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Explaining Fascism and Ethnic Cleansing: The Three Dimensions of Charisma and the Four Dark Sides of Nationalism

Roger Eatwell

University of Bath

Ideas and leaders matter. Fascism's syncretic ideology is crucial to understanding its rise and support. So too is the *coterie* charisma exerted by leaders like Hitler over an inner core even in the wilderness years; his *centripetal* charisma went on to help attract the masses to the 'Führer party' for very diverse reasons; and the *cultic* charisma leaders developed especially when in power further helps explain their appeal. The four dark sides of nationalism – namely, its *ethnic*, *religious*, *scientific* and *economic* dimensions – are also crucial to understanding genocide. So too is leadership: no Hitler, no Holocaust. Genocide also points to the importance of lower levels of leaders, who were sometimes influenced by the charisma of the 'great' leader, although in other cases, such as Milosevic's Serbia, the charismatisation of the national idea was more influential.

Over 60 years after the end of the Second World War, fascism continues to spawn a vast academic literature. In the case of the Holocaust, interest has if anything increased in recent years. This in part reflects an outburst of more recent examples of ethnic cleansing around the world. Indeed, 'genocide studies' have become a boom academic industry, fuelling an output which exceeds even that on historic fascism.[1]

Two new books from Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Mann, 2004) and *The Dark Side of Democracy* (Mann, 2005), seek to challenge many of the conventional wisdoms to be found in these literatures. There is no doubt that they deserve to be read widely by specialists and the more general academic reader alike, as they combine remarkable syntheses of secondary reading with original primary analysis. Following Mann's magisterial earlier works on the sources of social power (Mann, 1986; 1993), they reinforce the importance of adopting a broad approach to sweeping historical developments, focusing on four dimensions of power: ideological; economic; military; and political (Mann's IEMP grid).

However, in this article I will argue that Mann's account of the rise of fascism (he has little to say about fascism *qua* regimes or contemporary 'fascism') does not fully bring out crucial dimensions of both the mercurial nature of fascist ideology and the ways in which it was effectively disseminated to a broad variety of supporters, especially via charismatic leaders. Turning to Mann's second volume on the dynamics of ethnic cleansing (he does not systematically discuss prevention or policy responses), I will seek to reinforce the ideological point by looking more

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systematically at what I see as the specific dangers of nationalism rather than democracy, while again noting the importance of leaders and other opinion makers in charismatising nationalist messages of hate to core groups of activists.

Put more specifically, I seek to develop two linked but separate arguments. In the first section, my main emphasis is on the interrelationship between three types of *charismatic bond* which link fascist leaders and followers via the construction of a broad *ideological matrix* which centres on ideas about the creation of a 'new man', nation and state. In the second section the emphasis is more on the tripartite discourse of the *charismatic personality*, and especially the way in which such leaders' discourse helps prepare the way for ethnic cleansing by playing on what I see as the *four dark sides of nationalism*, namely: ethnic, religious, scientific and economic.

Fascism

Fascists is a book about the supporters of such movements in inter-war Europe. Mann has mastered an impressive array of material about six countries: Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Spain. The first five witnessed the rise of the most important European fascist movements, while in the Spanish case an authoritarian military dictator rather than fascists seized the reins of power. The choices are thus good ones, although it would also have been interesting to have added France, as this seedbed of fascist ideology gave birth to movements which enjoyed only fleeting significant support (Sternhell, 1983).

While many academics continue to hold that fascist 'thought' was little more than activist propaganda (epitomised by the notorious slogan: 'When I hear the word "culture", I reach for my gun!'), ideology figures prominently in the first chapter of *Fascists*. However, Mann is not interested in the nature of ideology per se: his concern is driven more by a desire to use it to explain support. Thus he is critical of the influential writings of Roger Griffin, whose much-cited definition holds that the 'mythic core' of fascist ideology lies in a 'palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism' (Griffin, 1991, p. 26), as it is both vague and places too much emphasis on 'political religion' motivations during the pre-regime phase.

Mann offers as his alternative short definition the claim that fascism was: 'the pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism'. Although he notes that there were some differences between countries, he identifies three core constituencies closely linked to this definition. First were those who were attracted to fascism's claims to transcend the social divisions that had accompanied modernity, followers who were typically found among those outside the front line of the struggle between organised labour and capital. The nation-statist constituency could be found especially among First World War veterans, contested peripheral areas, the public sector and churchgoers where the church had a strongly nationalist aspect. Those attracted by fascism's paramilitarism

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were especially the young, although the young could more generally be attracted by fascism's idealistic quest to forge a holistic nation against a background of serial crisis – a crusade that also attracted many educated older people, including a notable array of intellectuals in the 1930s.

Some of these connections have been noted before, such as the working-class element in Nazism. Nevertheless, Mann's comparative focus on these three groups is an important step forward. It is an especially useful corrective to the tendency of many historians to stress unique features of national development and politics, like an alleged German *Sonderweg*. Such historians often accuse comparativists of failing to perceive the particular, but these approaches are typically unconnected to any detailed analysis of the specific basis of fascist mass support, or point to misleading links, for example to the centrality of the middle class.

However, Mann's analysis has two major flaws. Firstly, he does not bring out fully the mercurial nature of fascist ideology, which helped give it an appeal well beyond his three core constituencies. Secondly, there are notable weaknesses in his analysis of the nature of the linkages between ideology and the dynamics of support, especially the charismatic role of Hitler in the Nazi case.

The Ideological Matrix

An important ideological issue which Mann manages to miss concerns geopolitics, including the rise of new powers such as warlike Japan and the USSR. The latter state was especially important as it posed a dual threat in some countries through its links to important domestic communist parties, and through the links made by many fascists between communism and Jews. While it is important not to see fascism's appeal largely in terms of a fear of either, in Italy the communist threat certainly turned some Catholics to fascism, including important sections of the rural bourgeoisie who agreed to land reform to attract peasants (a major constituency in general played down by Mann).

Mann also fails to probe sufficiently the question of the extent to which fascism was seen as extreme by contemporaries. In this context, it is worth highlighting that Mussolini was invited to join the governing 'National Bloc' in 1921, in part a reflection of a tradition of *trasformismo* for parties which were considered coalitionable, but also a tribute to Mussolini's skills in political manoeuvre. The Nazis too prior to 1933 tried hard to present a conventional face in some establishment circles, and more generally sought to portray their leader-based nationalism as part of a deeper German tradition.

Although these last points illustrate fascism's propagandistic dimension, they also highlight the need to see fascist ideology within a mercurial matrix rather than a relatively static ideal-type. At the core of fascist ideology were three primary foci: the creation of a 'new man', of a holistic nation and a new form of state. Central to fascist thinking on these matters was a radical syncretism, often seeking to

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transcend left and right.[2] However, the resulting syntheses could produce very different emphases. Thus, for some fascists a new 'third way' state involved a significant redistribution of resources towards the workers, whereas for others it was more a question of creating window-dressing corporatist institutions to tame class conflict.

Linked to this, we need to move on from seeing the core of fascist ideology in terms of a list of key words such as 'ultra-nationalism', and consider the different ways in which fascists understood these terms both within and across countries. In particular, it is a commonplace to argue that Nazism was a form of biological nationalism, whereas Italian Fascism was more cultural, a desire to complete the unification of Italy with the creation of a holistic community which could accommodate Jews and other ethnic groups (over 200 Jews took part as Fascists in the March on Rome in 1922). However, this approach glosses over the way in which Italian Fascist ideology constructed a national mission to expand into Africa. While some Fascist supporters who went as colonists to Libya and Abyssinia saw this in terms of personal economic opportunity, there is no doubt that from an early stage expansion was seen among the Fascist leadership as involving extensive ethnic cleansing in order to achieve the new Italy's historic place in the sun.

It is also vital to consider how ideology was disseminated, a means of explaining what led the Nazis to leap from 2.8 to 37.2 percent of the vote between 1928 and 1932. One factor was the publicity which media baron Alfred Hugenberg gave to Hitler after 1929 as part of a united nationalist campaign against reparations. The Nazis achieved arguably even more through the reorganisation of the party following the disappointing 1928 result. Existing 'civil' society groups, such as *völkisch* ones, were targeted for penetration and specific Nazi groups for important opinion makers such as doctors, lawyers and students were set up. Others were formed for what were identified as key constituencies, such as farmers, to whom new policies were addressed. Additionally, there was the deployment of new campaign technology: by 1932 the Nazis were distributing gramophone records of speeches and films of rallies, while Hitler was the first politician to use a plane regularly to fly to meetings.

In spite of the 1932 slogan 'Hitler over Germany', much campaigning remained highly localised, so the Nazis could disseminate different messages in particular areas. For example, anti-Semitism was played down in some areas, but in others figured prominently. Even leading Nazis could seek to disseminate varying messages. In Hitler's first speech to the German nation as chancellor, broadcast on 19 February 1933, he mixed a sense of mission and religious discourse (such as 'salvation', 'resurrection') with a sense of humility, symbolised by his simple military uniform and opening left-populist greeting to his racial comrades '*Volksgenossen*'. Interestingly, it was Goebbels who spoke in more virulent terms, warming up the live audience before Hitler arrived with the statement in relation

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to alleged Jewish control of the media: 'One day our patience will come to an end and the insolent Jews will have their lying mouths shut for them'.

The Charismatic Bond

A common argument used to explain the attractiveness of fascism, largely ignored by Mann, relates to its propensity to produce 'charismatic' leaders who appealed at moments of great crisis. However, there are major problems in such sweeping formulations. For instance, leaders such as Hitler or Mussolini exhibited 'charismatic' personality traits well before they attracted any significant support. Such problems have led some social scientists to argue that charismatic explanations have no significant analytical value. However, I want to argue that the need is more to reconfigure the concept and theory of charisma in a way which places much less emphasis on Max Weber's focus on the rise of mass affective support (Eatwell, 2006).

A full analysis of this question would need to look at the broad theoretical issue of what forms of crisis make such leaders attractive to followers? However, in this article I consider more the magnetism of the leaders than the magnetisability of the masses. Firstly, crisis is not an entirely objective category. The problems stemming from structural or institutional factors can be inflated by charismatic leaders, as Hitler did with his rhetoric of a terminal *Endsituation* after 1929. Moreover, a central part of my argument in this article is that we should not understand charisma simply in terms of leaders and masses: we need to look too at a crucial intermediate group of activists.

Firstly, it is important to consider leadership in relationship to organisation. There seems little doubt that by 1928 Hitler had come to exert what I term 'coterie charisma' over both his inner court, such as Goebbels or Himmler, and a large number of key activists in the country. This served to limit splits in the party and helps explain the remarkable levels of activism which were important to creating a sense of Nazi movement in targeted areas.

Although evidence about mass support is not conclusive, it seems clear that Hitler exerted a highly affective appeal over some supporters, while Nazi economic policies appealed for more rational reasons to others (Brustein, 1996). Hitler's charisma is especially important in helping to explain the strong attraction of the Nazis to those with low levels of interest in politics, including former non-voters and women (the latter is another major constituency neglected by Mann, although by 1932 they made up over half the Nazi vote). Put another way, we can hypothesise that what I term Hitler's 'centripetal charisma' needs to be understood as a form of low-cost signalling which was important in appealing to a particularly broad range of supporters. Moreover, the focus of many voters on politics through the prism of Hitler made it easier to avoid the dissonance which might have come had they paid more attention to the notably different appeals made in some circles and districts by the Nazis.

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During the regime phase of Nazism, a strong form of almost god-like 'cultic charisma' was developed around the Führer by state, party and other agencies using a wide range of media. Although there are dangers in talking about 'consensus' support, there is little doubt that this aura combined with policies such as the reversal of the Versailles Treaty humiliations and achievement of full employment made the Führer, though revealingly not the Nazi party, widely popular by 1939.

However, popular attitudes towards Jewish policy are less clear. By 1940, extensive propaganda, playing especially on deep-rooted Christian stereotypes, portrayed the Jews as racially different sub-humans, who had dominated key walks of German life, and whose international networks were involved in a life and death conspiracy against Germany. Nevertheless, this does not prove that there was near-universal anti-Semitism in Germany by the time that mass killings began, a point underlined by the fact that the 'Final Solution' took place essentially beyond Germany's borders and was hidden behind a panoply of euphemisms. Certainly policy was not made primarily with an eye to appealing to public opinion (Browning, 2004).

Indeed, some recent accounts have gone so far as to stress the importance of 'rational' concerns among lower-ranking professionals such as doctors or planners, who sought a healthy and 'optimum-sized' population for Germany's new *Lebensraum* in the east – a policy which involved the elimination of Jews, Roma and Slav elites who stood in the way of Nazi 'modernisation' (Ally and Heim, 2002). More commonly, the Holocaust has been portrayed by revisionists as based on the willingness of officials and soldiers to carry out what they saw as legitimate orders, or on amoral decisions about personal advancement through compliance. These were people who killed with efficiency rather than enthusiasm, the 'banality of evil' in Hannah Arendt's famous phrase about the Holocaust technocrat, Adolf Eichmann (Bauman, 1989).

However, while it is important not to create a teleology running backwards from Auschwitz, it is also important to underline that Hitler had been obsessively racist from at least as far back as the end of the First World War. This was also true of many members of his inner coterie and, as Mann notes, of Nazis like Eichmann who planned and took part in the Holocaust. An excellent brief insight into the decisions which led to the Holocaust is given by Ian Kershaw via his phrase 'working towards the Führer' (Kershaw, 1999). This points to the charismatic hold which Hitler exerted over an inner core, who at times almost competed to anticipate the will of the Führer. Thus the kind of internal personal 'checks and balances', which might have restrained dictatorial power, were removed in a system dominated by the Führer and his identification with Germany's mission. While important questions remain unclear about Hitler's precise role, and the extent to which the Hitler factor drove lower-level actions, there seems little doubt that without the charismatic Führer there would have been no major programme of genocide.

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Ethnic Cleansing

The Dark Side of Democracy is a book about why ethnic cleansing takes place. Mann's main case study is the Holocaust (he does not agree with those who stress its radical 'uniqueness'), together with the Turkish massacres of Armenian Christians, the break-up of post-communist Yugoslavia and the Hutu-Tutsi killings in Rwanda. Stalin's, Mao's and Pol Pot's communist regimes are covered in far less detail, as are some other instances of mass killings, plus two counterfactual cases where localised ethnic conflict has not degenerated into widespread politically legitimated murder. Mann thus deploys evidence from a broad range of case studies, although with some debatable emphases.

For example, why does he not pay more attention to pre-twentieth-century cases outside the Western colonial arena? And why does he largely neglect the Nazis' 'euthanasia' programme, which helped to establish the bureaucracy and mechanisms for the later gassing of Jews? If the answer to the latter question is that the book is essentially about 'ethnic' killing, why include communist examples which Mann himself accepts were mainly 'classicides' or 'politicides'? Mann defends their presence by arguing that these states possessed a conception of the 'we' which was similar to that of the holistic ethnic nation. In which case, why are they not treated in more detail, as Stalin's and Mao's regimes resulted in the death of more than all the others considered put together?

Mann's answer to the historical question lies in the book's primary thesis, which holds that ethnic cleansing is modern because it is 'the dark side of democracy'. He seeks to bolster this provocative claim by listing in the first chapter seven additional main theses (plus various sub-theses), which can usefully be divided into two linked categories. The first seeks to refine the structural environment likely to lead to killing, stressing factors such as when ethnicity trumps class as the main form of social stratification and when two groups each lay claim to a state in the same lands. The second set of theses focuses more on agents, who Mann sees as rarely intending mass killing at the outset, and made up of elites, militants and more ordinary people who are rarely the stereotypical fanatic.

Although some of Mann's points, such as the 'ordinariness' of many killers, are not new, his multidimensional analysis undoubtedly has many strengths. One concerns the way in which it acts as a corrective to those who adopt a highly culture-specific approach to the roots of ethnic cleansing, for example pointing to an alleged Hutu tribal heart of darkness, or demonising the Serb tradition as based on fanatical nationalism which was only frozen during the communist era (on the latter see Todorova, 1997). Mann is also critical of fashionable one-dimensional theories, especially rational choice approaches. He rightly argues that these over-stress economic motives, although approaches which stress security dilemmas point more fertilely towards fear and the role of competitive responses between groups.

Mann's primary thesis forces us to ask, why has the twentieth century been so murderous? The answer cannot simply be the growing power of the state and

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technology, epitomised by the 'holocaust' of Hiroshima. The Nazis may have exploited both, but in Croatia the chaotic Ustasha murdered large numbers of Serbs, Jews and others with primitive instruments, sometimes competing over how many throats they could slit in a day. Similarly, Rwanda in the 1990s, where the machete was the murder weapon of choice, reveals that neither a strong state nor modern technology was necessary for genocide. Mann's broad answer to this modern conundrum poses especially important questions about the dangers of the American administration's current quest for a democratic new world order, and the troubles which have afflicted post-invasion Afghanistan and especially Iraq – a topic on which, perhaps revealingly, he has recently written in a critical vein (Mann, 2003).

Mann's theses about perpetrators are important for highlighting the speed with which a situation can degenerate into mass killings. For instance, the factionalised Turkish government does not appear to have had a plan for genocide of the Armenians in early 1914 (although Islamic fundamentalist agitation throughout Turkey had led to various major massacres before 1914). Rather, it developed against a background of war and fears of Russian advances and Armenian disloyalty. And Rwanda has clearly shown the importance of identifying a militant level, which lies at the heart of most atrocities. Typically, policemen or soldiers form the hard core of such groups, although a revealing conclusion derived from Mann's sample of Nazi perpetrators is that core organisers of local killings often come from other groups among whom 'cleansing' resonates, such as doctors and lawyers, who in turn give legitimacy to orders to rank-and-file perpetrators.

However, the analysis also has significant flaws. First, in spite of the general title of the book, Mann is mainly discussing events which took place under forms of dictatorship, during attempted transitions to democracies and/or in illiberal democracies which lacked well-protected rights and other forms of checks and balances. Moreover, Mann fails to bring out fully two crucial issues which were highlighted above in relation to his volume on fascists – namely the multifaceted nature of nationalist ideology and the role of leadership in mobilising support.

The Charismatic Personality

A question glossed over earlier in the discussion concerns the specific traits exhibited by the charismatic personality. There is a long tradition of analysing such leaders in psychological terms. For instance, a Harvard team during the Second World War identified crucial formative aspects in Hitler's youth, such as the loss of three young brothers and his strict father (Langer, 1972). Childhood problems also often feature in accounts of Slobodan Milosevic (and his *éminence grise* wife, Mira Markovich). Nevertheless, there are clear dangers in such analyses, including a tendency to reduce political actions and belief to childhood development.

More recently, there has been a tendency to analyse leaders in terms of rational choice theory. This approach tends to see leaders such as Milosevic as political

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entrepreneurs rather than true ethnic believers.[3] While this approach offers important insights, it tends to play down the fact that there have been leaders who were obsessed with ethnicity and race. Moreover, if the emphasis turns towards the magnetisability of the masses rather than the actions of the charismatic personality, the question of true belief does not matter (although it may well affect relations with a coterie in the know about the leader).

In this article I want to stress the usefulness of an approach based more on discourse, which holds that a charismatic personality can usefully be conceived in terms of three traits. Firstly, they are missionaries – they have a vision, although not necessarily a very detailed one as this could lose more support than it gains, and there may be times when even the true believer sees the advantages of pragmatic compromise or silence. Secondly, they deal in symbiotic hierarchy – they are both above and of the people. Thirdly, they engage in a Manichean demonisation of enemies which not only reinforces the conception of the Other, but which also heightens threat.

A full supply-side analysis of the charismatic personality would require diachronic and synchronic approaches. A leader's image can be multifaceted and themes can change through time, as noted in the fascism section. However, the usefulness of this tripartite conceptual outline can be illustrated by considering the case of Milosevic – a man who has been seen both by many supporters at the time and later commentators as 'charismatic'.[4]

Milosevic was in many ways the antithesis of the popular conception of the charismatic leader, being diminutive and unattractive, and rather stilted in front of crowds (LeBor, 2002; Stevanovic, 2004). However, against a background of growing economic troubles and political division during the late 1980s, he lifted a long-standing taboo about national rivalries in Yugoslavia. Helped by his college friend, Dusan Mitevic, and others in the state-controlled media, Milosevic charismatised himself as a man of destiny, sent to end Serbia's long years of suffering. Comparisons were sometimes made with the Jews' long history of victim-hood, though more commonly the religious allusions were to his new-found role as protector of the Orthodox Church. These messages received, if anything, even more inflammatory endorsement from many within the Serbia Orthodox church, whose forebears had been a particular target of the Ustasha terror (Sells, 2000).

During his sudden rise from semi-obscurity, Milosevic presented himself as a simple man of the people, who understood their concerns. His lack of stereotypical 'charismatic' traits, together with his apparent relatively simple lifestyle, in many ways helped this appeal. Picking up widespread concerns, Milosevic not only portrayed himself as a nationalist but as leader of an 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' against the *nomenklatura* of which he was part. Milosevic thus managed to embody the technocratic appeal of someone who was by training a communist banker, with a more populist side which dropped the high cant of fellow politicians in favour of a language of the streets. And, while he never became a

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great speaker, he grew increasingly adept at working great crowds, which even in a television age was an important part of his strategy.

At one such meeting on 28 June 1989, the 600th anniversary of the defeat of the Serbs by the Ottomans at the Battle of Kosovo, he ominously declared to the hundreds of thousands present that 'we are again engaged in battles', and while they were not yet armed, 'such things cannot be excluded'. The growing Muslim population in what many Serbs saw as their spiritual homeland was targeted to create a sense of a wider threat of Islam not just to Serbia but to the whole of Europe. And the triumph of Franjo Tudjman, a nationalist true believer, in the 1990 Croatian elections, further reinforced memories of the Ustasha past and raised fears of new threats to Serbs living within Croatian borders – while allowing Milosevic to appear even moderate at times by comparison.

First elected president of Serbia by the national assembly in 1989, Milosevic was re-elected by direct vote in December 1990, a month in which his party won 80 percent of the vote. As well as arousing strong nationalist passions, Milosevic appears to have exerted an appeal to broad constituencies within his country, reflecting the nuanced nature of his appeal. Milosevic also had close relations with some of those who led the paramilitary bands which were to commit many of the atrocities, such as the one led by 'Arkan'. However, Milosevic never exerted anything like the coterie charisma of Hitler. Loyalty was due more to his charismatisation of the Serbian dream as a realisable one – although it is important to note that some militant groups attracted criminals and others whose primary motivation had little or nothing to do with Serbian loyalty.

The Four Dark Sides of Nationalism

These last points underline that Mann is writing about the dark side of nationalism as much as, if not more than, democracy. The fundamental democratic cry is the right to 'rule by the people', but academics have for many years shown how democracy could spawn a 'totalitarian' heresy, in which 'rule' by a communist vanguard or fascist elite allowed great crimes to be perpetrated in the name of the people and progress (Talmon, 1961). Mann focuses more on another corruption of the basic democratic claim – namely, the answer to the query, who are the 'people'? He notes that in many parts of the world this has been answered by the quest for an ethnocracy. Examples such as post-communist Yugoslavia, therefore, do not point so much to the problems facing new 'democratic' states as to the risks of political leaders mobilising along ethnic lines in an unstable economic and political environment in which effective democratic channels of representation for collective grievances are missing or inadequate.

However, while substituting the word 'nationalism' for 'democracy' in the title of Mann's work would be more accurate, it would still only tell part of the tale. For conflict to threaten or erupt, leaders or groups need to construct nationalism in ways which make the peaceful sharing of living space unlikely.

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In seeking an answer to how and why this can happen, it is helpful to define nationalism as 'collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its own governance unit' (Hechter, 2000, p. 7) rather than the common emphasis on the quest for separate statehood. Understood this way, it is possible peacefully to combine nations in a single state by federalism. Even where populations are closely intermingled rather than separated, it is possible to bargain peaceful coexistence through means such as consociationalism. So, we have to ask what factors make such institutionalist-elitist approaches less likely to work? This requires looking more carefully at the matrix within which nationalism is constructed.

Ethnic Nationalism

Many writers have long distinguished between the rise of 'organic' and more liberal (north European and American) forms of nationalism (Kohn, 1967). This approach holds that the former is far more likely to lead to ethnic conflict and war. Liberal nationalism in countries like Britain has shown that it is capable of transforming ethnic divisions into more overarching forms of identity. In this sense, the collapse of Yugoslavia into anarchy was the result of the failure to achieve an overarching 'Southern Slav' liberal nationalism, which transcended more parochial identities.

However, it is important not to reify ethnicity, and especially not to see it as necessarily involving primordial hatreds. It is interesting in this context to consider the proto-Fascist intellectual, Giovanni Papini, who in 1914 wrote: 'Italy in 1860 was made up of shit, dragged kicking and screaming into a new state by a daring elite, and shit it has remained for the last fifty years' (cited in de Grada, 1970, p. 305). This was a conception of a 'nation' still to be forged by dynamic elites, and which would need tempering by war. Far from being primordial, the martial nation was thus in an important sense an intellectual construction for Italian Fascists (although not for the Nazis, who identified it with a deep-rooted *Volksgeist*).

Rwanda also provides an interesting case study. First, it shows how peoples who had once lived peacefully together, sharing the same language and religion, increasingly in the late twentieth century defined themselves in terms of hostile identities, which were themselves grafted on to ones constructed by colonialists for pre-Second World War censuses (Mamdani, 2001). Secondly, this new construction of the Tutsi nation equated it both with oppressive colonialists and with sub-human vermin. 'Cockroaches' was the most common Hutu epithet in the latter context, a term which was widely broadcast over the radio and through other media, with the clear implication that the cockroaches should be eradicated. Moreover, the colonialist construction contained a strand which reflected the thinking of the earlier prophet of colonial revolution, Frantz Fanon. In this, violence was not only collectively necessary to the mission of national independence, but also individually as a self-actualising act which rejected subservience and embodied a new identity of control.

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Religious Nationalism

The discourse of nationalist mission is often intimately linked to religion, a field which Mann rightly states is under-theorised in studies of the rise of fascism. However, he still fails to pay sufficient attention either to the links between Protestantism and Nazism, or to the way in which Catholics directly or indirectly lent support to Hitler's regime. Mann notes that many Catholics played prominent roles in the Holocaust, but does not bring out that while Catholics opposed some aspects of Nazi genocide (most famously, Bishop von Galen's 1941 open denunciation from the pulpit of the 'euthanasia' programme), the same Catholics could support war against the USSR as a crusade, a battle in which the Jew was often identified with the communist anti-Christ.[5]

Mann recognises the dangers of religious claims to single truths, but argues that Christianity militated against ethnic cleansing in relation to colonial situations as it held that all souls are equally capable of redemption. He thus glosses over Protestantism's association with the concept of both a 'chosen people' and progress, points that have been stressed especially by Anthony Smith (see Smith, 2002). Indeed, it is hard to understand the fate of Native Americans without an examination of the construction and interpretation of the doctrine of 'manifest destiny'. In Rwanda, especially after an unsuccessful Tutsi invasion from Uganda in 1990, government sources promoted the idea of the need to defend a Hutu holy way of life, which was threatened both from within and without by the Tutsis. The religious metaphor was almost certainly a powerful one, as many within local religious hierarchies supported the president, who was himself linked with the Renouveau Charismatique sect within the Catholic Church.[6]

Neither is it necessary to accept the political religion approach to totalitarianism to see affinities between communism and religion – for instance, the sacred texts of Marx (embodied in and interpreted by Stalin *et al.*), the demonisation of enemies and the quest for an eternal classless paradise (Burleigh, 2005). Religion has thus always had the power to promote both war and peace.

Scientific Nationalism

One problem with conceiving Marxism as a religion is that it presented itself as a 'science'. This points to another crucial aspect about the construction of the nation – namely, the way in which it was frequently connected with intellectual developments both within science understood narrowly and conceived more generally as part of modernity's celebration of intellectual thought.

Historians of ideas such as George Mosse have clearly shown that by the early twentieth century racist conceptions of nationalism were central to Western thought – with Darwinism, eugenics and other scientific developments legitimating policies such as euthanasia and sterilisation in the quest for national purity (Mosse, 1978; Weindling, 1993). Such thinking was certainly strong in Germany,

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not least in the medical profession, a group which played a particularly important part in all aspects of Nazi genocide. In Rwanda, it was more historians at the national university in Butare who served the president's purpose in their anti-Tutsi historical diatribes.

At one point Mann suggests that the Young Turks prior to the Armenian massacres were liberal, but at others he notes that they were influenced by scientific and other intellectual developments which pointed more to the need to turn Turkey into a holistic state run by a technocratic elite. Indeed, a popular saying of theirs was 'Science is the religion of the elite, whereas religion is the science of the masses' (cited in Sükrü Hanioglu, 1995, p. 201). Far from being democratic, the Young Turks had a contempt for the masses, which owed much to the writings of the early crowd psychologist, Le Bon, who influenced many fascist intellectuals. It is also important to note that parts of the Turkish elite at this time were in direct contact with German military advisers who had taken part in the earlier mass killings of the Herreros in Namibia and were familiar with the partly German-inspired idea of 'total war', fought without regard to morality or law and seeing civilians as legitimate targets. Some Young Turks were also influenced by Japan's defeat of Russia and the belief that European-Christian society could be overthrown by new martial and racially united states.

Economic Nationalism

The genocide of the Herreros raises another issue, namely economic motives. Mann accepts that the desire to take land as well as the 'democratic' pressures from settlers was an important dimension in the colonial power struggle with natives. It is also worth stressing in the Rwanda case that the moves towards democratisation and power sharing threatened the privileges of many around the president, as well as making redundant many Hutu soldiers who were later to form the backbone of the genocidal militias.

However, it is important to ask how economics and nationalism were conceived both by intellectuals and others. Economic interest was often closely intertwined with wider constructions of the nation. Thus, attitudes to settlers' rights to land were intimately connected with views about not just white supremacy and religious mission, but also with conceptions of progress linked to the more efficient use of land and labour and the Protestant work ethic. A similar point could be made about Rwanda. Hutus and Tutsi had once lived in peace, but a crucial change during the twentieth century was rapid population growth which by the 1980s had made Rwanda the most densely populated country in Africa. The holy way of Hutu life celebrated their economic mode of activity, namely horticulture rather than Tutsi pastoralism. Killing Tutsis could thus be understood, not so much as an act of greed, as a necessary defence of a historic way of life which was threatened by the ever-growing Tutsi need for land to feed cattle.

Some recent commentators have stressed the growing impact of the spread of free market economics in terms of radicalising relations between ethnic groups in

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poorer countries (for example Chua, 2003). This undoubtedly can produce winners and losers which, especially when linked to the early stages of democratisation, can lead to conflict. However, this approach takes the argument into a realm that has largely been neglected in this article, namely the role of external state and non-state actors in both facilitating and preventing ethnic cleansing.

Moreover, if the question focuses on the issue of primacy, have economic motives ever driven genocide (as against more limited killings)? A survivor of the massacres of the Tutsi has commented that the Hutus had for many years persecuted his people without holding any plans to exterminate them, arguing that: 'It is the intellectuals who emancipated them by planting the idea of genocide in their heads and sweeping away their hesitations'. The latter point is corroborated by one of the Hutu militant leaders, a teacher who was sentenced to death for his crimes killing 'cockroaches', who has stated that: 'The thinkers got the genocide going, and the militants paid for the damage' (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 145, p. 163). While in his case there is a clear desire to inculpate others, it is hard not to conclude that leaders – both political and 'intellectual' – do wield considerable power to shape or sharpen the dark side of nationalism.

Conclusion

It is important to add by way of conclusion that my arguments are not meant to reject the importance of a broad analysis of the type embodied in Mann's influential IEMP model, which has justly made him pre-eminent in the field of historical sociology. Moreover, I am certainly not claiming that the approach set out above explains the rise or failure of every single instance of fascism, let alone the long and varied history of ethnic cleansings. Indeed, an important question for any exercise of this type is to what extent can any general 'model' hope to explain such complex events? Rather, I have sought to highlight what I see as two important aspects of these events – the nature of nationalist ideology and the impact of charisma understood both in terms of individuals and ideas.

Taking nationalism first, it is important to stress that fascist ideology appealed for many reasons, with some supporters not even seeing it as extreme. It is certainly wrong to hold that a desire for ethnic cleansing was central to mass support in the movement phase, though it was crucial for some Nazi activists. Nevertheless, a nation cannot be imagined out of nothing, especially if it is being imagined in a way which will lead some of its people towards murderous cleansing. It needs fertile soil to till. This is easiest in time of war, hence the fact that many of the most serious instances of ethnic cleansing are linked to more or less formal states of war when all enemies tend to become demonised (hence atrocities aimed at non-ethnic civilian enemies, such as the SS mass killings of the French inhabitants of Oradour-sur-Glane in 1944). However, while it is wrong to demonise sweepingly Germans, Serbs and others as inherently anti-Semitic, anti-Croat, anti-Muslim and so on, there were elements in these cultures which political, religious,

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intellectual and other opinion leaders could exploit – especially historic senses of mission, eternal enemies and a sense of past or present victimisation.

Turning to charisma, it is clearly naïve to adopt a 'great man' view of history in which one person explains everything. Having said this, no Hitler, no Holocaust – although the Jews would undoubtedly have suffered persecution had there been a Nazi government without Hitler after 1933. Rather, I have sought to put forward a view of charisma which involves a complex symbiosis between leader discourse, national traditions and audience needs (though the last of these have not been fully studied or theorised in the above analysis). In the context of the rise of fascism in the interwar period, successful leaders such as Hitler created a remarkably diverse ideological cocktail, which helped attract broad support in free elections – and enjoyed even broader support during the early regime years. In helping to prepare the way for ethnic cleansing, leaders used a Molotov cocktail of darker nationalist discourse in which they sanctified not only themselves, but more fundamentally a historic mission which dehumanised and demonised the 'Other'. However, in this case the impact was typically most disastrous on the relatively small number of militants who tended to be the true believers, rather than the more 'ordinary' killers they inducted into the process. Put this way, it is fascism more than ethnic cleansing which is the dark side of democracy.

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About the Author

Roger Eatwell, Department of European Studies and Modern Languages, University of Bath, Bath BA2 7AY, UK; email: *r.eatwell@bath.ac.uk*

Notes

1 There are important issues of terminology and typology relating to 'ethnic cleansing' and 'genocide' which are not discussed in this article, nor are they seriously considered by Mann. These include issues such as: are they synonyms? does 'genocide' have to be deliberate? or how useful is it to distinguish between ideological and retributive ethnic killings? For an excellent introduction see Wolff (2006).

2 For my views on ideology see Eatwell (1992), and especially Eatwell (2003).

3 On the two types see Lake and Rothchild (1998, ch. 1).

4 For example, see Milosevic (1993); see also Sell (2002, p. 181).

5 For the text of the speech in English, see Portmann (1957), pp. 239–46.

6 See http://laicite.free.fr/charismatic.htm [accessed 2 October 2005].

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