Although there have been thousands of books written about the destruction of the European Jews, few have been devoted to the more general problem of genocide per se. Indeed, a number of contributors to this volume have commented on the avoidance of the subject by political and social researchers. Kurt Jonassohn and Frank Chalk observe that until recently scholars participated in a process of pervasive, self-imposed denial concerning the importance of genocide in history. In their introductory essay, editors Isidor Wallimann and Michael Dobkowski note the relative silence of social scientists on the subject. They argue that social scientists have, e.g., been far more interested in poverty than in the "nature of social conflicts and their possible escalation into war and destruction." At the 1983 convention of the American Political Science Association, a session on genocide, which featured papers by a number of leading authorities, drew an audience of no more than ten. It is this writer's thesis that the relative silence on the subject of genocide stems from the unwillingness of both scholars and their audiences to confront the fact that, far from being a relapse into barbarism, genocide is an intrinsic expression of civilization as we know it. Put differently, the genocidal destructiveness of our era is an expression of some of its "most significant political, moral, religious and demographic tendencies." If indeed genocide expresses some, though obviously not all, of the dominant trends in contemporary civilization, it would hardly be surprising that few researchers would want to spend much time on the night side of the world we have made for ourselves.

In the present volume the connection between civilization and genocide is raised most directly by Tony Barta's chapter, "Relations of Geno-
cide: Land and Lives in the Colonization of Australia." A professor at an Australian university, Barta asserts that the basic fact of his nation's history has been the conquest of the country by one people and the dispossessions "with ruthless destructiveness" of another people, the Aborigines, those who were there *ab origine,* "from the beginning." Barta argues that, although it was by no means the initial intention of the British government to destroy the Aborigines, Australia is nevertheless a "nation founded on genocide." According to Barta, genocide was the inevitable, though unintended, consequence of the European colonization of the Australian continent. Barta's thesis puts him somewhat at odds with those scholars, such as Walter P. Zenner, who hold that genocide is "the intentional physical annihilation of all or part of a group of people on racial, religious or ethnic lines." According to Barta, in order to comprehend genocide we need a conception of the phenomenon that embraces relations of destruction and removes from the term the emphasis on policy and intention with which it is normally associated. Barta argues that the history of his own country amply demonstrates that genocidal outcomes can come into being without deliberate state planning. Moreover, he fully appreciates the degree to which the destruction of Australia's Aboriginal population was not the consequence of the actions of isolated men acting out their aggressions on a lawless frontier far from metropolitan centers of civilization but was in fact the outcome of economic, social, political, and religious transformations in the mother country, the first European nation fully to enter the economically rationalized world of the modern era.

If we wish to comprehend the roots of genocide in the modern world, the beginnings of the modernization process in Great Britain may provide an excellent starting point. The beginnings of English modernization are to be found in the acts of enclosure which transformed the subsistence economy of premodern English agriculture into the money economy of our era. In the process, the customary rights to land usage of the economically unproductive English peasant class were abrogated and that class was largely transformed into a congeries of individuals whose survival was entirely dependent upon their ability to find wage labor. Absent gainful employment, the dispossessed peasants could only turn to a harsh and punitively administered system of poor relief, vagabondage, or outright crime. A crucial social by-product of England's economic rationalization was the creation of a large class of people who were superfluous to England's new economic system.

A class of more or less permanently superfluous people is a potential source of acute social instability. Having no hope of receiving society's normal rewards, it has little incentive, save fear of punitive retaliation, to abide by society's customary behavioral restraints. Even if such a group is tied to the rest of the population by common ethnicity and religion, it is likely to be perceived and to perceive itself as having been cast outside of
society's *universe of moral obligation*. Implied in a universe of moral obligation is the expectation that, consistent with their social location, its actors will, under normal circumstances, subordinate their individual inclinations to the good of the whole. A measure of self-sacrificing altruism rather than self-regarding egoism will normally characterize the behavior of members of such a universe toward each other. At a minimum, members will not normally regard other members as potential sources of injury or even personal destruction. To the extent that trust is possible between human beings, the actors within a shared universe of moral obligation will normally trust each other, an attitude they will find impossible to extend to strangers. Such attitudes have less to do with the moral virtuosity of individuals than with the way social relations are structured. The enclosure laws had the effect of expelling England's displaced peasants from the only universe of obligation they had ever known, that of the manor and the parish. This was clearly understood by English decisionmakers as early as the enactment of the Elizabethan Poor Laws, which were as much police measures aimed at controlling England's first redundant population as they were philanthropic efforts to supply that population's irreducible needs for survival.

In the case of the modernization of England, the arable land taken from the displaced peasants was devoted to sheep raising, a cash crop, and economically rational large-scale farming. Out of the vast social dislocation engendered by the process, England was able to finance its first large-scale modern industry, textiles. However, the transformation of arable land to pasture seriously diminished England's ability to produce its own food supply. Moreover, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, that country was no longer able to produce all of the raw materials necessary for its burgeoning industry.

Australia was an ideal land for sheep raising. It was also a convenient outlet for the relatively humane elimination of a significant portion of England's redundant population. As Barta points out, the convict population exported by England to Australia was not unrelated to the dispossession of England's peasantry by the acts of enclosure. In addition, England contained large numbers of undercapitalized small holders and artisans who were faced with the prospect of downward economic mobility in an increasingly capital-intensive home economy. Many of the more enterprising small holders took their meagre assets to Australia in the knowledge that an ever-increasing demand for both sheep's wool and sheep's flesh in the mother country presented the undercapitalized free colonizers, who were willing to work and capable of prudent management, with opportunities for prosperity which could not be duplicated at home. Australia was thus an important safety valve for those segments of England's population made redundant by the progressive rationalization of its economy and society.

As we know, Australia was not an unsettled country. Its Aboriginal
people had developed a viable human ecology which was altogether incomprehensible to the settlers, as indeed the ways of the settlers were incomprehensible to them. Moreover, sheep raising and the settlers' rationalized agrarian economy was incompatible with Aborigine land use. Since both sides were absolutely dependent upon the land, albeit in radically different ways, loss of the land necessarily entailed the complete destruction of the defeated way of life. As Barta writes, coexistence was impossible.

The issue was decided by the superior power and technology of the settlers. Since their survival was at stake, the Aborigines had no choice but to resist. The predictable response of the settlers was to root out the menace to their way of life. There were a number of bloody massacres. There were also government-sponsored attempts to diminish settler violence, but even without direct violence the Aborigines were destined to perish. Having lost their way of life and having been deprived of a meaningful future, most of the Aborigines who were not killed by the whites "faded away." Barta writes that between 1839 and 1849 there were only twenty births recorded among the seven Aboriginal tribes around Melbourne. He concludes that, whatever the official British intent, the encounter between the white settlers and the blacks was one of living out a relationship of genocide, a relationship that was structured into the very nature of the encounter. Barta distinguishes between a genocidal society and a genocidal state. National Socialist Germany was a genocidal state. Its genocidal project was deliberate and intended. Australia was a genocidal society. It had no conscious genocidal project. Nevertheless, its very existence had genocidal consequences for the original population. According to Barta, the basic pattern of the colonization of Australia was everywhere the same. It consisted of white pastoral invasion, black resistance, violent victory of the whites, and finally the mysterious disappearance of the blacks.

Although Barta confines his description to Australia, it is clear that the process he describes was repeated in other European colonial settlements. In his biography of Oliver Cromwell, the English historian Christopher Hill comments:

A great many civilized Englishmen of the propertied class in the seventeenth century spoke of Irishmen in tones not far removed from those which the Nazis used about the Slavs, or white South Africans use about the original inhabitants of their country. In each case the contempt rationalized a desire to exploit.3

What Hill could have added was that Cromwell was fully prepared to exterminate those Irish Catholics who resisted exploitation and to turn their lands over to Protestant colonizers. The towns of Drogheda and Wexford refused to surrender to Cromwell. They were sacked and those
inhabitants unable to flee were massacred. In the case of Wexford, after all the inhabitants had been killed, Cromwell reported that the town was available for colonization by English settlers. An English clergyman commended the place for settlement: "It is a fine spot for some godly congregation where house and land wait for inhabitants and occupiers."4 Even in the seventeenth century, it was clear to England's leaders that the more Ireland was cleared of its original Catholic inhabitants the more available it would be for Protestant English settlement.

The extremes to which England was prepared to go to empty Ireland of its original inhabitants became clear during the famine years of 1846-1848. It is estimated that within that period the population of Ireland was reduced by about 2 million out of an estimated 1845 population of 9 million. Approximately 1 million perished in the famine. About the same number were compelled to emigrate in order to survive.5 Elsewhere, this writer has attempted to show that the relief given by the English government to the Irish, who were, technically speaking, British subjects at the time, was deliberately kept at levels guaranteed to produce the demographic result which came to pass. Moreover, the demographic outcome was welcomed by leading members of England's society and government. The deaths by famine and the removal by emigration were lauded as achieving for Ireland what the enclosures had done for England, namely, clearing the land of uneconomic subsistence producers and making it available for rationalized agricultural enterprise.6 The candor of an 1853 editorial in The Economist on the benefits of Irish and Scottish emigration is instructive:

It is consequent on the breaking down of the system of society founded on small holdings and potato cultivation. . . . The departure of the redundant part of the population of Ireland and Scotland is an indispensable preliminary to every kind of improvement.7

Unfortunately, the "departure" welcomed by The Economist entailed mass death by famine and disease for a very significant proportion of Ireland's peasant class. In the eyes of the British decision-making class of the period, Catholic Ireland was an inferior civilization.8 A class that was indifferent to the fate of its own peasants was hardly likely to be concerned with that of the Irish.

The basic colonizing pattern described by Barta, namely, white settlement, native resistance, violent settler victory, and, finally, the disappearance of most if not all of the natives, was played out in North and South America as well.9 If Australian society was built upon a genocidal relationship with that of the indigenous cultures, so too was American society. There was a time not so long ago when it was taken for granted that "the only good Indian was a dead Indian."

The connecting link between genocidal settler societies of the eight-
teenth and nineteenth centuries and twentieth-century genocide can be discerned in Adolf Hitler's *Lebensraum* program. As a young man, Hitler saw the settlement of the New World and the concomitant elimination of North America's Indian population by white European settlers as a model to be followed by Germany on the European continent. As John Roth points out in his chapter, Hitler was keenly aware of Germany's population problems. He was determined that there would be no surplus German population even if a significant portion of Germany's Slavic neighbors were exterminated to provide "living space" for German settlers adjacent to the homeland. Put differently, Hitler proposed to repeat in Europe, albeit with infinitely intensified viciousness, the exploitative colonialism practiced by other Europeans overseas. In Hitler's eyes the Slavs were destined to become Europe's Indians. They were to be displaced, uprooted, enslaved, and, if necessary, annihilated to make way for Germany's surplus population. Unlike the earlier colonizers, Hitler had no illusions concerning the genocidal nature of such an undertaking. He had the historical precedents of earlier European efforts at colonization and imperial domination. He regarded the defeat of native cultures by white settlers and colonists as evidence for his version of Social Darwinism, the belief that history is the theater in which the races enact their life and death struggle for survival and the superior races destroy their racial inferiors. As is well known, this same Social Darwinism became an important component in the legitimating ideology for the Holocaust. In Hitler's eyes, the Jews were the most contemptible of all of the inferior races destined by fate and German strength for destruction.

As noted above, there was a fundamental difference between the behavior of the older European colonizing powers and Hitler's in that his policies were intentional and deliberately formulated. If the destruction of the Aboriginal cultures of Australia was an unintended consequence of state policy, the destruction and eventual extermination of Germany's neighbors was fully intended by Hitler and National Socialist Germany. Nevertheless, that difference should not obscure the fact that (a) both colonizing policies were intended to solve the same fundamental problem, namely, the relatively humane, non-genocidal elimination by the mother country of a redundant or potentially redundant sector of its domestic population, and that (b) both could be successfully implemented only by the merciless elimination of the indigenous population of the colonized lands. Moreover, the very success of the earlier projects invited their repetition by political leaders, such as Hitler, who believed their nation to be faced with the problem that had led to the original colonization. Such leaders could no longer pretend ignorance of the consequences of their policies. One of the differences between Hitler and his predecessors was his lack of hypocrisy and illusion concerning the extent to which his project entailed mass murder. Nevertheless, it is
clear from the history of the English in Ireland and Australia as well as that of Europeans in the New World that the destruction of the indigenous population never constituted a reason for calling colonization to a halt. There is thus a historical continuum between the unintended genocides of the period of Europe's demographic projection beyond its original territorial limits and that of the period of Europe's deliberate auto-cannibalization.

If the above argument has merit, it will be possible to define genocide as the most radical means of implementing a state or communally sponsored program of population elimination. It should be noted that (a) the issue of intention is not raised in this definition, and that (b) genocide is grasped conceptually within the wider context of programs of population elimination. This definition allows for a comprehension of the larger historical conditions under which a population is likely to be identified as redundant and targeted for one or another form of elimination. This definition also helps to structure the connections between population redundancy, emigration, expulsion, colonization, modernization, and genocide.

According to Walter P. Zenner, the aim of genocide is to transform a social field by removing a whole group of political actors. Without necessarily disagreeing with Zenner, Roger Smith argues that the fundamental issue in genocide is Who belongs, who is to have a voice in society? It is this writer's conviction that, unless the identity of society and the political order is assumed, a highly questionable assumption, the real issue is Who is to have a voice in the political order?

The issue of a voice in the political order is in turn related to the universe of moral obligation. In ancient Greece, members of the polis belonged to a common universe of obligation. This was especially evident in war. Only those who shared common origins, belonged by inherited right to the same community, and saw themselves as partaking of a common fate could be trusted in a life-and-death struggle. Neither the slave nor the stranger could be so trusted. Hence, they were regarded as outside of the shared universe of obligation.

A very grave problem arises when, for any reason, a community regards itself as having within its midst a sub-community or a group of strangers who cannot be trusted. The problem is especially urgent in time of war. The perception of disloyalty may be mistaken, as in the case of the Armenians in Turkey during World War I and Japanese Americans during World War II. The fundamental reason for the mass incarceration of the Japanese Americans was the belief of most Americans that the majority of Japanese Americans were loyal to the Emperor rather than to their adopted country. Similarly, Rabbi Meir Kahane's extremist agitation to expel all Arabs from contemporary Israel ultimately rests upon the conviction that Israelis can only trust each other and that as long as the state contains potentially hostile elements, the safety of the
community remains precarious. This author is convinced that, were Kahane's policies ever implemented, the consequences would be disastrous. Nevertheless, even those Israelis who find Kahane's "solution" abhorrent do not advocate opening the ranks of the Israeli armed services to its Arab population. The problem Kahane proposes to "solve" is the classic problem of the nature of membership in a community.

Sometimes the question of a voice in the political community takes on a class rather than an ethnic dimension. When Kampuchea fell to the Pol Pot regime in 1975, the victors had a very clear idea of the kind of agrarian Communist society they proposed to establish. Rightly or wrongly, they regarded Kampuchea's entire urban population as being objectively hostile to the creation of the new political order. This perception was consistent with the Marxist idea that the bourgeois class is destined to disappear with the coming of socialism. Not content to let this process take its course nonviolently, the regime determined upon the immediate elimination through genocidal measures of all those who were regarded as either incapable of fitting into the new system or of being objectively committed to its destruction. In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, a very similar logic compelled the departure from the Soviet Union of millions of "objective enemies" of the new system. Similarly, the Cuban revolution resulted in the enforced emigration of over a million Cubans who could not fit into Fidel Castro's system, primarily to the United States.

A related development is currently taking place in South Africa. Because of the overwhelming number of blacks and their indispensability to the functioning of the economic order, it is impossible for the Afrikaners to eliminate them. Indeed, save for some ultra-rightist groups, there is no evidence of any Afrikaner interest in so doing. Nevertheless, the Afrikaners have answered the question "Who shall have a voice in the political community?" by excluding non-whites. Of crucial importance is the consistent refusal of the Afrikaners to admit the blacks to any meaningful kind of suffrage. Apartheid and the denial of electoral rights are attempts to define membership in the political community without resort to outright mass murder. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that all of the policies cited above—segregation, concentration camp incarceration, expulsion, and genocide—are attempts to cope with a common problem.

Gunter Remmling's discussion of the progressive steps taken by the Third Reich to deny legal rights to the Jews is especially helpful in acquiring an overview of the process by which Jews were stripped of membership in the German political community until finally even the right to life itself was denied them. The question "Who is to have a voice in the political community?" was absolutely decisive for National Socialism. The political emancipation of the Jews in Europe in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries bestowed upon the Jews a voice in
the political communities in which they were domiciled. With the dour wisdom of historical hindsight, the extermination of the Jews can be seen as an unintended consequence of their emancipation. Emancipation made membership of the Jews in Europe's political communities a political issue for the first time. Emancipation was opposed by all who believed such membership should be restricted to Christians. An important reason why so little was done to assist the Jews during World War II, both in Germany and in the occupied countries, was the almost universal European acceptance of the National Socialist objective of excluding the Jews from membership in the political communities in which they were domiciled. This certainly was true of the mainstream Protestant and Catholic churches, which everywhere saw the denial of political rights to the Jews as a beneficial step toward the creation of a Europe that was culturally, intellectually, socially, and politically Christian. The fundamental difference between Hitler and the churches was that Hitler had no illusions concerning the measures necessary to carry out such a program. The churches never faced frankly the question of implementation. Nevertheless, one must ask whether the silence of the overwhelming majority of Europe's church leaders during World War II concerning the Holocaust may have been at least partly due to the fact that church leaders fully understood that extermination was the only viable means of eliminating the Jews. Having no direct responsibility for carrying out the process of elimination, they preferred to wash their hands of the question of implementation. In any event, it is now clear that the insistent calls for the elimination of the Jews from membership in the body politic of the European nations was in fact a demand for their extermination.

The question of uniqueness looms large in the discussions of the place of the Holocaust in the larger subject of genocide. Surprisingly, none of the writers discusses one aspect of the Holocaust which was absolutely unique. *In no other instance of genocide in the twentieth century was the fate of the victims so profoundly linked to the religio-mythic inheritance of the perpetrators.* In Christianity, the Jews are not simply one of the many peoples of the world. They are the people in whose midst God himself reigned to be incarnated. According to the classic Christian account, instead of being the first to recognize this supreme act of divine graciousness, the Jews both rejected God-in-the-flesh and were responsible for the violent and vicious way in which he was removed from the human scene. The Jews are depicted as the God-bearing and the God-murdering people par excellence. No other religion is as hideously defamed in the classic literature of a rival tradition as is Judaism by Christianity. Moreover, starting with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., Christianity has taken the disasters of the Jewish people to be a principal historical confirmation of its own truth. These have been interpreted in the classic sources to be God's punishment of a sinful Israel for
having rejected Christ. The practical consequences of (a) the ascription of a demonic identity to Jews and (b) the interpretation of their misfortunes as just chastisements of a righteous Lord was to cast them out of any common universe of moral obligation with the Christians among whom they were domiciled. In times of acute social stress, it had the practical effect of decriminalizing any assault visited upon them, as Hitler and the leading National Socialists fully understood. The implementation of the Holocaust was greatly facilitated by the deicidal and demonic interpretation of the Jewish people in the Christian religious imagination. If the Holocaust was to some extent a unique event, its religio-mythic dimension constituted a significant component of that uniqueness.

In addition to the religious aspect of the Holocaust, there was a highly significant economic element. The European Jews were a middleman minority. The question of the proneness of middleman minorities to genocidal assault is raised by Walter P. Zenner. Zenner points out that the Armenians were also a middleman minority targeted for extermination. He also points out that a third middleman minority, the Hoa or ethnic Chinese of Vietnam, were the object of a large-scale, state-sponsored program of population elimination.11 Zenner ends his examination of middleman minority theory with the conclusion that there is no necessary connection between middleman minority status and genocide. Nevertheless, he concedes that such a status can be a precondition for genocide if other factors are present. According to Zenner, middleman minority theory has yet to face the question of why "economically integrated non-wage labor groups" are more likely to be victimized, while wage laborers, the marginalized, and the poor are not usually targets. In actuality, middleman minorities are permitted domicile in a community in order to do work that, for some reason, is not being done by the indigenous population. Their presence as strangers is tolerated because they constitute an economically or vocationally complementary population. They are most likely to be targeted for elimination when their roles can be filled either by the state or by members of the indigenous population. When this development takes place, the minority members become competitors of members of the majority. Usually, they compete against one of the most dangerous and potentially unstable groups within the larger population, the majority middle class. In the case of indigenous wage workers, the marginalized, or the poor, the same bitter rivalry with a dangerous class does not arise. When political leaders perceive vocationally redundant members of the majority to be a source of social or political instability, they have encouraged emigration, as was the case in Western and Central Europe during much of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, there is usually some residual sense that, even when they become redundant, the marginalized or the poor remain to some extent part of the community's shared universe of moral obligation. This is not the case with middleman minorities, especially when they are outside of
the majority religious consensus. They are often tolerated only as long as they are needed. Moreover, in premodern societies it was not socially or economically functional for middleman minorities to share a common religion with the majority. The impersonal, objective attitudes necessary for successful commerce were less likely to develop between people who considered themselves to be kin with the same gods. Commerce rested on an in-group, out-group double standard. It was only with the rise of Protestantism that the personalized ethics of tribal brotherhood gave way to universal otherhood and a universal money economy could come into being.12

Elsewhere, this writer has attempted to show that the situation of Europe's Jews became progressively more hopeless as the economies of Western and Eastern Europe were modernized.13 For example, as the agriculture of Eastern Europe was rationalized, large numbers of Polish and Russian peasants were dispossessed of their holdings and forced to seek scarce wage labor in the villages and cities. Desperate for any kind of work under conditions of massive unemployment and underemployment, members of the former peasant class began to compete with the Jews for wage labor and those middle-class slots which had previously been predominantly Jewish. In seeking to displace the Jews, the dispossessed peasants and their urbanized offspring had the support of the Tsarist government, which, after 1881, made the Jews the targets of one of the most highly successful state-sponsored programs of population elimination in all of history. From 1881 to 1917, the fundamental objective of the Tsarist government vis-à-vis the Jews differed little from that of the National Socialist regime in Germany. Both sought the elimination of the Jews as a demographic presence in the areas under their control. Most American Jews are alive today because the two regimes did not share a common method of implementation.

In addition to serving as a method of radically redefining and restructuring society, genocide has since ancient times been the most unremitting kind of warfare. According to Kurt Jonassohn and Frank Chalk, genocide began in ancient times when warring peoples realized that their victories were only temporary. Elimination of a potential future threat became a powerful reason for wars of genocide. Undoubtedly, the human cost to the perpetrator played an important role in determining when a war was carried to such an extreme. After total defeat, the cost to the victor of eliminating a future threat was minimal. Since the enemy was outside of the victor's universe of moral obligation, defeat removed the only practical impediment to genocide. As long as an enemy retained the power to injure, a would-be perpetrator had to weigh the relative costs of a precarious peace against those involved in genocide. If neither side had the power to achieve a decisive victory, there was no possibility of a "final solution." In the case of the Holocaust, the Jews were perceived as a defenseless enemy with no significant capacity to retaliate.
The problems involved in their extermination were reduced to the bureaucratic management, transport, and elimination of the target population. A principal Jewish motive for the establishment of the state of Israel was to escalate the cost of killing at least those Jews who are Israeli citizens. There is little doubt that the cost now includes nuclear retaliation.

Irving Louis Horowitz points out that genocide very frequently follows military defeat. An important element in the decision of the Young Turk regime to initiate the program of extermination against its Armenian Christian minority was Turkey's defeat by Bulgaria in 1912. Similarly, Germany's defeat in World War I created the conditions in which a radically anti-Semitic, revolutionary, revisionist National Socialist movement could come to dominate German politics. As a consequence of defeat, the fringe became the center.

Horowitz also argues that the most massive destruction of Jews during World War II began in earnest in 1942 after Stalingrad. When German defeat appeared inevitable, extermination of the Jews became a paramount goal. In a similar vein, Barbara Harff suggests that a lost war sometimes leads to genocide against defenseless minorities regarded as enemies. While Harff stresses the element of battered national pride, a related element may be that military defeat intensifies the urgency with which the question of membership in the community is posed. As noted above, a fundamental issue in genocide is the question of who can be trusted in a life-and-death struggle. All minorities suffer some discrimination and experience some degree of resentment and incomplete identification with the majority, a situation which is as obvious to the majority as to the minority. In normal times, such tensions can be held in check. In the aftermath of catastrophic military defeat, they can get out of hand. Aggressive energies can achieve cheap victories over a defenseless minority. The reality of defeat itself can be denied and responsibility for the misfortunes of war ascribed to the minority's hidden "stab in the back." The accusation of secret treachery can legitimate genocide against the minority. If such a group is perceived as bringing about national catastrophe, while appearing to be loyal, it can become a matter of the greatest public urgency to eliminate them from the body politic.

Almost from the moment Germany lost World War I, the Jews were accused of bringing about its defeat through treachery, an accusation that appeared ludicrous in view of the extremely high proportion of German Jews who had served as front-line soldiers and who had made the ultimate sacrifice for what they regarded as their Fatherland. Elsewhere, this writer has argued that the tradition of Judas betraying Jesus with a token of love, a kiss, provided an enormously powerful religio-mythic identification of the Jew with betrayal to German Christians. Since the identification of the Jew with Judas takes place in earliest childhood and is constantly reinforced by religious tradition, it is more deeply rooted
and less subject to rational criticism than beliefs acquired at a later stage in the life cycle. When Hitler and the German right ascribed Germany's defeat to the Jews, they had working for them this immensely powerful pre-theoretical archetype. Here too, we discern a unique religio-mythic element of enormous power that sets the Holocaust apart from other instances of genocide in our times.

Given the presence of religio-mythic elements in the Holocaust, it is not surprising that many scholars have argued that the Holocaust was irrational in its objective if not in its method. Barbara Harff has argued that though the Holocaust may have been a "rational choice of the Nazis," the utility of its implementation was thoroughly irrational. Robert G.L. Waite, a historian of preeminent rank, concludes that there is no adequate explanation for the Holocaust. By contrast, Roger Smith argues that genocide is a "rational instrument to achieve an end." In order to understand the force of Smith's argument, it is important not to confuse that which is humane with instrumental rationality. The experience of our era should leave no doubt concerning the enormous potential for inhumanity present in autonomous practical reason.

Ronald Aronson argues that the Holocaust systematically outraged the norms of the "normal world." He insists that the Holocaust was a product of madness, which he defines as a systematic derangement of perception, a seeing what is not there. The National Socialists saw the Jews as the source of Germany's problems and their riddance as a major element in the solution. Aronson argues that when rulers organize a society against false enemies and propagate the view that society is being mortally threatened by them when it is not, we may speak of madness as much as when an individual behaves in the same manner.

Aronson's arguments summarize the thesis he presents with greater force and detail in his book, *The Dialectics of Disaster.* It is not surprising that Aronson and Roger Smith do not agree on the rationality of genocide. Smith sees genocide as a violent means of determining who is to have a voice in a community. Aronson stresses the patently false character of the defamation of the intended victim and of the analysis of society as mortally endangered by his presence. However, Aronson does not deal with the underlying reason why the question of "who shall have a voice in the community" is raised in the first place. A community is more than a congeries of individuals living in close proximity. As noted above, it is a group whose members may have to sacrifice their lives in a life-and-death struggle with external enemies in a crisis. When the group regards itself as secure, it can afford to take a relatively benign view of the presence of a limited number of strangers in its midst. However, in times of acute national stress, such as war, economic dislocation, or military defeat, the group is likely to view strangers with suspicion and hostility. In an extreme situation, it may decide upon the total elimination of strangers.
Aronson insists that the Nazi attempt wholly to eliminate the Jews as a demographic presence first in Germany and then in all of Europe was insane because the Jews in no way constituted the threat the National Socialists alleged them to be. The issue of the truth of National Socialist defamations is, however, irrelevant to the crucial fact that the overwhelming majority of Germans regarded even the most assimilated Jews as aliens whose elimination would be a positive benefit. The Germans were not duped by mendacious Nazi propaganda. They wanted the volkisch homogeneity Hitler promised them. When it was all over, some of them regretted the methods employed but not the fact that Europe was largely free of Jews.

If Aronson were right, it would be irrational to want an ethnically or religiously homogeneous community consisting of those with whom one shares a sense of kinship and trust. In reality, there is nothing irrational about the desire for such a community. One wonders whether Aronson considers the colonization of the Americas and Australia, which was largely achieved through genocide, to be instances of madness. It is not the irrationality of such communities that is the problem, but the extreme cruelty and inhumanity which all too frequently attend their creation. Neither Hitler's ends nor his methods were irrational. They were obscenely cruel and graphically demonstrate what citizens of one of the world's most advanced civilizations were willing to do to other human beings for the sake of national homogeneity.

Finally, there is the issue of genocide and national sovereignty. Roger Smith observes that the United Nations never detected a single instance of genocide by a member nation. Kurt Jonassohn and Frank Chalk argue that the sovereignty of the perpetrator is the practical problem in cases of deportation and extermination because the nation-state is both the most dangerous violator and the ultimate guardian of human rights. Elsewhere, this writer has argued that National Socialist Germany probably committed no crime at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{16} It was under no circumstances this author's intention to mitigate the inhumanity and the obscenity of what the Germans did, but to point to one of the most urgent moral dilemmas involved in the notion of political sovereignty in our era. Crime is a violation of behavioral norms defined by political authority. Homicide, for example, is only a crime when the victim is protected by the state's laws. Even in National Socialist Germany, there were actually a very small number of SS officers who were punished for the unauthorized murder of Jews during World War II. The state determined when homicide was an offense against its law and when it constituted the implementation of those same laws.

If it be argued that the National Socialist state was by its very nature a criminal state because it violated God's laws or the laws of nature, one must ask what practical difference such violations made to the perpe-
trators. As long as the leaders of National Socialist Germany were free to exercise sovereignty, no superordinate system of norms constituted any kind of restraint on their behavior. As is well known, neither the German churches nor the Vatican ever asserted that the genocidal program of the National Socialist state was a violation of God's law, although the program was well known. **In reality, there are no human rights there are only political rights.** That is why the question "Who is to have a voice in the political community?" is the fundamental human question. Membership in a political community is no absolute guarantee of safety. Nevertheless, to the extent that men and women have any rights whatsoever, it is as members of a political community with the power to guarantee those rights. This was clearly evident in the fate of the Armenians in Turkey during World War I and the Jews of Europe during World War II. Genocide is the ultimate expression of absolute rightlessness.

While highlighting the extreme moral limitations of contemporary civilization, genocide is nevertheless an intrinsic expression of that civilization. Genocide is most likely to occur when men and women refuse to extend the benefits and protection of their societies to strangers whom they cannot or will not trust. Obviously, that perception is highly subjective and may very well be in error. Nevertheless, one of the privileges of power is the ability to define social reality. The objective facts are of far less practical consequence than the subjective perceptions of the majority.

**NOTES**


