is the season for driving them off”; and their “ferocious barbarities justified extermination”. In 1813 he thought that the defeated Creeks would “submit on the condition of removing them to such settlements beyond the Mississippi as we shall assign them”. He obviously preferred deportations to exterminations, but the latter might follow if the former were not accepted. Of course, neither of them ever spoke about the main British enemy in exterminist language. They were civilized white men. It is interesting that though most Americans today know that these two Founding Fathers were also slave-owners, their relations with Indians remain unknown.

Andrew Jackson has left a more ambiguous reputation. He did extend the franchise to all white males. On the other hand, he was renowned as an Indian Fighter. The "revisionist" view is that Jackson was merely a pragmatic politician, bending to pressure from southern state legislatures over deportations, prepared to defend Indians against white squatters and other unjust expropriations, but coming to believe that deportations were ultimately the only way to protect Indians from the white man (Prucha, 1994). Yet when Indians resisted, Jackson was ferocious. When one white woman was taken prisoner by the Creeks, he declared "I shall penetrate the creek Towns, until the Captive, with her Captors are delivered up, and think myself Justifiable in laying waste their villages, burning their houses, killing their warriors and leading into Captivity their wives and children, untill I do obtain a surrender of the Captive, and the Captors." Prucha (p 212) sums up such views as "Forthright and hard-hitting, he adopted a no-nonsense policy toward hostile Indians." The terminology reminds me of the euphemisms we find written by superior officers in the files of SS men proficient in a more recent genocide. "Hard-hitting" does not quite convey the sense of the mass murder he was perpetrating. Jackson inveighed on other occasions against "deceitfull" and "unrelenting barbarians" -- "the blood of our murdered countrymen must be revenged. The banditti ought to be swept from the face of the earth" . He boasted "I have on all occasions preserved the scalps of my killed". In principle he believed "fear is better than love with an indian". He urged his soldiers to kill women and children. Not to do so would be like pursuing "a wolf in the hamocks without knowing first where her den and whelps were". Indian wars were the setting for all these remarks, and they helped him become President. Once in office, Jackson broke Indian treaties and launched forcible deportations. He claimed his Removal Act of 1830 was an act of generosity, yet around 10,000 Creek, 4,000 Cherokee and 4,000 Choctaw died along the infamous "Trail of Tears".

The fourth and greatest democrat, Abraham Lincoln, was more moderate (see Nichols, 1978: 3, 76-128, 187, for this para.). As a young politician he used his military experience in the Black Hawk War to cultivate an Indian-fighter image. He eulogized Zachary Taylor's savage military exploits and Winfield Scott's deportation of the Cherokee. Yet while President, Indians were only perpheral to his vision. He was confronted by only one major decision. He had sanctioned military expeditions and land grabbing in Minnesota. This provoked a Sioux rising in 1862 which the army crushed, capturing 309 of the rebels. His decision was, whether to approve their execution. The locals and Governor Ramsey were clamouring for the execution of all 309, for had not whites been killed and raped in the rising? Lincoln was lobbied hard by both exterminists and humanitarians. He typically compromised, approving the execution of only 39 of the Indians, satisfying no-one but defusing the situation. He was glad to turn away from the matter which he described as "a disagreeable subject". It was still the largest mass execution in American history, and the evidence against any of the individual captives was scant. Almost all the rest of the captives soon died anyway from terrible prison conditions. But Lincoln's actions did make him a relative moderate among Presidents. Of course, he shared the general view that the Indians would disappear before a superior white civilization. As he had the impudence to tell a tribal delegation to the White House in 1863,

“the pale-faced people are numerous and prosperous because they cultivate the earth, produce bread and depend upon the products of the earth rather than wild game for a subsistence. This is the chief reason of the difference; but there is another ... we are not, as a race, so much disposed to fight and kill one another as our red brethren.”

During 1863 there was a white Civil War on. The truth was that the pale-faced people were more likely to kill each other **and** their red brethren.

At the end of the 19th century when the whole process of genocide was almost over, a fifth great democrat and President, Theodore Roosevelt, no longer needed to launch murderous cleansing. The Indians were almost gone. Yet he did declare that “extermination” “was as ultimately beneficial as it was inevitable”. “I dont go so far as to think that the only good Indians are dead Indians, but I believe nine out of ten are, and I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth”³. Presidents, especially the more democratic ones, responsive to the needs of their constituents, could reveal an arrogant imperial racism which fuelled policies beyond an **exemplary repression**, which remains an ultimately pragmatic policy, toward **genocide**. For Indian resistance led them all into such temptations. How many of these Presidents would be today prosecuted for genocide by an international war crimes tribunal? Four, I think -- excluding Roosevelt, whose rhetoric was not matched by actions -- though Lincoln's sentence would be slight.

What of the ordinary settlers on the frontier, who provided most of the actual killers? Since cleansing came in small, rolling waves in newly-settled areas, each settler group only had to dispossess a few natives in order to get the desired land. Then the next wave of local cleansings might be committed by others, and so on until local cleansing was complete. This whole process might take anywhere between five and fifty years, and its violence and murder would vary greatly according to the relative numbers of Whites and Indians, the rapidity of the land-grabbing, and the capacity of the Indians to resist. At any one time only a few Europeans were land-grabbing and even fewer murdered. Subsequent generations experienced only peace, since the Indians had been defeated and removed elsewhere. It is not really appropriate in such contexts to invoke coherent "Plans", of "A, B, C" among settlers, since local exigencies, the lack of a highly institutionalized local state, and their own greed and ideology would drive them quickly through varied cleansing means. Afterwards they could settle down as peace-loving Americans. Their children bore no taint. Only some of the local founding fathers were genocidal.

³. These presidential quotes are taken from Sheehan, 1973: 206, 209, 244; Stannard, 1992: 119-22, 245-6; and Cocker, 1998: 206.

The shooters were disproportionately young men with access to arms -- usually their own, though sometimes provided by the militia. Yet women in search of the promised land were often no innocents. Consider this eye-witness account of settlers entering California in 1849:

“One evening, after camping, a scout ... rode in and reported a party of Indians camped about five miles ahead, about twenty in number All were up in arms in a few minutes, and ready to start for them. The women were as much excited as the men. ... there was no lack of volunteers, the trouble was, all wanted to go, which would leave the homeguard too small. But the women were not afraid to remain alone; they wanted the ‘red devils rubbed out’, as they expressed it”.

Our narrator describes how a father’s eyes “beamed with pride” when his six or seven year old son demanded a rifle, crying “I want to shoot Ingins”. He describes the massacre ensuing when the Indians were started out from their tents into a prepared hail of fire:

“In less time than it takes to tell the story, twenty-seven wild and ferocious Indians were changed into harmless spirits of the air, never more to take the war-path or surprise and slaughter a party of emigrants”.

He then turns to justification. The party had suffered earlier casualties from other Indians, he says, and it is anyway impossible to humanize and civilize Indians:

“Powder, not prayer, is their only civilizer. You cannot manage him by reasoning with him ... Nothing will convert an Indian like convincing him you are his superior, and there is but one process by which even that can be done, and that is to shut off his wind. I never knew but one “truly good” Indian and he was dead”. (Hurtado & Iverson, 1994: “Documents”, pp 286-7)

Other locals opposed murderous cleansings. Missionaries did and so did Mormon settlers -- though when they felt threatened, they could react ferociously, too. Many more settlers must have been “bystanders”, looking the other way or feeling ambivalent. Progress was necessary but involved unpleasantness, many said. The Sacramento *Union* was capable of editorials sympathizing with Indians driven off their land. They had only turned to raiding, it said, through starvation. Had there been “reasonable care”, providing food and clothing for them, there would be “no need for an indiscriminate slaughter of the race”. Nevertheless,

“The fate of the Indian is fixed. He must be annihilated by the advance of the white man; by the diseases, and, to them, the evils of civilization. But the work should not have been commenced at so early a date by the deadly rifle”.

Such is the voice of the frontier moderate! The citizens of Fresno and Tulare County also argued for inevitability, without regret. They petitioned the Indian Agency, explaining why they had “removed” but with “no violence” 200 Indians from their valleys to a reservation. They had tired of the Indians stealing their stock. “Indians and a community of stock

growing people cannot inhabit the same country ... should they return they will surely be harshly dealt. *As abide with us they shall not.*" (Heizer, 1993: 36, 130; emphasis in the original). "Harsh" removal was inevitable, the citizens believed there was no alternative to complete policed deportation.

Army and Indian Bureau reports tell us much about California killings. Often local officers suggest that Indian depredations spark off the troubles, while accepting that these are understandable responses to being driven illegitimately off their lands. We get a sense of lawlessness, of groups of armed settlers unrestrained by any stabilized political institutions, counterposed only by army detachments reluctant to fire on fellow whites. The officers reserve venom for "the ill-disposed part" or "the vagabond mass" or even occasionally of "the greater number" of the local community. One army captain adds that the instigators of the mob were local politicians seeking "to pander for their votes for office". Two others describe settler behaviour as "outrages", "barbarities" "too shocking to describe" "which would disgrace the savage himself". Sometimes the officers believe the Indian victims are completely innocent, "miserable creatures, who it appears were not in the wrong, and whom the White inhabitants are determined to exterminate." Some killers offered no justification for their acts beyond the most general hatred of Indians. The worst killers (often in militia units) are described as "vagabonds", "out of employ", "idle", "too lazy or cowardly to scout in the mountains". These were probably landless men with a strong material motivation, still hoping to acquire property from complete extermination. Single miners called themselves "squaw hunters". In order to get and keep squaws, they had to kill the braves. The army officers may have been genuinely more decent men than these settlers, but careerism would generally reinforce decency since land-grabbing and sex with Indians was not permitted.

But most killers did feel the need for some ideological justification, sometimes "self-defence", more commonly "retaliation" for Indian atrocities committed earlier. Both normally involved considerable escalation. When an Indian retaliated violently for the rape of his wife, or when, starving, he stole a cow or horse, self-righteous settler escalation would follow. A Californian farmer testified "I believe for every beef that has been killed by them ten or fifteen Indians have been killed." The San Francisco *Bulletin*, away from the actual frontier, was a Californian voice of moderation, advocating "protection", ie humane segregation, not "extermination". It editorialized about a man called McElroy who had a deer stolen from him. He "retaliated" by killing an Indian and his squaw, and wounding a third. Then McElroy was murdered as Indians also retaliated. But the death of a white man brought in the California militia. They found an Indian camp, killed nine Indian men (the rest fleeing), and then butchered its forty defenceless women and children. This newspaper reported on another occasion that a 36-strong militia unit looking for the killers of one white man found an Indian village and killed all but 2 or 3 of its 150 inhabitants, men, women and children. One army unit seeking the killers of two noted Indian-killers did go on a rampage against a village. Its captain wrote proudly "The number killed I confidently report at not less than 75 and have little doubt it extended to nearly double that number". A captain of very different temperament criticized the actions of a Californian rancher who killed two or

three Indians, believing that an Indian had stolen some of his cattle. Next day the cattle were found! Unfortunately for the rancher, Indians then revenged their dead relatives and killed him. The captain was now trying to prevent further escalation (reports excerpted by Heizer, 1993: 42-3, 63- 79, 84-90, 95-7, 156-7, 245, 249-50).

Thus “retaliation” involved generalizing blame onto the “race” -- all Indians around. One man met three Missouri whites who said they intended to shoot the first Indians they came across, since they believed that Indians were responsible for stealing their horses. He commented “this inconsiderate retaliation upon a whole race for the acts of one of its members leads to half the conflicts that occur.” (Madsen, 1994: 316) Of course, Indians would do the same. “Retaliation” was mutual, each side denying that it had “started” the violence. But the whites were more likely to escalate the killing, and their less discriminate killing was counter-productive to their stated goals, since it alienated yet more Indians. Either rage had got the better of sense, or their real goal was complete extermination. The predominance of white escalation did not merely result from their superior weapons and organization. It also resulted from the superior, more “civilized” party being more unpleasantly shocked by violent resistance from the savages below, worsened by an ideologically-induced “moral shudder” which settlers often experienced when confronting the “savage”, “unclean” Indian. Their world seemed turned upside-down, inducing fear, panic and repression disproportionate to the actual threat -- as we saw from the Presidents quoted, and as we will see in all lopsided cases of murderous cleansing or repression. As I write this in February, 2001, killings are occurring in another colonized country, Israel. The stronger colonizers are outraged at the attacks of the dispossessed Palestinians. Yet the death-toll over the last four months amounts at present to 350 persons, of whom 85% are Arabs. The imbalance is normal where a basic conflict over land has one side with political and military superiority and a conviction that it is defending civilization. Whether this is civilized is another matter. Complicity among “ordinary” frontier people must have been more widespread than in any of the cases discussed later in this book. There can be no doubting the electoral popularity of the “removal” of the Indians. There was no protest movement comparable to those who sought to abolish slavery of Negroes.

Military power in cleansings was shared between the army and settler militias. The army could kill far more Indians because of superior weapons and communications. It contained diverse views. It was mandated to keep the peace, stop Indian raids, repress Indian risings and enforce their deportation to reservations. A variety of tactics might accomplish these goals. The predominant Army “Plan A”, was a combined “carrot-and-stick” approach: negotiating treaties for **policed deportations** into **segregated** Reservations, combined with **exemplary repression** for Indians who would not negotiate. In applying this policy local army units sometimes sided with Indians against settlers. The California record is full of army officers protesting against murderous settler treatment of local Indians. To protect them, some officers aimed their guns at the settlers, not the Indians; and some gave the Indians army rations or bought them provisions from their own resources (Heizer, 1993). In the Southwest General Crook ran pragmatic, sometimes conciliatory campaigns against the Apache and others, preferring negotiations to battles. Other generals had earlier done so

elsewhere.

Yet after the Civil War the army developed a "**Plan B**", escalating the **callous war** tactics learned during the Civil War, occasionally sliding further into a "**Plan C**" of local **genocide** committed against the Plains Indians, Apaches and other more formidable fighting nations. Sherman was Army Chief of Staff, Sheridan the commander of the Plains army. Sherman explained his tactics to the Secretary of War in 1866:

"My opinion is, if fifty Indians are allowed to remain between the Arkansas and the Platte we will have to guard every stage station, every train, and all railroad working parties ... fifty hostile Indians will checkmate three thousand soldiers. Rather get them out as soon as possible, and it makes little difference whether they be coaxed out by Indian commissioners or killed".

Dispersing his forces was to play into the hands of the Indians who were adept at small, mobile operations. He sought to attack the Indians when they were immobilized in their winter quarter villages. The warriors would then be forced to stand and fight to defend their women, children and possessions. The army believed that its firepower would win fixed-place battles (Uttley, 1994). Yet the fire-power would be directed at crowds of men, women and children, attempting to flee from their village. If they succeeded in fleeing, they lost all their possessions, which destroyed their ability to live off the land. If they failed, they would die together. His subordinate, General Sanborn was appalled by this obviously genocidal tactic. Writing to the Secretary of the Interior, he declared

"For a mighty nation like us to be carrying on a war with a few straggling nomads, under such circumstances, is a spectacle most humiliating, an injustice unparalleled, a national crime most revolting, that must, sooner or later, bring down on us or our posterity the judgement of Heaven."

But General Sheridan dismissed critics of these tactics as "good and pious ecclesiastics ... aiders and abettors of savages who murdered, without mercy, men, women and children". This was justification in terms of retaliation. Sheridan expressed himself even more clearly in a famous exchange as some Comanches came in to surrender. Their chief introduced himself to Sheridan in the only broken English he knew: "Tosawi, good Indian". Sheridan replied "The only good Indians I ever saw were dead". Sheridan has been credited with inventing what already an old saw in the West (I quoted a previous version of it earlier). In the retelling, his line became the most notorious exterminist statement of all, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" (Brown, 1970: 157-8, 170-1). Sherman and Sheridan remained in command of the Indian Wars. There was no vengeance of Heaven against them. Their policies were popular with settlers and politicians on the frontiers, and they were successful in achieving their goals.

The degeneration of military tactics is a common feature of murderous cleansing. It may require initial hatred of the enemy, but since it also has a tactical logic. It might emerge from

the need to deprive the enemy of its supply base contributed by non-combatants, or to combat guerillas who merge into the civilian population. There was an element of both of these in the Indian Wars. Braves did not wear distinguishing uniforms. Any Indian male might be a hostile -- to be on the safe side, better kill them all. But it also came here from the tactical need to pin the enemy down to fixed-place defence in sites where men, women and children were inter-mingled. At the worst such "tactical lures" can slide exemplary repression toward genocide -- as they did here.

Yet settler militias, financed by state or local government, provided more routine genocidal thrust. They were part-time volunteer forces, receiving a wage, sometimes in the form of a scalp bounty. "My intention is to kill all Indians I come across", said Colonel Chivington an ex- Methodist minister and leader of the Third Colorado militia Regiment. He exhorted his men to "kill and scalp all, little and big". "Little" meant children, for as he said, "Nits make lice". An army officer tried to persuade Colorado Governor Evans into negotiations with the Indians. "But what shall I do with the Third Colorado Regiment if I make peace?", the Governor responded. "They have been raised to kill Indians, and they must kill Indians." At Sand Creek they did. There Chivington's force murdered 105 Indian women and children and 28 men, their bodies being afterwards mutilated. Militiamen were seen carrying off trophies made of women's vaginas and other body parts. Chivington's action was stupid as well as evil, since he destroyed the power of most Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs who had been urging peace with the white men! (Stannard, 1992: 171-4; Brown, 1970: 86-93). This was more than **exemplary repression**, since it was so counter-productive to that goal. It was an attempt at local **genocide**. Some critics tried to bring Chivington and his Governor to trial, but they failed.

The vigilante posses, militias and Ranger forces described themselves as "a free people in arms", volunteers adapting their skills as herders and hunters. Eastern militia leaders would appeal for "experienced woodsmen", Western ones for "Indian fighters". Some were professional killers. Cocker (1998: 187-8) narrates the biography of "Sugarfoot Jack", a killer on a global scale. He had been transported as a boy from England to Tasmania, where he killed aborigines. Then he turned up in California as a violent militia member, and finally became a sadistic killer of Apache babies in Arizona. Militia leaders had recruitment problems. Despite our stereotypes of this "frontier nation", only 3-5% of Americans actually possessed guns until the Mexican-American War of 1848. Thereafter guns began to spread, but only the Civil War brought the reign of the US as most heavily-armed country in the world (Bellesiles, 2000). Presumably new settlers in the West were more likely to be gun-owners, though they probably also drew professional killers to complete the extermination of the natives. One of the main uses of the Second Amendment to the Constitution ("the right to a duly constituted militia") was to kill Indians, placing arms in the hands of a few professional killers any many more land-hungry men. Both derived ideological comfort from the justice of their cause: the supposed defence of civilization and the white race against savagery.

It is a terrible story which most Americans have forgotten. And, though the early

perpetrators were essentially British (as they were throughout in Australia), British people today feel this story has no connection with their own history. But while Americans show great awareness of the evils of slavery and of white racism towards blacks, they remain ignorant of the ethnocide\ genocide that whites committed on the people they called Redskins. Though this may not be a very sensible comparison, the brutal slave regime exerted over African-Americans was actually the “milder” one. Africans were **wildly deported** from their homeland and forced into extreme **segregation** as slaves. They remained outside the liberal institutions of the Europeans, brutalized but alive.⁴ This also had the effect of widening responsibility for slavery. White Americans of all later generations remained complicit, materially benefitting, reproducing it through their own practices. Now the worst has passed, whites may still feel guilt -- but not over Indians. Unlike the descendants of slaves, the descendants of murdered native Americans are few and marginalized. Genocide was a “success”. As exterminists claimed, out of the elimination of native peoples, a new civilization arose. That is how Hitler and Himmler would both refer to the American genocide as an example to follow when contemplating their own.

The Genocide of the Hereros, 1904-5

Colonial cleansing could not go on forever. By the 20th century native peoples in the worst-affected colonies were disappearing and the land was settled. The first new nations could forget their origins and delude themselves with their unique, pacific virtues. Cleansing remained strongest where white settler populations were still expanding, as in Australia, and in settler groups involved in the "scramble for Africa", also involving latecomers to colonialism like Germany and Italy. Both became implicated in particularly terrible incidents of murderous cleansing. In Chapter 10 I will discuss the last case, of Italy in Ethiopia. Here I discuss a single genocidal incident in a German protectorate. South West Africa, present-day Namibia.

African colonies varied. Only along the Mediterranean littoral, across the southern veldt and in a few highland areas could Europeans settle in large numbers. In tropical areas there were few of them. Given their enormous military superiority by the end of the 19th century, European states could fairly easily conquer almost all of Africa, but their rule in the tropics was thin, often indirect and they had neither the capacity nor the inclination to cleanse all Africans from the land. Instead the Belgians, the British, the French and the Germans all practiced the normal range of historical imperialist atrocities, centring on **exemplary**

⁴ Millions of Africans also died during enslavement,. most at the hand of other Africans while being driven across Africa. Additionally, 10-20% of those reaching the ships died in the voyage across the Atlantic. Estimates of the total deathrate in both continents vary between one third and three-quarters of those initially seized. Since 12-15 million did arrive, Africans presumably suffered a higher absolute death-toll but a much lower percentage death-rate than Indians (Stannard, 1992: 317, fn. 9; Nash, 1992).

repression and callous warfare. Villages refusing to submit or rebelling were destroyed, the crops burned, men (and sometimes women) massacred. Concentrated labour forces, as in mining, could lead to terrible labour conditions and repeated loss of life -- as it notoriously did in the Belgian Congo. Jonassohn (1998: Chapter 20) reviews six such of the worst cases and concludes that he is not sure where massacres end and genocide begins. But I focus here on what was clearly a genocide, perpetrated, predictably enough, by European settler farmers in a temperate region.

As in other colonial cases, I identify three main types of colonial actor in South West Africa. The first was ideological, here especially the Rhineland Missionary Society. Its activities, including land-grabbing, had started the colonization process, though it later became the most moderate actor. It welcomed the colonization process as a chance to Christianize the natives. Though German churchmen were only slightly less likely than anyone else to imbibe racist conceptions of superiority and inferiority, they sought to convert, ie partially assimilate, the natives and did not usually favour methods beyond those of **Institutional Assimilation**. They were opposed to German atrocities in 1904-5, and pressured Berlin to get them stopped. Their moderate line was generally supported by liberal and socialist deputies in the German parliament, the *Reichstag*. They were only a minority there, but their humanitarian clamour embarrassed the German government, occasionally forcing policy changes.

The second actor, caught in the middle, often factionalized, was the colonial administration in the colony and in the Berlin headquarters of the Colonial Department under the dual authority of the Chancellor and Kaiser. The Kaiser retained power over foreign policy and commanded the armed forces. These autonomies possessed by the more militarist executive power of the state were to have an escalatory impact on the events of 1904. Administrators sought to keep the colony pacified and expanding, goals which were difficult to reconcile. However, they were prepared to share some power with compliant leaders of powerful tribal groups. This was formally a "Protectorate" and not a direct colony, embodying some indirect rule. The German administration also wanted Africans to work as pliable labourers for whites, and had accorded them legal though not political rights. This was an official policy of severe **Discrimination**, even partial **Segregation**, but coupled with some protections. It was never aimed at murderous cleansing. However, their simultaneous commitment to encouraging more white settlers led to more land expropriations and **Policed Deportations** of natives.

But Major Theodor Leutwein, Governor of the Protectorate between 1894 and 1904, took care not to provoke the natives. He realized that the underlying conflict, over who should own the land, was especially problematic for the Herero, the second largest tribal grouping and easily the biggest cattle grazers. They needed very extensive ranges for their herds. As the white settlers expanded, they wanted the best of those lands. They got more of them by combining force, fraudulent treaties and malevolent use of credit, calling in lands as payment for supposed native debts -- as American colonists also did. Racial strife was

inevitable and perennial.

Leutwein sought to reduce conflict by dividing and ruling among the African tribal groupings, and by restraining the settlers from excess. His policy involved conciliating tribal leaders, even increasing their powers over their own people, while gradually expropriating the rights of the African masses. He generally managed to convince his superiors in Berlin that this was the best colonial strategy. Indeed -- though theirs might seem to us to be a wholly doomed strategy -- tribal elites often behaved complicitly in this, as if they were the status equals of the colonial elite and the status superiors of the uncultured mass of white settlers (Bley, 1971: 88-91). They -- and to a more limited extent the colonial administration -- wanted what I termed the policy of “**lateral aristocratic assimilation**”. They deluded themselves. They imagined a future roughly like that of Mexican or Inca aristocrats, sires of a new mestizo ruling class (not that they knew of these cases). But in Africa this was unlikely. Racism seemed to be grounded in real civilizational differences. African chiefs were not conceived of as the equal to poor whites, though political pragmatism might temporarily conceal this.

Leutwein understood the contradictions of German policy and knew he was walking a tightrope. On the one hand the regime had “to take land from the natives on the basis of questionable treaties and risk the life ... of one’s countrymen to this end, and on the other hand to enthuse about humanitarian principles in the Reichstag.” (Bley, 1971: 68). The colony’s economic adviser, Dr. Paul Rohrbach, advocated a more ruthless logic:

“The decision to colonise in South West Africa could mean nothing else but this, namely that the native tribes would have to give up their lands on which they have previously grazed their stock in order that the white man might have the land for the grazing of his stock. When this attitude is questioned from the moral law standpoint, the answer is that for nations of the cultural level of the South African natives, the loss of their free national barbarism and their development into a class of labourers in service of and dependent on the white people is primarily a ‘law of existence’ in the highest degree ... By no argument whatsoever can it be shown that the preservation of any degree of national independence, national prosperity or political organisation by the races of South West Africa, would be of... an equal advantage for the development of mankind.” (Quoted by Cocker, 1998: 301).

Rohrbach counters moral doubts by appealing to the more general benefit for mankind. Progress, he went on to explain, would come from making “the African races” service “the white races” “with the greatest possible working efficiency”. In the most elevated world-historical terms, he endorsed complete expropriation of the natives and forcing them into near-slave labour conditions. He was not contemplating eliminating them. Nor was any official.

The third and least conciliatory group of Germans consisted of settlers. Dominant among them were German settlers living around the capital Windhoek and farmers on the front

lines of expansion into tribal lands. The former lived in a white-dominated segregated enclave expressing strongly racist sentiments. The latter wanted more native land, but relatively few Herero workers. The Herero were used to the very different work rhythms of African cattle grazing. The settlers' described them in a petition sent to Berlin in response to Reichstag deputies' criticism of the way they were treating natives:

“From time immemorial our natives have grown to laziness, brutality and stupidity. The dirtier they are, the more they feel at ease. Any white man who has lived among natives finds it impossible to regard them as human beings at all in any European sense. They need centuries of training as human beings, with endless patience, strictness and justice” (Bley, 1971: 97)

Since the settlers were not proposing to invest in “centuries of training”, they were pressing for further **Deportations**, by all necessary force. Their language expressed a cruder racism than Rohrbach's. One missionary reported

“The underlying cause of the resentment which the Hereros bear against the Germans is that the average German looks upon and treats the natives as creatures being more or less on the same level as baboons (their favourite word to describe the natives) ... Consequently, the whites value their horses and oxen more highly than they do the natives. Such a mentality breeds harshness, deceit, exploitation, injustice, rape, and, not infrequently, murder as well”. (Drechsler, 1980: 167-8, n.6).

Since many settlers could not distinguish one tribe from another, or a chief from a landless labourer, their everyday behaviour undermined Leutwein's divide-and-rule strategy. He was horrified when a German baker flogged a prominent Herero subchief out of his shop “until the blood ran”. He reprimanded the baker for so abusing “a proud and respected man and a particularly wealthy cattle-owner.” (Drechsler, 1980: 136; Bley, 1971: 86). Such incidents undermined the chances for any lateral aristocratic assimilation. This chief, Assa Riarua, proved one of the main rebel leaders in the 1904 rising. Of course, the settlers did feel vulnerable. Any sign of resistance brought to this small minority terrible fears of being overwhelmed by “dark savages”. As we have found in other cases, the merest hint of native resistance led to settlers' inflicting ferocious punishment. For some this was a pretext for seizing more land and property, a deliberate provocation of the out group. But for most it was sincere racist fear.

The settlers did not rule, since this was not a democracy. The Governor ran the colony, reporting to the Colonial Department in Berlin. Settlers showed perpetual irritation at their inability to dent Leutwein's policies of “false sentimentality”. They complained of being treated “like vassals” by officials. Even when Leutwein seemingly consulted them, they might feel manipulated. In a 1896 meeting he called of Germans active in land-acquisition, the majority was persuaded to vote an endorsement of his policies. Next day over half those present signed a resolution withdrawing that endorsement, stating “It is the function of the government to establish control over the natives, but it can achieve this only when it has

sufficient power at its disposal. Moral pressure alone is not enough to impose our laws on the black race". (Bley, 1971: 79-81, 84-5).

But settlers did have two important local powers. They staffed the lay magistracy and sat on most cases brought by Africans claiming ill-treatment. White settlers routinely used whips and heavy sticks, and there were many protests at beatings and some charges of rape of African women by whites. That the courts almost never found against a white man, and would not accept evidence based on African testimony alone, produced much African outrage. If a white man did protest against atrocities committed by fellow whites, he might receive unofficial punishment himself (Drechsler, 1980: 133-6, details cases). Second, this was capitalism in which settlers had greater superior resources of capital, knowledge and access to law. They found it easy to deprive Africans of their lands within the apparent framework of the law, and the colonial administration was usually helpless to restrain them. Outrageous court injustices and continuous settler land-grabbing were the usual sparks of native revolts -- as they were in the Herero revolt of 1904.

In January 1904 the Herero paramount chief Samuel Mahareru -- hitherto a docile, drunken and corrupt client of the Germans -- was pressured by subchiefs to make a final stand. He prepared and led a co-ordinated rebellion. He wrote to all his headmen that they should carefully avoid killing any women, children, missionaries, English, Boers, half-breeds or Namas (the main neighbouring tribal group). This injunction was largely adhered to. Since Herero attacks failed to take the towns or barracks, their successes fell on more isolated farms. Their initial attacks killed 120-150 whites, of whom only 3 were women and 7 were Boers (Bridgman, 1981: 74). The revolt was totally unexpected by the white population, whose racism had led them to underestimate the Herero. Even Leutwein did not believe that they were capable of such coordination and he was slow to respond. Thus some German victims went unarmed to meet their final fatal encounters with "their" Africans. A few Germans were also tortured. German males could expect little mercy. The attacks were launched by enraged warriors believing that this was their last chance to live free. Either they won or they died, exhorted Mahareru. At first they did win, and they drove the settlers out of their tribal lands, seizing all their cattle.

From previous colonial cases we should expect the killing of over 100 white men, to bring ferocious retaliation. A missionary described settler reaction to the overturning of their world:

"The Germans are consumed with unexpiable hatred and a terrible thirst for revenge, one might even say they are thirsting for the blood of the Herero. All you hear these days is words like 'make a clean sweep, hang them, shoot them to the last man, give no quarter'. I shudder to think what may happen in the months ahead. The Germans will doubtless exact a grim vengeance" (Drechsler, 1980: 145).

They exacted a grimmer vengeance than he could have imagined. The whole German community, including Leutwein, knew that a strong military response was necessary. Berlin

was also immediately involved, since the whole colony seemed threatened.

But a split developed. Leutwein and his Colonial Department superiors wanted to follow a decisive military action with negotiation. Yet German conservatives and generals favoured massive **Exemplary Repression**. Herero power should be destroyed as an example to other tribes. The argument initially focussed on who should head the military expeditionary force sent to the colony. The moderates had better access to Reich Chancellor von Bulow, but the radicals, through the Chief of Staff, von Schlieffen, had access to the man who would take the decision, the Kaiser. The two men were close and shared similar racist views (Bridgman, 1981: 63). On von Schlieffen's advice, the Kaiser appointed General von Trotha to the command. He had African experience, he had brutally repressed a revolt in East Africa in 1896 and he had helped suppress the Boxer revolt in China in 1900-01. General von Schlieffen and the Kaiser believed he was the man to do so again. Von Trotha thought so too, for he "knew the African":

"I know enough tribes in Africa. They have all the same mentality insofar as they yield only to force. It was and remains my policy to apply this force by unmitigated terrorism and even cruelty. I shall destroy the rebellious tribes by shedding rivers of blood and money. Only thus will it be possible to sow the seeds of something new that will endure."

However, von Trotha was not acting entirely on his own. He said that the Kaiser had given him a carte blanche: "the Emperor only said that he expected me to crush the rebellion by fair means or foul" (quotes from Drechsler, 1980: 154). This clearly meant **Exemplary Repression** sufficient to crush Herero resistance once and for all and to deter any other tribal group from thinking of rebellion. This was bad enough. But egged on by the settlers and fortified by their own racism, von Trotha and his army independently escalated to **Genocide**. In October 1904 von Trotha issued a proclamation aimed at other Africans. He offered blood-money to anyone bringing in a Herero. It culminated

"Inside German territory every Herero tribesman, armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot. No women or children will be allowed in the territory: they will be driven back to their people or fired on. These are the last words to Herero nation from me, the great General of the Mighty German Emperor".

He added to his troops that "as a result of this order no more male prisoners would be taken" though he rejected atrocities against women and children. There seemed to be little "tactical lure" toward genocide in this case. Von Trotha seems to have mainly desired to punish a whole race of men for the killings of a few. The tactical lure might seem to be in the opposite direction, toward sparing most of those who surrender in order to encourage others to surrender.

The actual behaviour of the army was even worse, for many women and children were also shot by his soldiers. An eye-witness testified

“After the battle all men, women and children who fell into German hands, wounded or otherwise, were mercilessly put to death. Then the Germans set off in pursuit of the rest, and all those found by the wayside and in the sandveld were shot down or bayoneted to death. The mass of the Herero men were unarmed and thus unable to offer resistance. They were just trying to get away with their cattle.”

Von Trotha did not admit ordering the shooting of women and children, but he did admit deliberately driving them into the desert to die. He believed many were diseased, which may have been true since they were half-starved and weakening: “I deem it wiser for the entire nation to perish than to infect our soldiers ... over and above this, any gesture of leniency on my part would only be regarded as a sign of weakness by the Herero.” Settler militias joined in, their units showing special brutality. A Missionary reported “each member was as wild as hell itself. How many of them had lost everything. Now was the time for revenge. Many faces showed fierce resolution”.

Fire-power enabled the Germans to corral the Herero (men, women and children) into the desert. Poisoning water holes ensured the deaths of most remaining men, women and children. They starved, watched by the encircling Germans. When the Nama, emboldened by the Herero revolt, joined in, they were also treated with brutal repression, though not genocide. Von Trotha knew what he was doing. He wrote to von Schlieffen declaring that he rejected the advice of Leutwein and the “old Africans” to negotiate. They saw the Herero as useful labourers, said von Trotha, “I, however, am of an entirely different opinion. I believe that the Herero must be destroyed as a nation.” He repeated this sentence three times in his letter. His soldiers obeyed his murderous orders without question, indeed with some enthusiasm. After all, these “savages” had been murdering Germans (quotes from Bley, 1971: 163-4, 179; Drechsler, 1980: 156-61).

The German official military report on the campaign lauded the tactics

“This bold enterprise shows up in the most brilliant light the ruthless energy of the German command in pursuing their beaten enemy. No pains, no sacrifices were spared in eliminating the last remnants of enemy resistance. Like a wounded beast the enemy was tracked down from one water-hole to the next, until finally he became the victim of his own environment. The arid Omaheke [desert] was to complete what the German army had begun: the extermination of the Herero nation.” (Bley, 1971: 162).

Not everyone agreed with such exterminist sentiments. Chancellor von Bülow told the Kaiser that von Trotha’s proclamation and campaign was “contradictory to all Christian and humane principles” and also counter-productive, stiffening the African will to resist (Bley, 1971: 163). The Colonial Department, missionaries and some deputies pressured for von Trotha’s recall. Even some settlers were horrified. The pressure forced von Schlieffen to order a halt to the shooting of prisoners in December 1904. In November 1905 he finally

recalled von Trotha.

This came too late to save the Herero. By December 1905 only about 16,000 Herero of the 60-80,000 population of 1903 were left, a loss-rate of somewhere around three-quarters. The Nama were reduced from 15-20,000 to 9,800, a loss-rate of only about 40% (Drechsler, 1980: 244; Bley, 1971: 150-1). The survivors were held in concentration camps (where more died) or fled into Bechuanaland. The Herero were wiped out as a people, since the few dispersed survivors were unable to collectively re-organize themselves. The Germans took full advantage. The Kaiser approved an Expropriation Order in December 1905 authorizing the seizing of the "entire moveable and fixed property of the tribe" (Bley, 1971: 166). In 1907 all Hereroland and almost all the Nama territory were declared government property, and South West Africa was declared a Colony. This was a highly successful genocide.

Yet premeditation (which in legal terms is a requirement for bringing charges of genocide) had not been widespread. German colonial policy implied ruthless deportation, and the violence and killing necessary to achieve it, but this was never envisaged as involving mass murder. Many settlers were more radical. Their pressure hastened on confrontations and cleansings, their prejudices prevented "lateral aristocratic assimilation", their provocations caused the actual Herero revolt. Some settlers then responded (perhaps understandably) to the murders of one hundred of their own kind with murderous rhetoric and action. German policy would have probably led to the expropriation and break-up of the Herero nation anyway; while many settlers were willing to be the cutting-edge of such policies. The settlers lost no time afterwards in reaping the benefits of genocide and continuing their pressure on remaining African lands in the colony. But they had not intended genocide either.

Genocide only resulted through three stages of escalation. First, the Herero unexpectedly and violently revolted, overturning stable settler expectations and unleashing their worst fears and their most ferocious desires for revenge. Second, the revolt produced political factionalism within Germany, won by the militarist over the civilian-political half of the state. This faction appointed General von Trotha, considered a sufficiently experienced and ruthless repressor of native revolts, the man for exemplary repression. He had not committed genocide before. The third stage of escalation occurred only after he arrived in the colony in June 1904, when he discovered how bad the situation was, how dispersed were the existing military forces of the colony. Then he upped the level of response until it became genocidal. His troops were sufficiently disciplined and racist to implement his orders and von Schlieffen continued to support him for the period of the campaign. He and the Kaiser yielded up von Trotha too late, under great pressure from the more civilian-political half of the state. Genocide thus resulted suddenly through these unexpected escalations. Let us inject a counter-factual. Had the offence of "genocide" and an International Criminal Tribunal existed in 1905, who could have been convicted of the offence? General von Trotha would certainly have been convicted out of his own testimony. If sufficient evidence could be found, so would some of his officers and men, and some of the settler militiamen. Probably not the Kaiser or General von Schlieffen, however, nor many other civilians.

Only some of this conforms to the five-thesis model presented at the beginning of the chapter. The “ **Plan A**” of the relevant Germans, **Deportations**, had been rendered inoperable by a serious revolt -- a geopolitical crisis. Yet the German state remained stable and secure, not fitting well into thesis (3), which suggested that perpetrating states are beset by crises which factionalize and radicalize them. This genocide was also very statist, committed by the technically-advanced army of a modern state (even if its intervention had come after “bottom-up” settler pressures had provoked a genuinely threatening rebellion). Nonetheless, there was some state factionalism. This was a dual state, shared between traditional military authoritarian monarchy and newer representative democracy. The Herero revolt brought factional disagreement between them and a shift of power toward the militarist faction’s “**Plan B**”, **Exemplary Repression**. The final escalation was more accidental, however, as the general on the ground independently escalated into “**Plan C**”, **Genocide**. Though this alarmed the militarist state faction, it gritted its teeth and let him continue. The civilian-political state faction, emboldened by religious and secular humanitarians, then fought back. Of course, the elimination of Herero and Nama power enabled settlers to resume a more aggressive version of “**Plan A**”, **deportations**.

Finally, might this be a precursor of Hitler’s “Final Solution”, helping develop distinctively German genocidal tendencies? Many see German racism as an independent cause of the Herero genocide (eg Cocker, 1998: 293). But was German racism any greater than others? Bridgman notes (1981: 166-7) that all the colonial Powers of this time were harshly repressing revolts, buttressed by self-righteous racism. It was General von Trotha who turned such policy into something much worse. Perhaps his autonomy might be thought distinctively German, since this army was more autonomous from civilian control than most. The link from German militarism to Nazi militarism was real, as we shall see. Moreover, some of the German personnel involved later served in Turkey during World War I, being present as military advisers to Turkey during the Armenian genocide. Indeed, several members of my sample of Nazi perpetrators had lived in South West Africa or served in Turkey. I cannot establish any direct influences through such people on the two later cases. But let us in any case note that in the very year 1905 another late colonial Power, with a more civilian-controlled military, was active on Mindanao in the Philippines, suppressing rebellion among the Moros, a Muslim minority group. Mark Twain was with the American forces. He wrote “The enemy numbered 600, including women and children, and we abolished them utterly, leaving not even a baby to cry for his mother.”

Conclusion: Patterns of Colonial Cleansing

I return to the four theses stated at the beginning of the Chapter. They have been generally supported, though with some qualifications. Thesis (1) has been largely supported: colonial cleansings did represent the first darkside of modern democracy, though in a distinctive and not entirely modern way. European settler groups were not formally democracies, even for males. Yet settler groups enjoyed considerable de facto self-rule, since the colonial state

lacked the resources to closely supervise them. They were the most "democratic" local regimes in the world at the time, and their murderous cleansing was usually worse than that committed by imperial authorities like the Spanish, Portuguese and British Crowns, their Viceroy and Governors, plus Catholic and Protestant Churches and Orders. In California deliberate killings escalated as soon as rule passed from the Spanish Crown and Missions to American settler statehood. Most Indians supported the British North American colonial administration, not the settler revolutionaries in the War of Independence. Deliberate genocidal bursts were more common by settlers under the more democratic British and Dutch than by the Spanish or Portuguese. And a more egalitarian distribution of property among the Europeans, in the form of small farming and small land-grants, resulted in more murderous cleansing than did large plantations or estates. Only South West Africa differed much. Though its settlers were also more extreme than the colonial administration, and though they subverted the non-cleansing and non-democratic strategy of "lateral aristocratic assimilation", it was the most authoritarian part of the German state that went "over the edge" into genocide. I offer as a broad generalization: the greater the local settler democracy, the more the murderous cleansing.

Indeed, quite contrary to the "democratic peace theory" discussed in Chapter 1, most cases were ethnic wars **between** democracies. Most native political institutions were more democratic than the settlers', and philanthropic colonists admired them for it. "The Indians are perfect republicans" said Boudinot; "Every man with them, is perfectly free to follow his own inclinations" said Jefferson (Sheehan, 1973: 111). Democracy was direct rather than representative, ensuring that most males (sometimes also females) enjoyed greater rights than do citizens of representative democracies. They could speak up in tribal assemblies. If they did not agree with their chiefs' final decisions, they could refuse to fight or leave it at any time. They could even freely leave the nation. In many councils unanimity was required, which meant that chiefs had to be more skilled at persuasion and compromise than war. That was also true of aboriginal groups, and to a lesser degree of the Herero. None of this applies to the Aztec or other Meso-American states, but nor were their opponents democratic either. This is not to endorse a romantic image of the "Noble Savage". Indians fought repeated and often cruel wars against each other and could be more ferocious than settlers. The Fetterman Massacre of 1865 involved disembowellings, hacked limbs, "private parts severed and indecently placed on the person". Even after we discount the fantastic elements in settler horror stories of Indian atrocities, several Indian nations revelled in torture as a slow, deliberate ritual and artistic process, understandably appalling whites (Brown, 1970: 137; Sheehan, 1973: Chap. 7; Cocker, 1998: 201, 213-4).

"Democratic peace theory" excludes groups like Indian Nations from its calculations because these did not have permanent, differentiated, representative states. This is convenient for purposes of data massage. Yet some Indian Nations did develop such states. The most developed was the Cherokee, introduced during the 1820s. The Choctaw, Chickasaw and Creeks followed down the same representative road, though not so far, in the period 1856-1867 (Champagne, 1992). It did not save them, since this only further enraged settler state governments.

All this runs flat contrary to the “democratic peace” explanation of murderous cleansing. Only for whites could America and Australia be considered to have had fairly democratic and non-murderous polities before the 20th century. Ethnic cleansing, involving deportations and murders, amounting at its worst to genocide, was central to the liberal modernity of the New World -- committed first by the settler colonies then by the independent “first new nations”. The process continued in North America, some countries of South America, and Australia until there were virtually no more native peoples to exterminate. And not states, but “we, the people” (aided by local politicians and “popular” paramilitaries) perpetrated most of this. The central state was called in when its army became necessary, but it was local settler democracy which had made that necessary. This often occurred through settlers “taking the law into their own hands”, in cycles of land-grabbing, raiding/ rebellion and “retaliation”. Those urging conciliation and negotiation -- army detachments, colonial administrators, missionaries, national politicians -- were labelled “outsiders”, importing general models onto a local situation of which they knew little. Since armed gangs of locals could act on their own, and so polarize the situation, outsiders had to often decide whose side were they on. If even one settler was killed or a family terrified by natives raiding their stock, outsiders found it difficult not to work up civilized or racial outrage themselves -- as we saw U.S. Presidents doing.

Of course, the explanation of why settler democracies were so murderous is fairly obvious, and cannot be used to explain many other cases of murderous cleansing. There was a direct economic clash between the two ethnic groups over a monopolistic resource, land. Economic power relations were the prime mover of colonial cleansings, unlike most of those I consider in later chapters. But they still required my other three sources of social power.

Political power brings in thesis (2). Property rights required settlers to collectively claim exclusive legal sovereignty over the territory at present claimed by natives (only some of them had a fully-developed state). This economic-political clash was then exacerbated by the military/ ideological imbalance of power described in thesis (2b). For the settlers could eliminate the out-group with very little military or moral risk to itself. Military power was overwhelming, in the last resort by bringing in the army of a modern state against much simpler fighting techniques. Ideologically, the clash concerned “alien” peoples not previously in contact. With the exception of the Mexico, unproblematic notions of ethnicity between settlers and natives overwhelmed any ethnic and class differences within each side. Natives were easy to denigrate as “savages” or “inferior races” against whom “civilizations” and “higher races” should advance by whatever means necessary. This ideological insulation against moral risk was unlike those found in later cleansings, since it did not mobilize ideologies of modern nationalism or modern statism. Today, “colonial” cleansing continues in the back lands of Latin America and Asia, eliminating indigenous peoples from marginal forests, swamps and mountains. There are faint echoes of it in places like Chechnya. But most contemporary cleansing involves more modern versions of the democratic nation-state than we have found in this chapter.

Yet as thesis (4) suggests, even such instrumentally-rational settlers did not perpetrate murderous cleansing as a single premeditated "Plan". Almost all killings came accidentally or from callousness which might not care but did not actually intend to kill. Killings came in rolling waves, involving perpetrators in different localities drawn from different generations. In each wave only a few would actually kill, and they had not intended to do so before they believed themselves "provoked" by illegitimate and threatening native resistance. Other, more moderate "plans" had just been tried and failed. Now radicalization was finally necessary.

This raises thesis (3). Murderous cleansing "succeeded" because settlers controlled the frontier zones, but amid political institutions which had not been securely institutionalized, and which did not enjoy the monopoly of the means of military power which most modern states possess. Central states (and churches) sometimes deplored these local rolling waves of killing, but their writ did not run there. "Settler democracy" was loose and fluid in frontier areas. "Radicals" could emerge, mobilize crowds and "popular" local sentiment, and then commit atrocities -- while duly constituted authority remained divided or vacillating. Native political institutions had also been disrupted. White aggression, deception and treaty-breaking created factionalism and crisis within tribal assemblies (as Champagne, 1992, emphasizes). Younger warchiefs and new leaders radicalized, mobilized raiding parties or even rebellions, bringing upon the heads of the whole nation massive escalatory retaliation. Thus stable institutionalized settler or Indian democracies were less likely to go "over the edge" into the perpetration of murderous cleansing than those destabilized and factionalized by local geopolitical crises, leaving a power vacuum in which radicals could mobilize. With these qualifications concerning intentionality and confusion in mind, **Genocide** was the first consequence in modern times of rule by "we, the people" -- the first truly dark side of democracy.

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