JEWISH ANARCHIST

VOICES

TABLE OF DISCONTENT

Here, we offer a recent text by an Anonymous contributor (2019), and two classical pieces from the 1980s by Fredy Perlman. The three articles are all written by Anarchists of Jewish heritage.

Cover Image:

The cover photo was likely taken in 1945. Unfortunately, the location and photographer are unknown. However, the picture captures what was likely a recently liberated Jew from either a death camp or ghetto. Many Jews were given the chance by liberating forces to turn the tables and enact revenge on their oppressors once the Germans "surrendered", this beautiful picture captures one of these moments.

Back Cover Image:

The back cover photo shows a group of Jewish partisans, initially formed in the Vilna Ghetto of what would be modern-day Lithuania. They went on to operate in the forests outside of Vilna between September 1943 and July 1944, fighting the Nazis.

HERITAGE & DISCONTENT

A Stream of Consciousness by an Anarchist Jew / 2019

During my childhood, my father was one of the few parents I knew who even discussed racism. I learned to hate Nazis and fascists even before I understood "the birds and the bees." My father felt it was essential to take me to see Saving Private Ryan and Schindler's List, regardless of whether other people in the theater were shocked by the sight of a child watching these films. I remember when the Klan marched in New York City in 1999; I never felt uncomfortable cursing in front of my father again.

Still, he was a classic reformed Jew. He hated Nazis, loved Israel, went to temple for Yom Kippur (rarely making it through the fast) and maybe Rosh Hashanah, and was discreetly atheistic yet openly savored Chinese food as if it was a staple of his Judaism. And he didn't challenge the view of the United States as some sort of salvation for the modern Jew (never mind that Russians, not US soldiers, freed my grandfather[1] from Auschwitz).

My father didn't question capitalism or the state in any sense either. He certainly never could have expected that through his inspiration, I would not only carry on his legacy of a deep animosity toward Nazism but also expand that abhorrence, applying it to the broader logic of authoritarianism—a passionate recognition of the struggles remembered in my DNA. In fact, my first fight with my father, and the only physical one, was when I declared my unconditional opposition to Israel in 2001, following the 9/11 attacks. I explained to him that as a descendant of survivors, and forever enemy of fascism, it was my responsibility to oppose not only this medium for US intervention in the Middle East but every nation-state in existence too.

Growing up, other children viewed me, pejoratively, as a fat Jewish kid being raised by a struggling single mom, and thus someone who wasn't worthy of respect (which, in a predominantly Catholic town, led to some traumatic incidents indeed). I wasn't accepted much by other Jews, since my mother had converted, and I wasn't accepted by Catholics, because she had converted and married (and then divorced) a Jew. Christmas time stirred up classroom humiliation. My classmates would draw and flash swastikas at me, hoping for an awkward laugh. They were basically instructing me to be afraid and insecure, and in some cases, pushing me to hide my Jewish identity. I only found myself welcomed by others who were also excluded: lower-class whites and black or brown people. These experiences contributed to me understanding that "Nazism" was not the result of "human nature" but rather part of imposed and learned social structures such as racism. The Holocaust wasn't a finite event in human history; in big and small ways, heinous ideologies seep into everyday life, compelling people to choose a side.

Armed with my father's influence to despise oppressors from a young age, I began to see my bullies in a different light, turning my fear into hatred and anxiety into discontent, and gave up trying to adapt or fit in. I wasn't swayed by the pep talks of creepy principles and coaches to simply go along. I didn't dismiss racism or classism by labeling them as "bullying." Instead of brushing off or ignoring my experiences, I saw them as introductions to an authoritarian society that we are told and often forced to accept. Somewhat inevitably perhaps, my attention was grabbed by tendencies and cultures that celebrated the refusal to acquiesce, and opposed conformity and submission.

As I grew, I couldn't dismiss or ignore anything that resembled fascism or the ideas of the same scum who inflicted so much suffering onto my ancestors.

The first action I ever took against racism must have been when I was twelve years old, in the early days of the internet. I made a fake online profile, based on real-life personal information, for a rich kid I knew who used the N-word, intending to ruin his young life. Then I messaged as many students in our school as I could through his false account, asserting, "I'm a racist rich kid and like to say the N-word!" I got caught. My mother was threatened with a lawsuit, and I was almost expelled from school. Yet this act was only a beginning. Shortly afterward, I refused both aliyah to Israel and a bar mitzvah, as well as the notion of god itself. While Christianity was more prevalent behind the ugly faces of the youthful racism and general oppression that I witnessed in my school and town, organized religion in general and all its fallacies seemingly began to contradict a voice for freedom versus fascism in my eyes.

I have now been a self-proclaimed anarchist for over half my life. I have been beaten for it, intimidated and harassed for it, and had my life turned upside down on more than one occasion. I have forfeited ease and stability for commitment and integrity. My enemies have come to my work and home, and threatened many friends and loved ones. I have been pulled out of lines at borders and interrogated for hours on end. I have lost critical years of my youth inside juvenile facilities meant to crush my spirit and been doxxed by snitches, truly testing my will to stay the course. I have been backed into a corner where cooperation with the state would have been the easiest choice, but decided on the harder route instead, realizing that cooperating with the state would mean abandoning my ethical position as an enemy of fascism in all its manifestations.

In contrast, I would gladly share the clothes off my back with comrades or friends, and at times have done so. I've dedicated myself to schemes and projects that benefit political prisoners, war chests, and anarchist propaganda. And regardless of convenience, I seek to be in the streets whenever I can, preserving and asserting my position in this world as a victory in itself.

I remain a high school dropout with two poor parents, both of whom are now barely surviving through disability payments. To survive and demonstrate my rage, I have experienced a life of what might be considered criminal, certainly precarious, and always intent on experiencing or pushing for a sincere subversion only available outside conventional politics. I have never been helped formally by the broader Jewish community, and indeed have been scammed and fired by Israelis—both fully aware of my family's Shoah history. I've donated remnants of the Holocaust from my family to a museum, yet when I asked to explore the museum for free due to a lack of funds, I could feel the judgment in the room. More ridiculously, when a play about a relative of mine was performed on Broadway, and my brother and I wrote to the director about getting complimentary tickets, again due to a lack of money, we were ignored. And when I tried to retain my Polish citizenship through Swiss and German reparations paperwork, I was asked for my grandparents' birth certificates, despite the fact that their homes and belongings were all looted or destroyed (as cited in their reparations papers). When I mentioned this again, I was told to consult ancestry.com, as if it could magically make their documents reappear. So I reached out to Holocaust descendant groups, and was informed that I could potentially get assistance, yet at a hefty price tag that I could never afford; even in "modern-day" Europe, Polish Jews are unlucky.

In the most critical and scary of times, I was forced to leave everything behind in a process of informal evasion. This has led to the loss of jobs, savings, relationships, and friendships, and most poignantly, the opportunity to say I love you and goodbye to my nana[2] before her final dive into dementia.

My ranting point, put simply, is that if it wasn't for hearing a Jewish voice against Nazism from an early age—my dad's—I may never have been driven to question or react to oppression in the ways that I did. I wouildn't have felt I am permanently preserving the legacy of my family's struggle through my choices to live a life in extreme opposition to forces of domination and exploitation. I wouldn't have become and stayed an anarchist.

I know that my position today as an anarchist is, without a doubt, an extension of survivors' blood flowing through my veins. I know that being told to never forget what happened in Poland, and especially being told who to blame and who to respect, allowed me to react in ways that many other children wouldn't to their trauma or the world around them, and grow into the person I am now. It allowed me both consciously and unconsciously to connect my own traumatic experiences of abuse, feelings of deception, and confusion regarding a normalized world of divisive and stratified suffering to something bigger—recognized through my father's commitment to ensure nobody forget what our family went through. Whether he could have ever expected to lay the groundwork for my current understanding of the world is irrelevant; he did.

So even though I lack faith in all religions, I am a proud Jew. I became an atheist and opposed Israel because of my heritage. I despise all domination because of my heritage. And I warmly embrace the honor of having learned as a kid, unlike my peers, that deadly systems like fascism aren't "just the way it is"; they are the enemy of that which defines me.

Through years of pain and sorrow, I've never given in to fear. Struggle, in my mind, is defined as taking a position regardless of hope of victory (much like those who stood up to the Germans with no hope of victory, yet no choice but to resist). Further-

more, the people I know and love are extensions of my experiences and principles. And as an anarchist, to cooperate with the state or snitch, compromise my integrity, or forfeit my position would all be a slap in the face to those people and myself, and essentially the death of any life worth continuing.

I'm certain that my grandparents, if they were alive today, could never understand what I'm trying to say here, and that I want to give respect to the Jewish foundations of my anarchism. They would happily watch a Volkswagen car burn for hours, but they wouldn't feel the same about a US police cruiser in flames. Deep down, however, I know that they would be proud of the strength of my integrity and my passion for challenging what I see as anything resembling the belief system that inflicted their suffering. They survived so I could live. And you have to fucking respect such a struggle, not only as an anarchist, but as a human with a heart.

In some ways, the Jewish faith has more of an appreciation for this mortal life than some other religions. Abandoning my values in the face of fear and repression would be a betrayal to my very existence, which includes being an anarchist. Yet, it could also be seen as betraying my Jewish heritage, the legacy that runs through my blood and helped me to realize the position I take everyday in response to this frustrating world. Distinct from all books and written histories documenting this religion, Judaism has become a culture grown in struggle. Just as the Torah (which I am deaf to), can be interpreted differently depending on which sect of Jews you ask, there are many interpretations to be made of Jewish culture. Anarchism is one; it is mine.

Notes:

1)My grandfather lost the majority of his family, and was one of the many Jews transferred from the Łódź ghetto to the Auschwitz Concentration Camp when the Nazis shut it down due to concerns of an uprising. My Papa survived Auschwitz, being liberated by Russian forces. He committed the rest of his life to helping liberate persecuted Jews and contributing to post-war revenge efforts. My Papa was always quiet about what he did after the war, and his experiences during the war. But I know he survived so I can live. And his strength lives on through me.

2) My Nana was always one of my biggest supporters. The unconditional love she shared with me is something I cherish to this day. My Nana hated Nazis, and everything German for that matter (it's understandable). She wore a Jewish star around her neck like Flava Flav wears his clocks. She wanted the world to know her struggle, her survival, and her refusal to ever hide her Judaism from the world again.

My Nana and her sister were put into the Częstochowa ghetto during the war. One day, her sister escaped, demanding my Nana join her, but my Nana was too afraid. My great aunt escaped on her own, only to return with equipment and a carpet to push my Nana over the fence of the ghetto. She gave my Nana courage, and for this my Nana was forever grateful to her sister.

Once they escaped, they made it to a local train station. From there, they hid underneath the train, spotted by a young soldier who miraculously didn't report them. For the rest of the war, my Nana and her sister made fake Kennkarte papers (German ID cards) and hid with a family who hired them as care-takers. They were lucky to have blonde hair, allowing them to more easily hide. I would not be here if it wasn't for her courage and the courage of her sister. A courage that inspires me to this day.

Post Script:

Since at the time of writing this (2019) I've been a target of threats for some time, I've used a pseudonym for this piece and have been relatively broad in my references. If it matters, I only know the Hanukah prayer by heart because of the gifts I got as a kid during the holiday, and while I was not bar mitzvahed, I did have a proper bris. I am a direct descendant of Holocaust survivors and many murdered by the German state as well as some well-known Jews in history, including a man who participated in postwar partisan revenge and liberation efforts in Ethiopia. I hope that this piece provokes some goosebumps of love and solidarity. And while I defy Zionism and its right-wing influences on the modern Jewish community, I hope that if my grandparents were still alive to read this, they could appreciate its affectionate and loving intention.

This text also appears in the book There is Nothing So Whole as a Broken Heart*, edited by Cindy Milstein and published by AK Press.*

ANTI-SEMITISM & THE BEIRUT POGROM

Fredy Perlman / 1983

Escape from death in a gas chamber or a Pogrom, or incarceration in a concentration camp, may give a thoughtful and capable writer, Solzhenitsyn for example, profound insights into many of the central elements of contemporary existence, but such an experience does not, in itself, make Solzhenitsyn a thinker, a writer, or even a critic of concentration camps; it does not, in itself, confer any special powers. In another person the experience might lie dormant as a potentiality, or remain forever meaningless, or it might contribute to making the person an ogre. In short, the experience is an indelible part of the individual's past but it does not determine his future; the individual is free to choose his future; he is even free to choose to abolish his freedom, in which case he chooses in bad faith and is a Salaud (J.P. Sartre's precise philosophical term for a person who makes such a choice [The usual English translation is 'Bastard']).

My observations are borrowed from Sartre; I'd like to apply them, not to Solzhenitsyn, but to myself, as a specific individual, and to the American cheerleaders rooting for the State of Israel, as a specific choice.
I was one of three small children removed by our elders from a Central European country a month before the Nazis invaded the country and began rounding up Jews. Only part of my extended family left; the rest remained and were all rounded up; of these, all my cousins, aunts, and grandparents died in Nazi concentration camps or gas chambers except two uncles, whom I'll mention later.

A month more and I, too, would have been one of those who actually underwent the rationally-planned scientific extermination of human beings, the central experience of so many people in an age of highly developed science and productive forces, but I wouldn't have been able to write about it.

I was one of those who escaped. I spent my childhood among Quechua-speaking people of the Andean highlands, but I didn't learn to speak Quechua and I didn't ask myself why; I spoke to a Quechua in a language foreign to both of us, the Conquistador's language. I wasn't aware of myself as a refugee nor of the Quechuas as refugees in their own land; I knew no more about the terrors — the expropriations, persecutions and pogroms, the annihilation of an ancient culture — experienced by their ancestors than I knew about the terrors experienced by mine.

To me the Quechuas were generous hospitable, guileless, and I thought more of an aunt who respected and liked them than of a relative who cheated them and was contemptuous of them and called them dirty and primitive.

My relative's cheating was my first contact with the double standard, the fleecing of outsiders to enrich insiders, the moral adage that said: It's all right if it's We who do it.

My relative's contempt was my first experience with racism, which gave this relative an affinity with the Pogromists she had fled from; her narrow escape from them did not make her a critic of Pogromists; the experience probably contributed nothing to her personality, not even her identification with the Conquistador, since this was shared by Europeans who did not share my relative's experience of narrowly escaping from a concentration camp. Oppressed European peasants had identified with Conquistadores who carried a more vicious oppression to non-Europeans already before my relative's experience.

My relative did make use of her experience years later, when she chose to be a rooter for the State of Israel, at which time she did not renounce her contempt toward the Quechuas; on the contrary, she then applied her contempt toward people in other parts of the world, people she had never met or been among. But I wasn't concerned with the character of her choice at the time; I was more concerned with the chocolates she brought me.

In my teens I was brought to America, which was a synonym for New York even to people already in America among the Quechuas; it was a synonym for much else, as I was very slowly to learn.

Shortly after my arrival in America, the state power of the Central European country of my origin was seized

by a well-organized gang of egalitarians who thought they could bring about universal emancipation by occupying State offices and becoming policemen, and the new State of Israel fought its first successful war and turned an indigenous population of Semites into internal refugees like the Quechuas and exiled refugees like the Central European Jews. I should have wondered why the Semitic refugees and the European refugees who claimed to be Semitic, two peoples with so much in common, did not make common cause against common oppressors, but I was far too occupied trying to find my way in America.

From an elementary school friend who was considered a hooligan by my parents, and also from my parents themselves, I slowly learned that America was the place where anyone would want to be, something like Paradise, but a Paradise that remained out of reach even after one entered America. America was a land of clerks and factory workers, but neither clerical nor factory work were America. My hooligan friend summarized it all very simply: there were suckers and hustlers, and you had to be dumb to become a sucker. My parents were less explicit; they said: Study hard. The implied motivation was: God forbid you should become a clerk or factory worker! Become something other: a professional or a manager. At that time I didn't know these other callings were also America's, that with every rung reached, Paradise remained as unreachable as before. I didn't know that the professional's or even the clerk's or worker's satisfaction came, not from the fullness of his own life, but from the rejection of his own life, from identification with the great process taking place outside him, the process of unfettered industrial destruction. The results of this process could be watched in movies or newspapers, though not yet on Television, which would soon bring the process into everyone home; the satisfaction was that of the voyeur, the peeper. At that time I didn't know that this process was the most concrete synonym for America.

Once in America, I had no use for my experience of narrowly escaping a Nazi concentration camp; the experience couldn't help me climb the ladder toward Paradise and might even hinder me; my hurried climb might have been slowed considerably or even stopped altogether if I had tried to empathize with the condition of the labor camp inmate I might have become, for I would have realized what it was that trade the prospect of factory work so fearsome: it differed from the other condition in that there were no gas chambers and in that the factory worker spent only his weekdays inside.

I wasn't alone in having no use for my Central European experience. My relatives had no use for it either. During that decade I met one of my two uncles who had actually lived through a Nazi concentration camp. Once in America, even this uncle had no use for his experience; he wanted nothing more than to forget the Pogrom and everything associated with it; he wanted only to climb the rungs of America; he wanted to look and sound and act no differently from other Americans. My parents had exactly the same attitude. I was told that my other uncle had survived the camps and gone to Israel, only to be hit by a car soon after his arrival.

The State of Israel was not interesting to me during that decade, although I heard talk of it. My relatives spoke with a certain pride of the existence of a State with Jewish policemen, a Jewish army, Jewish judges and factory managers, in short a State totally unlike Nazi Germany and just like America, my relatives, whatever their personal situations, identified with the Jewish policemen and not with the policed, with the factory owners and not the Jewish workers, with the Jewish hustlers and not the suckers, an identification which was understandable among people who wanted to forget their close encounter with labor camps. But none of them wanted to go there; they were already in America.

My relatives gave grudgingly to the Zionist cause and were baffled — all except my racist relative — by the unqualified enthusiasm of second to nth generation Americans for a distant State with Jewish policemen and teachers and managers, since these people were already policemen and teachers and managers in America, my racist relative understood what the enthusiasm was based on: racial solidarity. But I wasn't aware of this at the time. I was not an over-bright American high-schooler and I thought racial solidarity was something confined to Nazis, Afrikaaners and American Southerners.

I was starting to be familiar with the traits of the Nazis who'd almost captured me: the racism that reduced human beings to their genealogical connections over five or six generations, the crusading nationalism that considered the rest of humanity an obstacle, the Gleichschaltung that cut off the individuals freedom to choose, the technological efficiency that made small

humans mere fodder for great machines, the bully militarism that pitted walls of tanks against a cavalry and exacted a hundred times the losses it sustained, the official paranoia that pictured the enemy, poorly armed townspeople and villagers, as a nearly omnipotent conspiracy of cosmic scope. But I didn't see that these traits had anything to do with America or Israel. It was only during my next decade, as in American college student with a mild interest in history and philosophy, that I began to acquire a smattering of knowledge about Israel and Zionism, not because I was particularly interested in these subjects but because they were included in my readings. I was neither hostile nor friendly; I was indifferent; I still had no use for my experience as a refugee.

But I didn't remain indifferent to Israel or Zionism. This was the decade of Israel's spectacular capture and trial of the Good German Eichmann, and of Israel's spectacular invasion of large parts of Egypt, Syria and Jordan in a six-day Blitzkrieg, a decade when Israel was news for everyone, not just for refugees.
I didn't have any unconventional thoughts about the obedient Eichmann except the thought that he couldn't be so exceptional since I had already met people like him in America. But some of my readings did make me start wondering about my Zionist relative's racism.

I learned that people like the ancient Hebrews, Akkadians, Arabs, Phoenicians and Ethiopians had all come from the land of Shem (the Arabian Peninsula) and had all spoken the language of Shem, which was what made them Shemites or Semites. I learned that the Jewish religion had originated among Semites in the ancient Levantine State Judah, the Christian religion among Semites in the ancient Levantine towns Nazareth and Jerusalem, the Mohammedan religion among Semites in the ancient Arabian towns Mecca and Medina, and that for the past 1300 years the region called Palestine had been a sacred place to the Islamic Semites who lived there and in surrounding regions.

I also learned that the religions of European and American Jews, like the religions of European and American Christians, had been elaborated, during almost two millennia, by Europeans and more recently by Americans.

If Europeans and American Jews were Semites in terms of their religion, then European and American Christians were also Semites, a notion that was generally considered absurd.

If Jews were Semites in terms of the language of their Sacred Book, then all European and American Christians were Greeks or Italians, a notion almost as patently absurd.

I started to suspect that my Zionist relative's only connection to the Zion in the Levant was a genealogical connection traced, not over six, but over more than sixty generations. But I had come to consider such racial reckoning a peculiarity of Nazis, Afrikaaners and American Southerners.

I was uneasy. I thought surely there was more to it than that; surely those who claimed to descend from the victims of all that racism were not carriers of a racism ten times more thorough.

I knew little of the Zionist Movement, but enough to start being repelled. I knew the Movement had originally had two wings, one of which, the Socialist one, I could understand because I was starting to empathize with victims of oppression, not from insights I gained from my own experience but from books equally accessible to others; the other wing of Zionism was incomprehensible to me.

The egalitarian or Left Zionists, as I then understood them, did not want to be assimilated into the European states that persecuted them, some because they didn't think they ever could be, others because they were repelled by industrializing Europe and America. The Messiah, their Movement, would deliver Israel from exile and guide her to Zion, to something altogether different, to a Paradise without suckers or hustlers. Some of them, even more metaphorically, hoped the Messiah would deliver the oppressed from their oppressors, if not everywhere, then at least in a millennial egalitarian Utopia located in a province of the Ottoman Empire, and they were ready to join with the Islamic residents of Zion against Ottoman, Levantine and British oppressors. They shared this dream with Christian millenarians who had been trying for more than a millennium to found Zion in one or another province of Europe; both had the same roots, but I suspected the left Zionists had inherited their millenarianism from the Christians.

The egalitarian Zionists were arrogant in thinking the Islamic residents of Zion would embrace European

leftists as liberators, and they were as naive as the egalitarians who had seized state power in the country of my birth, thinking the millennium would begin as soon as they occupied State offices and became policemen. But as far as I could see, they weren't racists. The other Zionists, the Right, who by the time I reached college had all but supplanted the Left, at least in America, were explicit racists arid assimilationists; they wanted a State dominated by a Race ever so thinly disguised as a religion, a State that would not be something altogether different, but exactly the same as America and the other states in the Family of Nations. I couldn't understand this, for it seemed to me that these Zionists, who included statists, industrializers and technocrats, were not only racists but also Conversos.

Earlier Conversos were Jews in fifteenth century Spain who, to avoid persecution, discovered that the long-awaited Jewish Messiah had already arrived, a millennium and a half earlier, in the person of Jewish prophet Jesse, the Crucified. Some of these Conversos then joined the Inquisition and persecuted Jews who had not made this discovery.

The modern Conversos hadn't become Catholics; Catholicism was not the dominant creed in the twentieth century; Science and Technology were.

I thought Jesse had at least affirmed, if only as relics, some of the traits of the ancient human community, whereas Science and Technology affirmed nothing human; they destroyed culture as well as nature as well as human community.

It seemed sad that the long-preserved and carefully-guarded specificities of a cultural minority that had refused to be absorbed were to shatter on the discovery that the technocratic State was the Messiah and the Industrial Process the long-awaited millennium. This made the whole trajectory meaningless. The dream of these racist Conversos was repulsive to me. It wasn't until the following decade, when I was over thirty, that my nearness to the Nazi Pogrom began to be meaningful to me. This transvaluation of my early experience happened suddenly, and was caused by something like a chance encounter, an encounter which, also by chance, included an odd reference to the State of Israel.

This was the decade when America waged its war of extermination against a people and an ancient culture of the Far East.

It happened that I was visiting my Americanized relatives at the same time that my Andean aunt was with them for the first time since their separation. This was the aunt who had respected the Quechua-speaking people, although not enough to learn their language, and had stayed among them when the others left.

The conversation among the relatives turned to pious reflections about the uncle who had gone to Israel and been killed by a car after having survived the Nazi concentration camps.

My Andean aunt couldn't believe what she heard. She asked her relatives if they had all gone crazy. The story about the car accident had been told to the children so often that the adults had come to believe it.

That man wasn't killed in an accident, she shouted. He committed suicide. He had survived the concentration camps because he had been a technician employed in applying chemical science to the operation of the gas chambers. He had then made the mistake of emigrating to Israel, where his collaboration had been made public knowledge. He probably couldn't face the accusing eyes; maybe he feared retaliation.

My first response to this revelation was revulsion against a human being who could be so morally degraded as to gas his own kin and fellow-captives. But the more I thought about him, the more I had to admit there had at least been a shred of moral integrity in his final self-destructive act; that act didn't make him a moral paradigm, but it contrasted sharply with the acts of people who lacked even that shred of moral integrity, people who were returning from the Far East and affirming their deeds, actually boasting of the unnatural atrocities they had inflicted on their fellow human beings.

And I asked myself who the others really were, the pure ones who had exposed and judged Eichmann the obedient German.

I didn't know anything about the people in Israel and had never met an Israeli, but I was increasingly aware of the loud American cheerleaders for the State of Israel, and not the Left Zionists among them but the others, my racist relative's friends. The Leftists had all but vanished in a dark sectarian Limbo no outsider could penetrate, a Limbo that stank almost as strong-

ly as the one that held Messiah Lenin's and Stalin's heirs, with sects twisted out of shape by the existence of the State of Israel, ranging from those who claimed their seizure of power was all that was needed to turn the State of Israel into an egalitarian community, to those who claimed the existing State of Israel was already the egalitarian community.

But the Left Zionists shouted only at each other.

It was the others who made all the din, who shouted at everyone else. And these were explicit about what they admired in the State of Israel; they affirmed it, they boasted of it, and it had nothing to do with the ailing wing's egalitarianism.

What they admired was:

• the crusading nationalism that considered the humanity surrounding it as nothing but obstacles to its flowering;

• the industrial potency of the Race that had succeeded in denaturing the desert and making it bloom;

• the efficiency of the human beings remade into operators of big tanks and incredibly accurate jets;

• the technological sophistication of the instruments of death themselves, infinitely superior to that of the Nazis;

• the spectacularly enterprising secret police whose prowess was surely not inferior, for such a small State, to that of the CIA, KGB or Gestapo;

• the bully militarism that pitted the latest inventions of life-killing Science against a motley collection of weapons, and exacted a hundred or a thousand times the losses it sustained.

This last boast, which expressed the morality of exacting hundreds of eyes for an eye and thousands of teeth for a tooth, seemed particularly repulsive in the mouth of a cheerleader for a theocratic State where an ethical elite claimed to provide inspired guidance on moral questions; but this will surprise only those uninformed about history's theocracies.

During this decade, the racism, the anti-Semitism, to be more precise, of these admirers of the State of Israel became virulent. Zion's expropriated Semites were no longer considered human beings; they were Backward Arabs; only those among them who had been turned into good assimilated Israelis could be called human; the others were dirty Primitives. And Primitives, in the definition given a few centuries earlier by Conquistadores, not only had no right to resist humiliation, expropriation and desolation; Primitives had no right to exist; they only squandered nature's resources, they didn't know what to do with God's precious gifts! Only God's chosen knew how to use the Great Father's gifts, and they knew exactly what to do with them.

Yet even while dwelling on the backwardness of the expropriated, the cheerleaders became paranoid and pictured the pathetic resistance of the expropriated as a vast conspiracy of untold power and nearly cosmic scope.

Sartre's expression mauvaise foi [The usual English translation is 'Bad faith.'] is too weak to characterize the posture chosen by these people, but it's not my concern to coin another expression.

I survived into my forties, thanks partly to the fact that America still hadn't exterminated itself and the rest of humanity with the high-powered incinerants and poisons with which it was mining [Mining in the sense of setting explosive mines, making earth lethal], or rather undermining, its own as well as other people's lands.

This decade combined what I had earlier thought uncombinable; it combined a barrage of revelations about the Holocaust, in the form of movies, plays, books and articles, with the Pogrom, perpetrated on Levantine Semites in Beirut by the State of Israel. [Written in mid-August, this statement referred to Israel's invasion and not yet to the Pogrom in the strict 19th century sense perpetrated in September. (Sept 16–18, 1982, to be exact)]

The revelations touched the Holocaust in Vietnam only marginally; maybe two generations have to pass before such filth is hung out to air. The revelations were almost all about the Holocaust I had narrowly escaped as a child.

People who don't understand human freedom might think the terrible revelations could have only one effect, they could only turn people against the perpetrators of such atrocities, they could only make people

empathize with the victims, they could only contribute to a resolve to abolish the very possibility of a repeat of such dehumanizing persecution and cold-blooded murder. But, for better or worse, such experiences, whether personally lived or learned from revelations, are nothing but the field over which human freedom soars like a bird of prey. The revelations about the forty-year-old Pogrom have even been turning up as justifications for a present-day Pogrom.

Pogrom is a Russian word that used to refer, in past years that now seem almost benign, to a riot of cudgel-armed men against poorly armed villagers with different cultural traits; the more heavily the State was involved in the riot, the more heinous was the Pogrom. The overwhelmingly stronger attackers projected their own character as bullies onto their weaker victims, convincing themselves that their victims were rich, powerful, well-armed and allied with the Devil. The attackers also projected their own violence onto their victims, constructing stories of the victims' brutality out of details taken from their own repertory of deeds. In nineteenth century Russia, a Pogrom was considered particularly violent if fifty people were killed.

The statistics underwent a complete metamorphosis in the twentieth century, when the State became the main rioter. The statistics of modern German and Russian and Turkish state-run Pogroms are known; the statistics from Vietnam and Beirut are not public yet.

Beirut and its inhabitants had already been made desolate by the presence of the violent resistance movement of the expropriated refugees ousted from Zion; if the casualties of those clashes were added to the number killed by the State of Israel's direct involvement in the riot — but I'll stop this; I don't want to play numbers games.

The trick of declaring war against the armed resistance and then attacking the resisters' unarmed kin as well as the surrounding population with the most gruesome products of Death-Science — this trick is not new. American Pioneers were pioneers in this too; they made it standard practice to declare war on indigenous warriors and then to murder and burn villages with only women and children in them. This is already modern war, what we know as war against civilian populations; it has also been called, more candidly, mass murder or genocide.

Maybe I shouldn't be surprised that the perpetrators of a Pogrom portray themselves as the victims, in the present case as victims of the Holocaust.

Herman Melville noticed over a century ago, in his analysis of the metaphysics of Indian-hating, that those who made a full-time profession of hunting and murdering indigenous people of this continent always made themselves appear, even in their own eyes, as the victims of manhunts.

The use the Nazis made of the International Jewish Conspiracy is better known: during all the years of atrocities defying belief, the Nazis considered themselves the victimized.

Pogrom is a Russian word that used to refer, in past years that now seem almost benign, to a riot of cudgel-armed men against poorly armed villagers with different cultural traits; the more heavily the State was involved in the riot, the more heinous was the Pogrom.

It's as if the experience of being a victim gave exemption from human solidarity, as if it gave special powers, as if it gave a license to kill.

Maybe I shouldn't be surprised, but I can't keep myself from being angry, because such a posture is the posture of a Salaud, the posture of one who denies human freedom, who denies that he chooses himself as killer. The experience, whether personally lived or learned from revelations, explains and determines nothing; it is nothing but a phony alibi.

Melville analyzed the moral integrity of the Indian-hater.

I'm talking about modern Pogromists, and more narrowly about cheerleaders for Pogroms. I'm talking about people who haven't personally killed fifty or five or even one human being.

I'm talking about America, where the quest is to immerse oneself in Paradise while avoiding any contact with its dirty work, where only a minority is still involved in the personal doing of the dirty work, where the vast majority are full-time voyeurs, peepers, professors, call them what you will.

Among the voyeurs, I'm concentrating on the voyeurs of Holocausts and Pogroms. I have to keep referring to what's on the screen because that's what's being watched. But my concern is with the watcher, with one who chooses himself a voyeur, specifically a voyeur of Holocausts, a cheerleader for death squads. Mention the words Beirut and Pogrom in the same sentence to such a one, and he'll vomit all the morality inside him: he won't vomit much.

The likeliest response you'll get is a moronic chuckle and a cynical laugh.

I'm reminded of my uncle, the one who wasn't hit by a car, who at least had the shred of moral integrity to see what others saw and reject it, and I contrast my uncle with this person who either sees nothing at all, or who cynically affirms what he sees, cynically accepts himself.

If he's an intellectual, a professor, he'll respond with the exact equivalent of the moronic grin or the cynical laugh but with words; he'll bombard you with sophistries, half truths and outright lies which are perfectly transparent to him even as he utters them.

This is not an airy, wide-eyed idealist but a gross, down-to-earth property-oriented materialist with no illusions about what constitutes expropriation of what he calls Real Estate. Yet this real estate man will start telling you that the Levantine Zion is a Jewish Land and he'll point to a two-thousand year old Title.

He calls Hitler a madman for having claimed the Sudetenland was a German land because he totally rejects the rules that would have made it a German land, international peace treaties are included in his rules, violent expropriations are not.

Yet suddenly he pulls out a set of rules which, if he really accepted them, would pulverize the entire edifice of Real Property. If he really accepted such rules, he would be selling plots in Gdansk to Kashubians returning from exile, tracts in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota to Ojibwas reappropriating their homeland, estates in Iran, Iraq and much of Turkey to homeward bound Indian Parsees, and he would even have to lease parts of Zion itself to Chinese descendants of Nestorian Christians, and to many others besides.

Such arguments have more affinity with the moronic chuckle than with the cynical laugh.

The cynical laugh translated into words would say: We (they always say We) We conquered the Primitives, expropriated them and ousted them; the expropriated are still resisting, and in the meantime We have acquired two generations who have no other home but Zion; being Realists, we know we can end the resistance once and for all by exterminating the expropriated,

Such cynicism without a shred of moral integrity might be realistic, but it might also turn out to be what C.W. Mills called Crackpot Realism, because the resistance might survive and spread and it might go on as long as the Irish.

There's yet another response, the response of the cudgel-armed Defense League bully who thinks the absence of a brown shirt makes him unrecognizable.
He clenches his fist or tightens his grip on his club and shouts: Traitor!

This response is the most ominous, for it claims that We are a club to which all are welcome, but the membership of some is mandatory.

In this usage, Traitor does not mean anti-Semite, since it is aimed at people who empathize with the plight of the current Semites. Traitor does not mean Pogromist, since it is aimed at people who still empathize with the victims of the Pogrom. This term is one of the few components of the vocabulary of a racist through the ages; it means: Traitor to the Race.

And here I reach the single element which the new anti-Semite had not yet shared with the old anti-Semite: Gleichschaltung, the totalitarian 'synchronization' of all political activity and expression. The entire Race must march in step, to the same drumbeat; all are to obey.

The uniqueness of the condemned Eichmann becomes reduced to a difference in holiday ritual.

It seems to me that such goons are not preservers of the traditions of a persecuted culture. They're Conversos, but not to the Catholicism of Fernando y Isabela; they're Conversos to the political practice of the Fuehrer.

The long exile is over; the persecuted refugee at long last returns to Zion, but so badly scarred he's unrecognizable, he has completely lost his self; he returns as anti-Semite, as Pogromist, as mass murderer; the ages of exile and suffering are still included in his makeup, but only as self-justifications, and as a repertory of horrors to impose on Primitives and even on Earth herself.

I think I've now shown that the experience of the Holocaust, whether lived or peeped, does not in itself make an individual a critic of Pogroms, and also that it does not confer special powers or give anyone a license to kill or make someone a mass murderer.

But I haven't even touched the large question that is raised by all this: Can I begin to explain why someone chooses himself a mass murderer?

I think I can begin to answer. At the risk of plagiarizing Sartre's portrait of the old anti-Semite, I can at least try to point to one or two of the elements in the field of choice of the new anti-Semite.

I could start by noticing that the new anti-Semite is not really so different from any other TV-watcher, and that TV-watching is somewhere near the core of the choice (I include newspapers and movies under the abbreviation for 'tell-a-vision').

What the watcher sees on the screen are some of the 'interesting' deeds, sifted and censored, of the monstrous ensemble in which he plays a trivial but daily role. The central but not often televised activity of this vast ensemble is industrial and clerical labor, forced labor, or just simply labor, the Arbeit which macht frei. ['Work Liberates': a slogan posted at the entrance to Nazi slave labor camps.]

Solzhenitsyn, in his multi-volumed Gulag Archipelago, gave a profound analysis of what such Arbeit does to a human individual's outer and inner life; a comparably profound analysis has yet to be made of the administration that 'synchronizes' the activity, the training institutions that produce the Eichmanns and Chemists who apply rational means to the perpetration of the irrational ends of their superiors.

I can't summarize Solzhenitsyn's findings; his books have to be read. In a brief space I can only say that the part of life spent in Arbeit, the triviality of existence in a commodity market as seller or customer, worker or client, leaves an individual without kinship or community or meaning; it dehumanizes him, evacuates him; it leaves nothing inside but the trivia that make up his outside. He no longer has the centrality, the significance, the self-powers given to all their members by ancient communities that no longer exist. He doesn't even have the phony centrality given by religions which preserved a memory of the ancient qualities while reconciling people to worlds where those qualities were absent. Even the religions have been evacuated, pared down to empty rituals whose meaning has long been lost.

The gap is always there; it's like hunger: it hurts. Yet nothing seems to fill it.

Ah, but there's something that does fill it or at least seems to; it may be sawdust and not grated cheese, but it gives the stomach the illusion that it's been fed; it may be a total abdication of self-powers, a self-annihilation, but it creates the illusion of self-fulfillment, of reappropriation of the lost self-powers.

This something is the Told Vision which can be watched on off hours, and preferably all the time.

By choosing himself a Voyeur, the individual can watch everything he no longer is.

All the self-powers he no longer has, It has, And It has even more powers; It has powers no individual ever had; It has the power to turn deserts into forests and forests into deserts; It has the power to annihilate peoples and cultures who have survived since the beginning of time and to leave no trace that they ever existed; It even has the power to resuscitate the vanished peoples and cultures and endow them with eternal life in the conditioned air of museums.

In case the reader hasn't already guessed, It is the technological ensemble, the industrial process, the Messiah called Progress. It is America.

The individual deprived of meaning chooses to take the final leap into meaninglessness by identifying with the very process that deprives him. He becomes We the exploited identifying with the exploiter. Henceforth his powers are Our powers, the powers of the ensemble, the powers of the alliance of workers with their own bosses known as the Developed Nation. The powerless individual becomes an essential switch in the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing God, the

central computer; he becomes one with the machine. His immersion becomes an orgy during the crusades against those who are still outside the machine: untouched trees, wolves, Primitives.

During such crusades he becomes one of the last Pioneers; he joins hands across the centuries with the Conquistadores of the southern part and the Pioneers of the northern part of this double continent; he joins hands with Indian-haters and Discoverers and Crusaders; he feels America running in his veins at last, the America that was already brewing in the cauldrons of European Alchemists long before Colon (the Converso) reached the Caribs, Raleigh the Algonquians or Cartier the Iroquoians; he gives the coup de grace to his remaining humanity by identifying with the process exterminating culture, nature and humanity.

If I went on I would probably come to results already found by W. Reich in his study of the mass psychology of Fascism. It galls me that a new Fascism should choose to use the experience of the victims of the earlier Fascism among its justifications.

THE CONTINUING APPEAL OF NATIONALISM

Fredy Perlman / Detroit / 1984

Nationalism was proclaimed dead several times during the present century:

• the First World War, when the last empires of Europe, the Austrian and the Turkish, were broken up into self-determined nations, and no deprived nationalists remained, except the Zionists;

• after the Bolshevik coup d'etat, when it was said that the bourgeoisie's struggles for self-determination were henceforth superseded by struggles of workingmen, who had no country;

• after the military defeat of Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany, when the genocidal corollaries of nationalism had been exhibited for all to see, when it was thought that nationalism as creed and as practice was permanently discredited.

Yet forty years after the military defeat of Fascists and National Socialists, we can see that nationalism did not only survive but was born again, underwent a revival. Nationalism has been revived not only by the so-called right, but also and primarily by the so-called left. After the national socialist war, nationalism ceased to be confined to conservatives, became the creed and practice of revolutionaries, and proved itself to be the only revolutionary creed that actually worked.

Leftist or revolutionary nationalists insist that their nationalism has nothing in common with the nationalism of fascists and national socialists, that theirs is a nationalism of the oppressed, that it offers personal as well as cultural liberation. The claims of the revolutionary nationalists have been broadcast to the world by the two oldest continuing hierarchic institutions surviving into our times: the Chinese State and, more recently, the Catholic Church. Currently nationalism is being touted as a strategy, science and theology of liberation, as a fulfillment of the Enlightenment's dictum that knowledge is power, as a proven answer to the question "What Is to be Done?"

To challenge these claims, and to see them in a context, I have to ask what nationalism is — not only the new revolutionary nationalism but also the old conservative one. I cannot start by defining the term, because nationalism is not a word with a static definition: it is a term that covers a sequence of different historical experiences. I'll start by giving a brief sketch of some of those experiences.

According to a common (and manipulable) misconception, imperialism is relatively recent, consists of the colonization of the entire world, and is the last stage of capitalism. This diagnosis points to a specific cure: nationalism is offered as the antidote to imperialism: wars of national liberation are said to break up the capitalist empire.

This diagnosis serves a purpose, but it does not describe any event or situation. We come closer to the truth when we stand this conception on its head and say that imperialism was the first stage of capitalism, that the world was subsequently colonized by nation-states, and that nationalism is the dominant, the current, and (hopefully) the last stage of capitalism. The facts of the case were not discovered yesterday; they are as familiar as the misconception that denies them.

It has been convenient, for various good reasons, to forget that, until recent centuries, the dominant powers of Eurasia were not nation-states but empires. A Celestial Empire ruled by the Ming dynasty, an Islamic Empire ruled by the Ottoman dynasty, and a Catholic Empire ruled by the Hapsburg dynasty vied with each other for possession of the known world. Of the three, the Catholics were not the first imperialists but the last. The Celestial Empire of the Mings ruled over most of eastern Asia and had dispatched vast commercial fleets overseas a century before seaborne Catholics invaded Mexico.

The celebrants of the Catholic feat forget that, between 1420 and 1430, Chinese imperial bureaucrat Cheng Ho commanded naval expeditions of 70,000 men and sailed, not only to nearby Malaya, Indonesia and Ceylon, but as far from home ports as the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and Africa. The celebrants of Catholic conquistadores also belittle the imperial feats of

the Ottomans, who conquered all but the westernmost provinces of the former Roman Empire, ruled over North Africa, Arabia, the Middle East and half of Europe, controlled the Mediterranean and hammered on the gates of Vienna. The imperial Catholics set out westward, beyond the boundaries of the known world, in order to escape from encirclement.

Nevertheless, it was the imperial Catholics who "discovered America," and their genocidal destruction and plunder of their 'discovery' changed the balance of forces among Eurasia's empires.

Would imperial Chinese or Turks have been less lethal had they "discovered America"? All three empires regarded aliens as less than human and therefore as legitimate prey. The Chinese considered others barbarians; the Muslims and Catholics considered others unbelievers. The term unbeliever is not as brutal as the term barbarian, since an unbeliever ceases to be legitimate prey and becomes a full-fledged human being by the simple act of converting to the true faith, whereas a barbarian remains prey until she or he is made over by the civilizer.

The term unbeliever, and the morality behind it, conflicted with the practice of the Catholic invaders. The contradiction between professions and acts was spotted by a very early critic, a priest called Las Casas, who noted that the conversion ceremonies were pretexts for separating and exterminating the unconverted, and that the converts themselves were not treated as fellow Catholics but as slaves.

The critiques of Las Casas did little more than embarrass the Catholic Church and Emperor. Laws were passed and investigators were dispatched, but to little effect, because the two aims of the Catholic expeditions, conversion and plunder, were contradictory. Most churchmen reconciled themselves to saving the gold and damning the souls. The Catholic Emperor increasingly depended on the plundered wealth to pay for the imperial household, army, and for the fleets that carried the plunder.

Plunder continued to take precedence over conversion, but the Catholics continued to be embarrassed. Their ideology was not altogether suited to their practice. The Catholics made much of their conquests of Aztecs and Incas, whom they described as empires with institutions similar to those of the Hapsburg Empire and the religious practices as demonic as those of the official enemy, the heathen empire of the Ottoman Turks. But the Catholics did not make much of the wars of extermination against communities that had neither emperors nor standing armies. Such feats, although perpetrated regularly, conflicted with the ideology and were less than heroic.

The contradiction between the adventurers' professions and their acts was not resolved by the imperial Catholics. It was resolved by harbingers of a new social form, the nation-state. Two harbingers appeared during the same year, 1561, when one of the Emperor's overseas adventures proclaimed his independence from the empire, and several of the Emperor's bankers and provisioners launched a war of independence.
The overseas adventurer, Lope de Aguirre, failed to mobilize support and was executed.

The Emperor's bankers and provisioners mobilized the inhabitants of several imperial provinces and succeeded in severing the provinces from the empire (provinces which were later called Holland).

These two events were not yet struggles of national liberation. They were harbingers of things to come. They were also reminders of things past. In the bygone Roman Empire, Praetorian guards had been engaged to protect the Emperor; the guards had assumed ever more of the Emperor's functions and had eventually wielded the imperial power instead of the Emperor. In the Arabic Islamic Empire, the Caliph had engaged Turkish bodyguards to protect his person; the Turkish guards, like the earlier Praetorians, had assumed ever more of the Caliph's functions and had eventually taken over the imperial palace as well as the imperial office.

Lope de Aguirre and the Dutch grandees were not the Hapsburg monarch's bodyguards, but the Andean colonial adventurer and the Dutch commercial and financial houses did wield important imperial functions. These rebels, like the earlier Roman and Turkish guards, wanted to free themselves of the spiritual indignity and material burden of serving the Emperor; they already wielded the Emperor's powers; the Emperor was nothing more to them than a parasite.
Colonial adventurer Aguirre was apparently inept as a rebel; his time had not yet come.

The Dutch grandees were not inept, and their time had come. They did not overthrow the empire; they rationalized it. The Dutch commercial and financial houses already possessed much of the New World's wealth; they had received it as payment for provisioning the Emperor's fleets, armies and household. They now set out to plunder colonies in their own name and for their own benefit, unshackled by a parasitic overlord. And since they were not Catholics but Calvinist Protestants, they were not embarrassed by any contradiction between professions and acts. They made no profession of saving souls. Their Calvinism told them that an inscrutable God had saved or damned all souls at the beginning of Time and no Dutch priest could alter God's plan.

The Dutch were not crusaders; they confined themselves to unheroic, humorless, and businesslike plunder, calculated and regularized; the plundering fleets departed and returned on schedule. The fact that the plundered aliens were unbelievers became less important than the fact that they were not Dutchmen. West Eurasian forerunners of nationalism coined the term savages. This term was a synonym for the east Eurasian Celestial Empire's term barbarians. Both terms designated human beings as legitimate prey.

West Eurasian forerunners of nationalism coined the term savages. This term was a synonym for the east Eurasian Celestial Empire's term barbarians. Both terms designated human beings as legitimate prey.

During the following two centuries, the invasions, subjugations and expropriations initiated by the Hapsburgs were imitated by other European royal houses.

Seen through the lenses of nationalist historians, the initial colonizers as well as their later imitators look like nations: Spain, Holland, England, France. But seen from a vantage point in the past, the colonizing powers are Hapsburgs, Tudors, Stuarts, Bourbons, Oranges — namely dynasties identical to the dynastic families that had been feuding for wealth and power ever since the fall of the western Roman empire. The invaders can be seen from both vantage points because a transition was taking place. The entities were no longer mere feudal estates, but they were not yet full-fledged nations; they already possessed some, but not yet all, the attributes of a nation-state. The most notable missing element was the national army. Tudors and Bourbons already manipulated the Englishness or Frenchness of their subjects, especially during wars against another monarch's subjects. But neither Scots and Irishmen, nor Corsicans and Provencals, were recruited to fight and die for "the love of their country." War was an onerous feudal burden, a corvée; the only patriots were patriots of Eldorado.

The tenets of what was going to become the nationalist creed did not appeal to the ruling dynasts, who clung to their own tried and tested tenets. The new tenets appealed to the dynast's higher servants, his money-lenders, spice-vendors, military suppliers and colony-plunderers. These people, like Lope de Aguirre and the Dutch grandees, like earlier Roman and Turkish guards, wielded key functions yet remained servants. Many if not most of them burned to shake off the indignity and the burden, to rid themselves of the parasitic overlord, to carry on the exploitation of countrymen and the plunder of colonials in their own name and for their own benefit.

Later known as the bourgeoisie or the middle class, these people had become rich and powerful since the days of the first westward-bound fleets. A portion of their wealth had come from the plundered colonies, as payment for the services they had sold to the Emperor; this sum of wealth would later be called a primitive accumulation of capital. Another portion of their wealth had come from the plunder of their own local countrymen and neighbors by a method later known as capitalism; the method was not altogether new, but it became very widespread after the middle classes got their hands on the New World's silver and gold.

These middle classes wielded important powers, but they were not yet experienced in wielding the central political power. In England they overthrew a monarch and proclaimed a commonwealth but, fearing that the popular energies they had mobilized against the upper class could turn against the middle class, they soon restored another monarch of the same dynastic house. Nationalism did not really come into its own until the late 1700s when two explosions, thirteen years apart, reversed the relative standing of the two upper classes and permanently changed the political geography of the globe. In 1776, colonial merchants and adventurers reenacted Aguirre's feat of proclaiming their independence from the ruling overseas dynast, outdid their predecessor by mobilizing their fellow-settlers,

and succeeded in severing themselves from the Hanoverian British Empire. And in 1789, enlightened merchants and scribes outdid their Dutch forerunners by mobilizing, not a few outlying provinces, but the entire subject population, by overthrowing and slaying the ruling Bourbon monarch, and by remaking all feudal bonds into national bonds. These two events marked the end of an era. Henceforth even the surviving dynasts hastily or gradually became nationalists, and the remaining royal estates took on ever more of the attributes of nation-states.

The two eighteenth century revolutions were very different, and they contributed different and even conflicting elements to the creed and practice of nationalism. I do not intend to analyze these events here, but only to remind the reader of some of the elements.

Both rebellions successfully broke the bonds of fealty to a monarchic house, and both ended with the establishment of capitalist nation-states, but between the first act and the last they had little in common. The main animators of both revolts were familiar with the rationalistic doctrines of the Enlightenment, but the self-styled Americans confined themselves to political problems, largely to the problem of establishing a state machinery that could take up where King George left off. Many of the French went much further; they posed the problem of restructuring not only the state but all of society; they challenged not only the bond of subject to monarch, but also the bond of slave to master, a bond that remained sacred to the Americans. Both groups were undoubtedly familiar with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's observation that human beings were born free, yet everywhere were bound in chains, but the French understood the chains more profoundly and made a greater effort to break them.

As influenced by rationalistic doctrines as Rousseau himself had been, French revolutionaries tried to apply social reason to the human environment in the same way that natural reason, or science, was starting to be applied to the natural environment. Rousseau had worked at his desk; he had tried to establish social justice on paper, by entrusting human affairs to an entity that embodied the general will. The revolutionaries agitated to establish social justice not only on paper, but in the midst of mobilized and armed human beings, many of them enraged, most of them poor.
Rousseau's abstract entity took the concrete form of a Committee of Public Safety (or Public Health), a police organization that considered itself the embodiment of the general will. The virtuous committee members conscientiously applied the findings of reason to human affairs. They considered themselves the nation's surgeons. They carved their personal obsessions into society by means of the state's razor blade. The application of science to the environment took the form of systematic terror. The instrument of Reason and Justice was the guillotine.

The Terror decapitated the former rulers and then turned on the revolutionaries.

Fear stimulated a reaction that swept away the Terror as well as the Justice. The mobilized energy of bloodthirsty patriots was sent abroad, to impose enlightenment on foreigners by force, to expand the nation into an empire. The provisioning of national armies was far more lucrative than the provisioning of feudal armies ever had been, and former revolutionaries became rich and powerful members of the middle class, which was now the top class, the ruling class. The terror as well as the wars bequeathed a fateful legacy to the creed and practice of later nationalisms.
The legacy of the American revolution was of an altogether different kind. The Americans were less concerned with justice, more concerned with property.
The settler-invaders on the northern continent's eastern shore needed George of Hanover no more urgently then Lope de Aguirre had needed Philip of Hapsburg. Or rather, the rich and powerful among the settlers needed King George's apparatus to protect their wealth, but not to gin it. If they could organize a repressive apparatus on their own, they would not need King George at all.

Confident of their ability to launch an apparatus of their own, the colonial slave-holders, land-speculators, produce-exporters and bankers found the King's taxes and acts intolerable. The most intolerable of the King's acts was the act that temporarily banned unauthorized incursions into the lands of the continent's original inhabitants; the King's advisers had their eyes on the animal furs supplied by indigenous hunters; the revolutionary land-speculators had theirs on the hunters' lands.

Unlike Aguirre, the federated colonizers of the north succeeded in establishing their own independent repressive apparatus, and they did this by stirring up a minimum of cravings for justice; their aim was to overthrow the King's power, not their own. Rather than rely excessively on their less fortunate fel-

low-settlers or backwoods squatters, not to speak of their slaves, these revolutionaries relied on mercenaries and on indispensable aid from the Bourbon monarch who would be overthrown a few years later by more virtuous revolutionaries.

The North American colonizers broke the traditional bonds of fealty and feudal obligation but, unlike the French, they only gradually replaced the traditional bonds with bonds of patriotism and nationhood. They were not quite a nation; their reluctant mobilization of the colonial countryside had not fused them into one, and the multi-lingual, multi-cultural and socially divided underlying population resisted such a fusion. The new repressive apparatus was not tried and tested, and it did not command the undivided loyalty of the underlying population, which was not yet patriotic. Something else was needed. Slave-masters who had overthrown their king feared that their slaves could similarly overthrow the masters; the insurrection in Haiti made this fear less than hypothetical. And although they no longer feared being pushed into the sea by the continent's indigenous inhabitants, the traders and speculators worried about their ability to thrust further into the continent's interior.

The American settler-invaders had recourse to an instrument that was not, like the guillotine, a new invention, but that was just as lethal. This instrument would later be called Racism, and it would become embedded in nationalist practice. Racism, like later products of practical Americans, was a pragmatic principle; its content was not important; what mattered was the fact that it worked.

Human beings were mobilized in terms of their lowest and most superficial common denominator, and they responded. People who had abandoned their villages and families, who were forgetting their languages and losing their cultures, who were all but depleted of their sociability, were manipulated into considering their skin color a substitute for all they had lost. They were made proud of something that was neither a personal feat nor even, like language, a personal acquisition. They were fused into a nation of white men. (White women and children existed only as scalped victims, as proofs of the bestiality of the hunted prey.) The extent of the depletion is revealed by the nonentities the white men shared with each other: white blood, white thoughts, and membership in a white race. Debtors, squatters and servants, as white men, had everything in common with bankers, land speculators and plantation owners, nothing in common with Redskins, Blackskins or Yellowskins. Fused by such a principle, they could also be mobilized by it, turned into white mobs; lynch mobs, "Indian fighters."

Racism had initially been one among several methods of mobilizing colonial armies, and although it was exploited more fully in America than it ever had been before, it did not supplant the other methods but rather supplemented them. The victims of the invading pioneers were still described as unbelievers, as heathen. But the pioneers, like the earlier Dutch, were largely Protestant Christians, and they regarded heathenism as something to be punished, not remedied. The victims also continued to be designated as savages, cannibals and primitives, but these terms, too, ceased to be diagnoses of conditions that could be remedied, and tended to become synonyms of nonwhite, a condition that could not be remedied. Racism was an ideology perfectly suited to a practice of enslavement and extermination.

The lynch-mob approach, the ganging-up on victims defined as inferior, appealed to bullies whose humanity was stunted and who lacked any notion of fair play. But this approach did not appeal to everyone. American businessmen, part hustlers and part confidence men, always had something for everyone. For the numerous Saint Georges with some notion of honor and great thirst for heroism, the enemy was depicted somewhat differently; for them there were nations as rich and powerful as their own in the trans-montane woodlands and on the shores of the Great Lakes.

The celebrants of the heroic feats of imperial Spaniards had found empires in central Mexico and on top of the Andes. The celebrants of nationalist American heroes found nations; they transformed desperate resistances of an-archic villagers into international conspiracies masterminded by military archons such as General Pontiac and General Tecumseh; they peopled the woodlands with formidable national leaders, efficient general staffs, and armies of uncountable patriotic troops; they projected their own repressive structures into the unknown; they saw an exact copy of themselves, with all the colors reversed — something like a photographic negative. The enemy thus became an equal in terms of structure, power and aims. War against such an enemy was not only fair play; it was a dire necessity, a matter of life and death. The enemy's other attributes — the heathenism, the savagery, the cannibalism — made the tasks of expropriating, en-

slaving and exterminating all the more urgent, made these feats all the more heroic.

The repertory of the nationalist program was now more or less complete. This statement might baffle a reader who cannot yet see any "real nations" in the field. The United States was still a collection of multilingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural 'ethnicities', and the French nation had overflowed its boundaries and turned itself into a Napoleonic empire. The reader might be trying to apply a definition of a nation as an organized territory consisting of people who share a common language, religion and customs, or at least one of the three. Such a definition, clear, pat and static, is not a description of the phenomenon but an apology for it, a justification. The phenomenon was not a static definition but a dynamic process. The common language, religion and customs, like the white blood of the American colonizers, were mere pretexts, instruments for mobilizing armies. The culmination of the process was not an enshrinement of the commonalities, but a depletion, a total loss of language, religion and customs; the inhabitants of a nation spoke the language of capital, worshipped on the altar of the state and confined their customs to those permitted by the national police.

Nationalism is the opposite of imperialism only in the realm of definitions. In practice, nationalism was a methodology for conducting the empire of capital. The continual increase of capital, often referred to as material progress, economic development or industrialization, was the main activity of the middle classes, the so-called bourgeoisie, because capital was what they owned, it was their property; the upper classes owned estates.

The discovery of new worlds of wealth had enormously enriched these middle classes, but had also made them vulnerable. The kings and nobles who initially gathered the new world's plundered wealth resented losing all but a few trophies to their middle class merchants. This could not be helped. The wealth did not arrive in usable forms; the merchants supplied the king with things he could use, in exchange for the plundered treasures. Even so, monarchs who saw themselves grow poor while their merchants grew rich were not above using their armed retainers to plunder the wealthy merchants. Consequently the middle classes suffered continual injuries under the old regime — injuries to their property. The king's army and police were not reliable protectors of middle class property, and the powerful merchants, who already operated the business of the empire, took measures to put an end to the instability; they took the politics in hand as well. They could have hired private armies, and they often did. But as soon as instruments for mobilizing national armies and national police forces appeared on the horizon, the injured businessmen had recourse to them. The main virtue of a national armed force is that it guarantees that a patriotic servant will war alongside his own boss against an enemy boss's servant.

The stability assured by a national repressive apparatus gave the owners something like a hothouse in which their capital could grow, increase, multiply. The term 'grow' and its corollaries come from the capitalists' own vocabulary. These people think of a unit of capital as a grain or seed which they invest in fertile soil. In spring they see a plant grow from each seed. In summer they harvest so many seeds from each plant that, after paying for the soil, sunshine and rain, they still have more seeds than they had initially. The following year they enlarge their field, and gradually the whole countryside becomes improved. In reality, the initial 'grains' are money; the sunshine and rain are the expended energies of laborers; the plants are factories, workshops and mines, the harvested fruits are commodities, bits of processed world; and the excess or additional grains, the profits, are emoluments which the capitalist keeps for himself instead of dividing them up among the workers.

The process as a whole consisted of the processing of natural substances into saleable items or commodities, and of the incarceration of wage workers in the processing plants.

The marriage of Capital with Science was responsible for the great leap forward into what we live in today. Pure scientists discovered the components into which the natural environment could be decomposed; investors placed their bets on the various methods of decomposition; applied scientists or managers saw to it that the wage workers in their charge carried the project through. Social scientists sought ways to make the workers less human, more efficient and machine-like. Thanks to science, capitalists were able to transform much of the natural environment into a processed world, an artifice, and to reduce most human beings into efficient tenders of the artifice.

The process of capitalist production was analyzed and

criticized by many philosophers and poets, most notably by Karl Marx,[1] whose critiques animated, and continue to animate, militant social movements. Marx had a significant blind spot; most of his disciples, and many militants who were not his disciples, built their platforms on that blind spot. Marx was an enthusiastic supporter of the bourgeoisie's struggle for liberation from feudal bonds — who was not an enthusiast in those days? He, who observed that the ruling ideas of an epoch were the ideas of the ruling class, shared many of the ideas of the newly empowered middle class. He was an enthusiast of the Enlightenment, of rationalism, of material progress. It was Marx who insightfully pointed out that every time a worker reproduced his labor power, every minute he devoted to his assigned task, he enlarged the material and social apparatus that dehumanized him. Yet the same Marx was an enthusiast for the application of science to production.

Marx made a thorough analysis of the production process as an exploitation of labor, but he made only cursory and reluctant comments about the prerequisite for capitalist production, and the initial capital that made the process possible.[2] Without the initial capital, there could have been no investments, no production, no great leap forward. This prerequisite was analyzed by the early Soviet Russian marxist Preobrazhensky, who borrowed several insights from the Polish marxist Rosa Luxemburg to formulate his theory of primitive accumulation.[3] By primitive, Preobrazhensky meant the basement of the capitalist edifice, the foundation, the prerequisite. This prerequisite cannot emerge from the capitalist production process itself, if that process is not yet under way. It must, and does, come from outside the production process. It comes from the plundered colonies. It comes from the expropriated and exterminated populations of the colonies. In earlier days, when there were no overseas colonies, the first capital, the prerequisite for capitalist production, had been squeezed out of internal colonies, out of plundered peasants whose lands were enclosed and crops requisitioned, out of expelled Jews and Muslims whose possessions were expropriated.

The primitive or preliminary accumulation of capital is not something that happened once, in the distant past, and never after. It is something that continues to accompany the capitalist production process, and is an integral part of it. The process described by Marx is responsible, for the regular and expected profits; the process described by Preobrazhensky is responsible for the takeoffs, the windfalls and the great leaps forward. The regular profits are periodically destroyed by crises endemic to the system; new injections of preliminary capital are the only known cure to the crises. Without an ongoing primitive accumulation of capital, the production process would stop; each crisis would tend to become permanent.

Genocide, the rationally calculated extermination of human populations designated as legitimate prey, has not been an aberration in an otherwise peaceful march of progress. Genocide has been a prerequisite of that progress. This is why national armed forces were indispensable to the wielders of capital. These forces did not only protect the owners of capital from the insurrectionary wrath of their own exploited wage workers. These forces also captured the holy grail, the magic lantern, the preliminary capital, by battering the gates of resisting or unresisting outsiders, by looting, deporting and murdering.

The footprints of the national armies are the traces of the march of progress. These patriotic armies were, and still are, the seventh wonder of the world. In them, the wolf lay alongside the lamb, the spider alongside the fly. In them, exploited workers were the chums of exploiters, indebted peasants the chums of creditors, suckers the chums of hustlers in a companionship stimulated not by love but by hatred — hatred of potential sources of preliminary capital designated as unbelievers, savages, inferior races.

Human communities as variegated in their ways and beliefs as birds are in feathers were invaded, despoiled and at last exterminated beyond imagination's grasp. The clothes and artifacts of the vanished communities were gathered up as trophies and displayed in museums as additional traces of the march of progress; the extinct beliefs and ways became the curiosities of yet another of the invaders' many sciences. The expropriated fields, forests and animals were garnered as bonanzas, as preliminary capital, as the precondition for the production process that was to turn the fields into farms, the trees into lumber, the animals into hats, the minerals into munitions, the human survivors into cheap labor. Genocide was, and still is, the precondition, the cornerstone and ground work of the military-industrial complexes, of the processed environments, of the worlds of offices and parking lots.

Nationalism was so perfectly suited to its double task, the domestication of workers and the despoliation of aliens, that it appealed to everyone — everyone, that is, who wielded or aspired to wield a portion of capital.

During the nineteenth century, especially during its second half, every owner of investable capital discovered that he had roots among the mobilizable countryfolk who spoke his mother's tongue and worshipped his father's gods. The fervor of such a nationalist was transparently cynical, since he was the countryman who no longer had roots among his mother's or father's kin: he found his salvation in his savings, prayed to his investments and spoke the language of cost accounting. But he had learned, from Americans and Frenchmen, that although he could not mobilize the countryfolk as loyal servants, clients and customers, he could mobilize them as loyal fellow-Catholics, Orthodox or Protestants. Languages, religions and customs became welding materials for the construction of nation-states.

The welding materials were means, not ends. The purpose of the national entities was not to develop languages, religions or customs, but to develop national economies, to turn the countryfolk into workers and soldiers, to turn the motherland into mines and factories, to turn dynastic estates into capitalist enterprises. Without the capital, there could be no munitions or supplies, no national army, no nation.

Savings and investments, market research and cost accounting, the obsessions of the rationalistic former middle classes, became the ruling obsessions. These rationalistic obsessions became not only sovereign but also exclusive. Individuals who enacted other obsessions, irrational ones, were put away in madhouses, asylums.

The nations usually were but need no longer have been monotheistic; the former god or gods had lost their importance except as welding materials. The nations were mono-obsessive, and if monotheism served the ruling obsession, then it too was mobilized.

World War I marked the end of one phase of the nationalizing process, the phase that had begun with the American and French revolutions, the phase that had been announced much earlier by the declaration of Aguirre and the revolt of the Dutch grandees. The conflicting claims of old and newly-constituted nations were in fact the causes of that war. Germany, Italy and Japan, as well as Greece, Serbia and colonial Latin America, had already taken on most of the attributes of their nationalistic predecessors, had become national empires, monarchies and republics, and the more powerful of the new arrivals aspired to take on the main missing attribute, the colonial empire. During that war, all the mobilizable components of the two remaining dynastic empires, the Ottoman and the Hapsburg, constituted themselves into nations. When bourgeoisies with different languages and religions, such as Turks and Armenians, claimed the same territory, the weaker were treated like so-called American Indians; they were exterminated. National Sovereignty and Genocide were — and still are — corollaries.

Common language and religion appear to be corollaries of nationhood, but only because of an optical illusion. As welding materials, languages and religions were used when they served their purpose, discarded when they did not. Neither multi-lingual Switzerland nor multi-religious Yugoslavia were banned from the family of nations. The shapes of noses and the color of hair could also have been used to mobilize patriots — and later were. The shared heritages, roots and commonalities had to satisfy only one criterion, the criterion of American-style pragmatic reason: did they work? Whatever worked was used. The shared traits were important, not because of their cultural, historical or philosophical content, but because they were useful for organizing a police to protect the national property and for mobilizing an army to plunder the colonies.

Once a nation was constituted, human beings who lived on the national territory but did not possess the national traits could be transformed into internal colonies, namely into sources of preliminary capital. Without preliminary capital, no nation could become a great nation, and nations that aspired to greatness but lacked adequate overseas colonies could resort to plundering, exterminating and expropriating those of their countrymen who did not possess the national traits.

The establishment of nation-states was greeted with euphoric enthusiasm by poets as well as peasants who thought their muses or their gods had at last descended to earth. The main wet blankets amidst the waving

banners and flying confetti were the former rulers, the colonized, and the disciples of Karl Marx.

The overthrown and the colonized were unenthusiastic for obvious reasons.

The disciples of Marx were unenthusiastic because they had learned from the master that national liberation meant national exploitation, that the national government was the executive committee of the national capitalist class, that the nation had nothing for workingmen but chains. These strategists for the workingmen, who were not themselves workingmen but were as bourgeois as the ruling capitalists, proclaimed that the workingmen had no country and organized themselves into an International. This International split into three, and each International moved increasingly into the field of Marx's blind spot.

The First International was carried off by Marx's onetime Russian translator and then antagonist Bakunin, an inveterate rebel who had been a fervent nationalist until he'd learned about exploitation from Marx. Bakunin and his companions, rebels against all authorities, also rebelled against the authority of Marx; they suspected Marx of trying to turn the International into a state as repressive as the feudal and national combined. Bakunin and his followers were unambiguous in their rejection of all states, but they were ambiguous about capitalist enterprise. Even more than Marx, they glorified science, celebrated material progress and hailed industrialization. Being rebels, they considered every fight a good fight, but the best of all was the fight against the bourgeoisie's former enemies, the fight against feudal landlords and the Catholic Church. Thus the Bakuninist International flourished in places like Spain, where the bourgeoisie had not completed its struggle for independence but had, instead, allied itself with feudal barons and the Church for protection from insurgent workers and peasants. The Bakuninists fought to complete the bourgeois revolution without and against the bourgeoisie. They called themselves anarchists and disdained all states, but did not begin to explain how they would procure the preliminary or the subsequent industry, progress and science, namely the capital, without an army and a police. They were never given a real chance to resolve their contradiction in practice, and present day Bakuninists have still not resolved it, have not even become aware that there is a contradiction between anarchy and industry.

The Second International, less rebellious than the first, quickly came to terms with capital as well as the state. Solidly entrenched in Marx's blind spot, the professors of this organization did not become enmeshed in any Bakuninist contradiction. It was obvious to them that the exploitation and the plunder were necessary conditions for the material progress, and they realistically reconciled themselves to what could not be helped. All they asked for was a greater share of the benefits for the workingmen, and offices in the political establishment for themselves, as the workingmen's representatives. Like the good unionists who preceded and followed them, the socialist professors were embarrassed by "the colonial question," but their embarrassment, like Philip Hapsburg's, merely gave them bad consciences. In time, imperial German socialists, royal Danish socialists and republican French socialists even ceased to be internationalists.

The Third International did not only come to terms with capital and the state; it made them its goal. This international was not formed by rebellious or dissenting intellectuals; it was created by a state, the Russian state, after the Bolshevik Party installed itself in that state's offices. The main activity of this international was to advertise the feats of the revamped Russian state, of its ruling party, and of the party's founder, a man who called himself Lenin. The feats of that party and founder were indeed momentous, but the advertisers did their best to hide what was most momentous about them.

The First World War had left two vast empires in a quandary. The Celestial Empire of China, the oldest continuous state in the world, and the Empire of the Tsars, a much more recent operation, hovered shakily between the prospect of turning themselves into nation-states and the prospect of decomposing into smaller units, like their Ottoman and Hapsburg counterparts had done.

Lenin resolved this quandary for Russia. Is such a thing possible? Marx had observed that a single individual could not change circumstances; he could only avail himself of them. Marx was probably right. Lenin's feat was not to change circumstances, but to avail himself of them in an extraordinary manner. The feat was monumental in its opportunism.

Lenin was a Russian bourgeois who cursed the weakness and ineptitude of the Russian bourgeoisie. [4] An enthusiast for capitalist development, an ar-

dent admirer of American-style progress, he did not make common cause with those he cursed, but rather with their enemies, with the anti-capitalist disciples of Marx. He availed himself of Marx's blind spot to transform Marx's critique of the capitalist production process into a manual for developing capital, a "how-to-do-it" guide. Marx's studies of exploitation and immiseration became food for the famished, a cornucopia, a virtual horn of plenty. American businessmen had already marketed urine as spring water, but no American confidence man had yet managed an inversion of such magnitude.

No circumstances were changed. Every step of the inversion was carried out with available circumstances, with tried and tested methods. Russian countryfolk could not be mobilized in terms of their Russianness or orthodoxy or whiteness, but they could be, and were, mobilized in terms of their exploitation, their oppression, their ages of suffering under the despotism of the Tsars. Oppression and exploitation became welding materials. The long sufferings under the Tsars were used in the same way and for the same purpose as the scalpings of white women and children had been used by Americans; they were used to organize people into fighting units, into embryos of the national army and the national police.

The presentation of the dictator and of the Party's central committee as a dictatorship of the liberated proletariat seemed to be something new, but even this was new only in the words that were used. This was something as old as the Pharaohs and Lugals of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, who had been chosen by the god to lead the people, who had embodied the people in their dialogues with the god. This was a tried and tested gimmick of rulers. Even if the ancient precedents were temporarily forgotten, a more recent precedent had been provided by the French Committee of Public Health, which had presented itself as the embodiment of the nation's general will.

The goal, communism, the overthrow and supersession of capitalism, also seemed something new, seemed to be a change of circumstances. But only the word was new. The goal of the Dictator of the Proletariat was still American-style progress, capitalist development, electrification, rapid mass transportation, science, the processing of the natural environment. The goal was the capitalism that the weak and inept Russian bourgeoisie had failed to develop. With Marx's Capital as their light and guide, the dictator and his Party would develop capitalism in Russia; they would serve as a substitute bourgeoisie, and they would use the power of the state not only to police the process, but to launch and manage it as well.

Lenin did not live long enough to demonstrate his virtuosity as general manager of Russian capital, but his successor Stalin amply demonstrated the powers of the founder's machine. The first step was the primitive accumulation of capital. If Marx had not been very clear about this, Preobrazhensky had been very clear. Preobrazhensky was jailed, but his description of the tried and tested methods of procuring preliminary capital was applied to vast Russia. The preliminary capital of English, American, Belgian and other capitalists had come from plundered overseas colonies. Russia had no overseas colonies. This lack was no obstacle. The entire Russian countryside was transformed into a colony.

The first sources of preliminary capital were Kulaks, peasants who had something worth plundering. This drive was so successful that it was applied to the remaining peasants as well, with the rational expectation that small amounts plundered from many people would yield a substantial hoard.

The peasants were not the only colonials. The former ruling class had already been thoroughly expropriated of all its wealth and property, but yet other sources of preliminary capital were found. With the totality of state power concentrated in their hands, the dictators soon discovered that they could manufacture sources of primitive accumulation. Successful entrepreneurs, dissatisfied workers and peasants, militants of competing organizations, even disillusioned Party Members, could be designated as counterrevolutionaries, rounded up, expropriated and shipped off to labor camps. All the deportations, mass executions and expropriations of earlier colonizers were re-enacted in Russia.

Earlier colonizers, being pioneers, had resorted to trial and error. The Russian dictators did not have to resort to trial and error. By their time, all the methods of procuring preliminary capital had been tried and tested, and could be scientifically applied. Russian capital developed in a totally controlled environment, a hothouse; every lever, every variable, was controlled by the national police. Functions which had been left to chance or to other bodies in less controlled environments fell to the police in the Russian hothouse. The

fact that the colonials were not abroad but within, and therefore subject not to conquest but to arrest, further increased the role and size of the police. In time the omnipotent and omnipresent police became the visible emanation and embodiment of the proletariat, and communism became a synonym of total police organization and control.

Lenin's expectations were not, however, fully realized by the Russian hothouse. The police-as-capitalist worked wonders in procuring preliminary capital from expropriated counterrevolutionaries, but did not do nearly as well in managing the capitalist production process. It may still be too early to tell for sure, but to date this police bureaucracy had been at least as inept in this role as the bourgeoisie Lenin had cursed; its ability to discover ever new sources of preliminary capital seems to be all that has kept it afloat.

Nor has the appeal of this apparatus been on a level with Lenin's expectations. The Leninist police apparatus has not appealed to businessmen or to established politicians; it has not recommended itself as a superior method of managing the production process. It has appealed to a somewhat different social class, a class I will briefly try to describe, and it has recommended itself to this class primarily as a method of seizing national power and secondarily as a method of primitive accumulation of capital.

The heirs of Lenin and Stalin have not been actual Praetorian guards, actual wielders of economic and political power in the name and for the benefit of a superfluous monarch; they have been understudy Praetorians, students of economic and political power who despaired of ever reaching even intermediate levels of power. The Leninist model has offered such people the prospect of leaping over the intermediate levels directly into the central palace.

The heirs of Lenin were clerks and minor officials, people like Mussolini, Mao Zedong and Hitler, people who, like Lenin himself, cursed their weak and inept bourgeoisies for having failed to establish their nation's greatness.

(I do not include the Zionists among the heirs of Lenin because they belong to an earlier generation. They were Lenin's contemporaries who had, perhaps independently, discovered the power of persecution and suffering as welding materials for the mobilization of a national army and police. The Zionists made other contributions of their own. Their treatment of a dispersed religious population as a nation, their imposition of the capitalist nation-state as that population's end-all and be-all, and their reduction of a religious heritage to a racial heritage, contributed significant elements to the nationalist methodology, and would have fateful consequences when they were applied on a population of Jews, not all of them Zionists, by a population welded together as a "German race.")

Mussolini, Mao Zedong and Hitler cut through the curtain of slogans and saw Lenin's and Stalin's feats for what they were: successful methods of seizing and maintaining state power. All three trimmed the methodology down to its essentials. The first step was to join up with likeminded students of power and to form the nucleus of the police organization, an outfit called, after Lenin's, the Party. The next step was to recruit the mass base, the available troops and troop suppliers. The third step was to seize the apparatus of the state, to install the theoretician in the office of Duce, Chairman or Fuehrer, to apportion police and managerial functions among the elite or cadre, and to put the mass base to work. The fourth step was to secure the preliminary capital needed to repair or launch a military-industrial complex capable of supporting the national leader and cadre, the police and army, the industrial managers; without this capital there could be no weapons, no power, no nation.

The heirs of Lenin and Stalin further trimmed the methodology, in their recruiting drives, by minimizing capitalist exploitation and by concentrating on national oppression. Talk of exploitation no longer served a purpose, and had in fact become embarrassing, since it was obvious to all, especially to wage workers, that successful revolutionaries had not put an end to wage labor, but had extended its domain.

Being as pragmatic as American businessmen, the new revolutionaries did not speak of liberation from wage labor, but of national liberation.[5] This type of liberation was not a dream of romantic utopians; it was precisely what was possible, and all that was possible, in the existing world, one needed only to avail oneself of already existing circumstances to make it happen. National liberation consisted of the liberation of the national chairman and the national police from the chains of powerlessness; the investiture of the chairman and the establishment of the police were not pipe dreams but components of a tried and tested strategy, a science.

Fascist and National Socialist Parties were the first to prove that the strategy worked, that the Bolshevik Party's feat could actually be repeated. The national chairmen and their staffs installed themselves in power and set out to procure the preliminary capital needed for national greatness. The Fascists thrust themselves into one of the last uninvaded regions of Africa and gouged it as earlier industrializers had gouged their colonial empires. The National Socialists targeted Jews, an inner population that had been members of a "unified Germany" as long as other Germans, as their first source of primitive accumulation because many of the Jews, like many of Stalin's Kulaks, had things worth plundering.

Zionists had already preceded the National Socialists in reducing a religion to a race, and National Socialists could look back to American pioneers for ways to use the instrument of racism. Hitler's elite needed only to translate the corpus of American racist research to equip their scientific institutes with large libraries. The National Socialists dealt with Jews much the same way as the Americans had earlier dealt with the indigenous population of North America, except that the National Socialists applied a later and much more powerful technology to the task of deporting, expropriating and exterminating human beings. But in this the later exterminators were not innovators; they merely availed themselves of the circumstances within their reach.

The Fascists and National Socialists were joined by Japanese empire-builders who feared that the decomposing Celestial Empire would become a source of preliminary capital for Russian or revolutionary Chinese industrializers. Forming an Axis, the three set out to turn the world's continents into sources of primitive accumulation of capital. They were not bothered by other nations until they started to encroach on the colonies and homelands of established capitalist powers. The reduction of already established capitalists to colonized prey could be practiced internally, where it was always legal since the nation's rulers make its laws — and had already been practiced internally by Leninists and Stalinists. But such a practice would have amounted to a change of circumstances, and it could not be carried abroad without provoking a world war. The Axis powers overreached themselves and lost.

After the war, many reasonable people would speak of the aims of the Axis as irrational and of Hitler as a lunatic. Yet the same reasonable people would consider men like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson sane and rational, even though these men envisioned and began to enact the conquest of a vast continent, the deportation and extermination of the continent's population, at a time when such a project was much less feasible than the project of the Axis.[6] It is true that the technologies as well as the physical, chemical, biological and social sciences applied by Washington and Jefferson were quite different from those applied by the National Socialists. But if knowledge is power, if it was rational for the earlier pioneers to maim and kill with gunpowder in the age of horse-drawn carriages, why was it irrational for National Socialists to maim and kill with high explosives, gas and chemical agents in the age of rockets, submarines and 'freeways'?

The Nazis were, if anything, yet more scientifically-oriented than the Americans. In their time, they were a synonym for scientific efficiency to much of the world. They kept files on everything, tabulated and cross tabulated their findings, published their tabulations in scientific journals. Among them, even racism was not the property of frontier rabble-rousers, but of well-endowed institutes.

Many reasonable people seem to equate lunacy with failure. This would not be the first time. Many called Napoleon a lunatic when he was in prison or in exile, but when Napoleon re-emerged as the Emperor, the same people spoke of him with respect, even reverence. Incarceration and exile are not only regarded as remedies for lunacy, but also as its symptoms. Failure is foolishness.

Mao Zedong, the third pioneering national socialist (or national communist; the second word no longer matters, since it is nothing but a historical relic; the expression "left-wing fascist" would serve as well, but it conveys even less meaning than the nationalist expressions) succeeded in doing for the Celestial Empire what Lenin had done for the Empire of the Tsars. The oldest bureaucratic apparatus in the world did not decompose into smaller units nor into colonies of other industrializers; it reemerged, greatly changed, as a People's Republic, as a beacon to "oppressed nations."
The Chairman and his Cadre followed the footsteps of a long line of predecessors and transformed the Celestial Empire into a vast source of preliminary

capital, complete with purges, persecutions and their consequent great leaps forward.

The next stage, the launching of the capitalist production process, was carried out on the Russian model, namely by the national police. This did not work in China any better than it had in Russia. Apparently the entrepreneurial function was to be entrusted to confidence men or hustlers who are able to take other people in, and cops do not usually inspire the required confidence. But this was less important to Maoists than it had been to Leninists. The capitalist production process remains important, at least as important as the regularized drives for primitive accumulation, since without the capital there is no power, no nation. But the Maoists make few, and ever fewer, claims for their model as a superior method of industrialization, and in this they are more modest than the Russians and less disappointed by the results of their industrial police.

The Maoist model offers itself to security guards and students the world over as a tried and tested methodology of power, as a scientific strategy of national liberation. Generally known as Mao-Zedong-Thought,[7] this science offers aspiring chairmen and cadres the prospect of unprecedented power over living beings, human activities and even thoughts. The pope and priests of the Catholic Church, with all their inquisitions and confessions, never had such power, not because they would have rejected it, but because they lacked the instruments made available by modern science and technology.

The liberation of the nation is the last stage in the elimination of parasites. Capitalism had already earlier cleared nature of parasites and reduced most of the rest of nature to raw materials for processing industries. Modern national socialism or social nationalism holds out the prospect of eliminating parasites from human society as well. The human parasites are usually sources of preliminary capital, but the capital is not always 'material'; it can also be cultural or 'spiritual'. The ways, myths, poetry and music of the people are liquidated as a matter of course; some of the music and costumes of the former "folk culture" subsequently reappear, processed and packaged, as elements of the national spectacle, as decorations for the national accumulation drives; the ways and myths become raw materials for processing by one or several of the "human sciences." Even the useless resentment of workers toward their alienated wage labor is liquidated. When the nation is liberated, wage labor ceases to be an onerous burden and becomes a national obligation, to be carried out with joy. The inmates of a totally liberated nation read Orwell's 1984 as an anthropological study, a description of an earlier age.

It is no longer possible to satirize this state of affairs. Every satire risks becoming a bible for yet another national liberation front.[8] Every satirist risks becoming the founder of a new religion, a Buddha, Zarathustra, Jesus, Muhammad or Marx. Every exposure of the ravages of the dominant system, every critique of the system's functioning, becomes fodder for the horses of liberators, welding materials for builders of armies. Mao-Zedong-Thought in its numerous versions and revisions is a total science as well as a total theology; it is social physics as well as cosmic metaphysics. The French Committee of National Health claimed to embody the general will of only the French nation. The revisions of Mao-Zedong-Thought claim to embody the general will of all the world's oppressed.

The constant revisions of this Thought are necessary because its initial formulations were not applicable to all, or in fact to any, of the world's colonized populations. None of the world's colonized shared the Chinese heritage of having supported a state apparatus for the past two thousand years. Few of the world's oppressed had possessed any of the attributes of a nation in the recent or distant past. The Thought had to be adapted to people whose ancestors had lived without national chairmen, armies or police, without capitalist production processes and therefore without the need for preliminary capital.

These revisions were accomplished by enriching the initial Thought with borrowings from Mussolini, Hitler and the Zionist State of Israel. Mussolini's theory of the fulfillment of the nation in the state was a central tenet. All groups of people, whether small or large, industrial or non-industrial, concentrated or dispersed, were seen as nations, not in terms of their past, but in terms of their aura, their potentiality, a potentiality embedded in their national liberation fronts. Hitler's (and the Zionists') treatment of the nation as a racial entity was another central tenet. The cadres were recruited from among people depleted of their ancestors' kinships and customs, and consequently the liberators were not distinguishable from the oppressors in terms of language, beliefs, customs or weapons; the only welding material that held them to each other and to their mass base was the welding

material that had held white servants to white bosses on the American frontier; the "racial bond" gave identities to those without identity, kinship to those who had no kin, community to those who had lost their community; it was the last bond of the culturally depleted.

The revised thought could now be applied to Africans as well as Navahos, Apaches as well as Palestinians. [9] The borrowings from Mussolini, Hitler and the Zionists are judiciously covered up, because Mussolini and Hitler failed to hold on to their seized power, and because the successful Zionists have turned their state into the world's policeman against all other national liberation fronts. Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong must be given even more credit than they deserve.
The revised and universally applicable models work much the same as the originals, but more smoothly; national liberation has become an applied science; the apparatus has been frequently tested; the numerous kinks in the originals have by now been straightened out. All that is needed to make the contraption run is a driver, a transmission belt, and fuel.

The driver is of course the theoretician himself, or his closest disciple. The transmission belt is the general staff, the organization, also called the Party or the communist party. This communist party with a small c is exactly what it is popularly understood to be. It is the nucleus of the police organization that does the purging and that will itself be purged once the leader becomes National Leader and needs to re-revise the invariant Thought while adapting himself to the family of nations, or at least to the family bankers, munitions suppliers and investors. And the fuel: the oppressed nation, the suffering masses, the liberated people are and will continue to be the fuel.

The leader and the general staff are not flown in from abroad; they are not foreign agitators. They are integral products of the capitalist production process. This production process has invariably been accompanied by racism. Racism is not a necessary component of production, but racism (in some form) has been a necessary component of the process of primitive accumulation of capital, and it has almost always leaked into the production process.

Industrialized nations have procured their preliminary capital by expropriating, deporting, persecuting and segregating, if not always by exterminating, people designated as legitimate prey. Kinships were broken, environments were destroyed, cultural orientations and ways were extirpated.

Descendants of survivors of such onslaughts are lucky if they preserve the merest relics, the most fleeting shadows of their ancestors' cultures. Many of the descendants do not retain even shadows; they are totally depleted; they go to work; they further enlarge the apparatus that destroyed their ancestors' culture. And in the world of work they are relegated to the margins, to the most unpleasant and least highly paid jobs. This makes them mad. A supermarket packer, for example, may know more about the stocks and the ordering than the manager, may know that racism is the only reason he is not manager and the manager not a packer. A security guard may know racism is the only reason he's not chief of police. It is among people who have lost all their roots, who dream themselves supermarket managers and chiefs of police, that the national liberation front takes root; this is where the leader and general staff are formed.

Nationalism continues to appeal to the depleted because other prospects appear bleaker. The culture of the ancestors was destroyed; therefore, by pragmatic standard, it failed; the only ancestors who survived were those who accommodated themselves to the invader's system, and they survived on the outskirts of garbage dumps. The varied utopias of poets and dreamers and the numerous "mythologies of the proletariat" have also failed; they have not proven themselves in practice; they have been nothing but hot air, pipe dreams, pies in the sky; the actual proletariat has been as racist as the bosses and the police.

The packer and the security guard have lost contact with the ancient culture; pipe dreams and utopias don't interest them, are in fact dismissed with the practical businessman's contempt toward poets, drifters and dreamers. Nationalism offers them something concrete, something that's been tried and tested and is known to work. There's no earthly reason for the descendants of the persecuted to remain persecuted when nationalism offers them the prospect of becoming persecutors. Near and distant relatives of victims can become a racist nation-state; they can themselves herd other people into concentration camps, push other people around at will, perpetrate genocidal war against them, procure preliminary capital by expropriating them. And if "racial relatives" of Hitler's victims can do it, so can the near and distant relatives of the victims of a Washington, Jackson, Reagan or

Begin.

Every oppressed population can become a nation, a photographic negative of the oppressor nation, a place where the former packer is the supermarket's manager, where the former security guard is the chief of police. By applying the corrected strategy, every security guard can follow the precedent of ancient Rome's Praetorian guards. The security police of a foreign mining trust can proclaim itself a republic, liberate the people, and go on liberating them until they have nothing left but to pray for liberation to end. Even before the seizure of power, a gang can call itself a Front and offer heavily taxed and constantly policed poor people something they still lack: a tribute-gathering organization and a hit-squad, namely supplementary tax farmers and police, the people's own. In these ways, people can be liberated of the traits of their victimized ancestors; all the relics that still survive from pre-industrial times and non-capitalist cultures can at last be permanently extirpated.

The idea that an understanding of the genocide, that a memory of the holocausts, can only lead people to want to dismantle the system, is erroneous. The continuing appeal of nationalism suggests that the opposite is truer, namely that an understanding of genocide has led people to mobilize genocidal armies, that the memory of holocausts has led people to perpetrate holocausts. The sensitive poets who remembered the loss, the researchers who documented it, have been like the pure scientists who discovered the structure of the atom. Applied scientists used the discovery to split the atom's nucleus, to produce weapons which can split every atom's nucleus; Nationalists used the poetry to split and fuse human populations, to mobilize genocidal armies, to perpetrate new holocausts.
The pure scientist, poets and researchers consider themselves innocent of the devastated countrysides and charred bodies. Are they innocent?

It seems to me that at least one of Marx's observations is true: every minute devoted to the capitalist production process, every thought contributed to the industrial system, further enlarges a power that is inimical to nature, to culture, to life. Applied science is not something alien; it is an integral part of the capitalist production process. Nationalism is not flown in from abroad. It is a product of the capitalist production process, like the chemical agents poisoning the lakes, air, animals and people, like the nuclear plants radioactivating micro-environments in preparation for the radioactivation of the macro-environment.

As a postscript I'd like to answer a question before it is asked. The question is: "Don't you think a descendant of oppressed people is better off as a supermarket manager or police chief?" My answer is another question: What concentration camp manager, national executioner or torturer is not a descendant of oppressed people?

Footnotes:

[1] The subtitle of the first volume of Capital is A Critique of Political Economy: The Process of Capitalist Production (published by Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1906; republished by Random House, New York).
[2] In Ibid., pages 784–850: Part VIII: The So-Called Primitive Accumulation.
[3] E. Preobrazhensky, The New Economics (Moscow, 1926; English translation published by Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1965), a book which announced the fateful "law of primitive socialist accumulation."
[4] See V.I. Lenin, The Development of Capitalism in Russia (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964; first published in 1899). I quote from page 599: "if...we compare the present rapidity of development with that which could be achieved with the general level of technique and culture as it is today, the present rate of development of capitalism in Russia really must be considered as slow. And it cannot but be slow, for in no single capitalist country has there been such an abundant survival of ancient institutions that are incompatible with capitalism, retard its development, and immeasurably worsen the condition of the producers..."
[5] Or the liberation of the state: "Our myth is the nation, our myth is the greatness of the nation"; "It is the state which creates the nation, conferring volition and therefore real life on a people made aware of their moral unity"; "Always the maximum of liberty coincides with the maximum force of the state"; "Everything for the state; nothing against the state; nothing outside the state." From Che cosa è il fascismo and La dottrina del fascismo, quoted by G.H. Sabine, A History of Political Theory (New York, 1955), pp. 872–878.
[6] "...the gradual extension of our settlements will as certainly cause the savage, as the wolf, to retire; both being beast of prey, tho' they differ in shape" (G. Washington in 1783). "...if ever we are constrained to lift the hatchet against any tribe, we will never lay it down till that tribe is exterminated, or driven be-

yond...” (T. Jefferson in 1807). “...the cruel massacres they have committed on the women and children of our frontiers taken by surprise, will oblige us now to pursue them to extermination, or drive them to new seats beyond our reach” (T. Jefferson in 1813). Quoted by Richard Drinnon in Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building (New York: New American Library, 1980), pp. 65, 96, 98.

[7] Readily available in paper back as Quotations from Chairman Mao (Peking: Political Department of the People’s Liberation Army, 1966).

[8] Black & Red tried to satirize this situation over ten years ago with the publication of a fake Manual for Revolutionary Leaders, a “how-to-do-it guide” whose author, Michael Velli, offered to do for the modern revolutionary prince what Machiavelli had offered the feudal prince. This phoney “Manual” fused Mao-Zedong-Thought with the Thought of Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler and their modern followers, and offered grizzly recipes for the preparation of revolutionary organizations and the seizure of total power. Disconcertingly, at least half of the requests for this “Manual” came from aspiring national liberators, and it is possible that some of the current versions of the nationalist metaphysic contain recipes offered by Michael Velli.

[9] I am not exaggerating. I have before me a book-length pamphlet titled The Mythology of the White Proletariat: A Short Course for Understanding Babylon by J. Sakai (Chicago: Morningstar Press, 1983). As an application of Mao-Zedong-Thought to American history, it is the most sensitive Maoist work I’ve seen. The author documents and describes, sometimes vividly, the oppression of America’s enslaved Africans, the deportations and exterminations of the American continent’s indigenous inhabitants, the racist exploitation of Chinese, the incarceration of Japanese-Americans in concentration camps. The author mobilizes all these experiences of unmitigated terror, not to look for ways to supersede the system that perpetrated them, but to urge the victims to reproduce the same system among themselves. Sprinkled with pictures and quotations of chairmen Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong and Ho-chi Minh, this work makes no attempt to hide or disguise its repressive aims; it urges Africans as well as Navahos, Apaches as well as Palestinians, to organize a party, seize state power, and liquidate parasites.

REGARDLESS OF ITS FACE OR FORM...

DEATH TO FASCISM.

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