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Eine Studie von A study by
Jochen Hippler mit Kommentaren
von with commentaries from
Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid und
and Amr Hamzawy

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WAR REPRESSION TERRORISM

Political Violence and Civilisation
in Western and Muslim Societies

A study by
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Amr Hamzawy

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Foreword

Terror, war, occupation: the fact that relations between the West and the Islamic countries are in a state of serious crisis is something we know from the news on a daily basis. The relationship between the two cultural areas has never been easy in the past, either. Times of intensive fruitful exchange have been followed by periods of confrontation: the crusades, the Ottoman armies before Vienna, colonialism. Since 11 September 2001 in particular, however, the fear of terrorism and violence in the West has increasingly determined attitudes towards Islam. Conversely, the war in Iraq has stirred up fear of Western dominance in Muslim countries. This varied history has repeatedly claimed victims in both cultural areas over a period of centuries – whether through dictatorships, wars, persecution and eradication motivated by racism, colonialism or religious fanaticism.

It is therefore time to reflect on common ground and differences in dealing with political violence and summarise this in a study, especially given the fact that »as far as we know« no such analysis has yet been conducted. The Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa) commissioned PD Dr. Jochen Hippler from the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) at the University of Duisburg-Essen to draw up this study. Together with the ifa, Hippler has devised the ifa-Forum Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, a project within the framework of the European-Islamic Cultural Dialogue organised by the German Foreign Office, the context in which this study has been produced.

To prepare for this study, a workshop was held in Malta at which the ifa attempted an intellectual experiment under the direction of the project leaders, Barbara Kuhnert and Jochen Hippler. A small group of participants from Germany and the Arab world with very differing academic backgrounds cast light on the complex domain of political violence in terms of an international comparison. The group consisted of Prof. Dr. Tobias Debiel (Institute for Development and Peace, University of Duisburg-Essen), Prof. Wilhelm Heitmeyer (Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and

Violence, University of Bielefeld), Dr. Bruno Schoch (Hessian Foundation for Research on Peace and Conflict, Frankfurt), Prof. Dr. Trutz von Trotha (Chair of Sociology, University of Siegen), Dr. Klaus Wahl (German Youth Institute, Munich), Dr. Awat Asadi (political scientist, Bonn), Prof. Muhammad El-Saadani (University of Alexandria/Egypt), Prof. Dr. Basem Ezbidi (Birzeit University/Palestinian Regions) and Nizar Saghieh (lawyer and academic, Beirut/Lebanon).

The participants contributed their knowledge and respective research approaches from their quite different academic disciplines to the debate. Structural common ground and differences were highlighted and reflected on in order to better understand the reasons for different forms of violence and legitimisations as well as facilitate the development of joint strategies for overcoming violence reaching beyond the current and reduced fixation on the issue of terrorism. The results of the discussions together with the various comments, ideas and suggestions have been incorporated into the study.

The ifa had requested six intellectuals from Muslim countries to submit an inventory of their perceptions of relations between the West and the Muslim world. The result comprised the report submitted in 2003, entitled »The West and the Islamic world – A Muslim position«. This study takes the opposite approach: Jochen Hippler has drawn up an analysis as a Western academic which is subsequently commented on by two intellectuals whose opinions carry weight in the Arab world and beyond. We are delighted that Prof. Dr. Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid from the University of Humanistics in Utrecht and Leiden University and Dr. Amr Hamzawy, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C. have agreed to be involved in this capacity.

Hippler reaches the following conclusion in his analysis: if governments in the West and in the Near and Middle East want to prevent or at least limit violence in the future, a change of policy is also needed in addition to joint reflection and mutual dialogue based on the principle of equality. The West

must at last take its own demands for freedom from violence, democracy, as well as the observance of human rights and international law seriously and make them the basis for its foreign policy. Conversely, the countries of the Near and Middle East have to lower their level of violence, extend rights of political freedom and improve the economic situation of their own populations. Such reforms are essential in order for the dialogue between Western and Muslim countries to become really fruitful, prejudices and clichés to be overcome and to reach a situation in which it is possible to work together on resolving common problems.

The ifa sees its main tasks in promoting the exchange of art as well as dialogue in civil societies, pursuing the motto of »linking cultures«. For this reason, I would like to add to Jochen Hippler's conclusion as follows: only when politics shows itself to be capable of reform can the dialogue between the two cultural areas achieve what sensible and rational people in Europe and the Near East have been wanting for a very long time, i.e. working on a common vision for the future – through cooperation, innovation, creativity and orientation towards peace with the fruitful exchange of ideas and the people behind them.

I would like to thank Jochen Hippler, Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid and Amr Hamzawy for their analyses.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Ulrike Knotz and Volkmar Wenzel, responsible for the European-Islamic Cultural Dialogue at the German Foreign Office, for their critical examination and, last but not least, Barbara Kuhnert and her team for the energy with which they have moved this project forward.

Jochen Hippler

War, Repression, Terrorism
Political Violence and Civilisation in Western and Muslim Societies

Introduction

»Violence«, according to Trutz von Trotha – and in contrast to Hannah Arendt,[1] who sees the two as antithetic – »is a form of *power*, the 'capacity' of man 'to assert himself against alien forces' (Popitz 1999). The basic forms of violence are killing, wounding, destruction, plundering and expulsion. All forms of violent acts of power are variants and hybrids of these five basic forms. Violence is thus an act of power, a deed, especially a deed against another, founded on the power to cause physical and material injury and man's openness to injury, determined by the unlimitedness of man's relationship with force or violence.«[2] The historical memory of people and societies, as far back as it can be traced, appears to have been constantly characterized by the most diverse experiences of violence.

After the end of the Cold War, however, many people dreamed of a decrease in political violence, of a »peace dividend«. There was widespread expectation that general disarmament would be possible following the end of the confrontation between the West and the Eastern bloc and that after generations of wars and violent conflicts there were now definite prospects of a more peaceful world order. After two devastating world wars in the first half of the 20th century and two generations of the Cold War, in which two superpowers threatened each other with atomic destruction while they waged »wars by proxy« in the Third Word, a less violent world gradually

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1 »In political terms, it is not sufficient to say that power and violence are not the same. Power and violence are antitheses: where the one dominates absolutely, the other is not present. Violence comes on the scene where power is in danger; if it is left to the laws inherent in itself, the end goal of violence, its goal and its end, is the disappearance of power.« Hannah Arendt, Macht und Gewalt; Munich 1970, p. 57

2 Trutz von Trotha, Geschichte, das »Kalaschsyndrom« und Konfliktregulierung zwischen Globalisierung und Lokalisierung, manuscript for the workshop on »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften«, Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, Malta 19 – 20 November 2004, p. 1

seemed to be possible. Although new wars and military interventions occurred almost immediately – the Gulf War in 1991 and the intervention in Somalia soon after –, many observers interpreted this as little more than the labour pains of a new, peaceful world order: the Gulf War was officially conducted to assert the rules of international law against an aggressor (Saddam Hussein's conquest of Kuwait) and the intervention in Somalia was undertaken in order to relieve a humanitarian disaster. Little remains of such illusions today. The wars and massacres in the Balkans, the genocide in Rwanda and numerous other brutally violent conflicts clearly showed that the period after the end of the Cold War would not be any more peaceful than the preceding decades. There was now often talk of a period of »new wars«, »ethnic conflicts« and »new threats« which could be even more dangerous than the relatively transparent East-West conflict. Efforts were very quickly made to try and interpret this new situation, albeit often falling back on old clichés and schematizations. So-called »ethnic conflicts« were uncovered almost everywhere, for example, though with the term frequently being stretched to the limits.

The new lack of transparency and the need for clear concepts of the enemy led in the 1990s to the relationship with Muslim and other societies being ideologized in a negative manner in Western countries. Probably the best known example of this is Samuel Huntington's notion of a »Clash of Civilizations«,[3] which declared Muslim societies to be a central threat to Western politics while also seeing, in more general terms, a new confrontation which he described as »The West against the Rest«. Although the »West« had just won the Cold War, some Western ideologists staked everything on defining themselves as being caught up in a cultural, spiritual, political and military state of siege. Some observers contended that »Islam was the new Communism« – absurd notions which, however, not infrequently fell on fertile ground and were perceived in the countries of the Near and Middle East with interest and concern. Intellectuals and politicians in those regions often concluded from this that »the West« had anti-Arab or anti-Muslim leanings in principle and they themselves took up increasingly

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3 Samuel Huntington, »The Clash of Civilizations?« In: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, no. 3, summer 1993

strong anti-Western positions. Such views likewise made use of the same relics of clichés and concepts of the enemy as their Western mirror images, and were just as effective politically.

When al-Qaeda then launched its unprecedented terror attack on New York City on 11 September 2001, the ideological agitators on both sides saw their views confirmed. Many in North America and Europe regarded the contended violent nature of »Islam« as having been substantiated: was not the mass murder at the World Trade Center committed in the name of Islam? On the other hand, many people of the Muslim culture – including a large number of non-religious members – felt that the response from the USA and its allies, i.e. the war against Afghanistan, which established a ring of military bases throughout the entire region (in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, the Persian-Arabian Gulf and later in Iraq), the war against Iraq and the sometimes brutal occupation policy, confirmed the suspicion that the »West« primarily wanted to control the oil and gas reserves of the Middle East and Central Asia and weaken »the Muslims«.

An intense confrontation came about in the one and a half decades following the end of the Cold War – not between »the« West and »Islam« but, rather, between strong political forces in North America and Europe on the one hand and evidently far weaker forces of the Near and Middle East, as well as the Far East on the other hand. This confrontation very much left its mark in the thoughts and feelings of the public at large in both regions, especially with regard to feelings of mutual threat. The associated debates focused then and still focus now on the issue of violence, especially political violence. In the West, Muslims came under the general suspicion of being prepared to use violence or actually engaging in it – the emotionalised images of September 11 were, in the feelings of many Americans and Europeans, truly linked to »Islam« – while the secular[4] and religious forces in the Near and Middle East tried to make the USA or »the West« responsible for the bombing of wedding parties, the killing of women and children in Afghanistan and Iraq, the abuse of prisoners, including torture, as well as

4 What is meant by »secular« and »secularity« in this text is not an anti-religious stance but, rather, the separation of state and religion or a position that would like to keep the two separate.

the overall alarming extent of civilian victims resulting from the wars and occupation. Since 11 September 2001, international politics has revolved around the question of dealing with political violence, and around terrorism and war, with this issue becoming polarized and emotionalized. Those now interested in a better understanding of and improvement in relations between Western and Muslim countries cannot evade or ignore this question. The issue therefore cannot be avoided in a dialogue; instead, it must be made the central theme in order to prevent such a dialogue appearing to be an ideological diversionary tactic from the outset.

When we speak of »Western« or »Muslim« violence, the problem that immediately arises is who exactly we mean by these terms. Both sides tend to impose sweeping terms on each other, even though they know very well that their own side is structured in a heterogeneous and very complex manner. What or who do we actually mean when we refer to »the Muslim world«? It can hardly be a *religious* definition because we would then be excluding religious minorities (e.g. Christians in Egypt, Palestine or Lebanon or Hindus in Malaysia) as well as secular, agnostic and non-religious currents. That would support the social pressure for homogenisation that exists in some Near East societies. Furthermore, when we speak of »the Muslim world« (or culture, civilization, etc.), we group very different societies together which have actually very little in common in objective or subjective terms. Although the Algerian, Yemeni, Pakistani and Indonesian societies may all be characterised by Islam in one way or another, they are, nevertheless, hardly comparable in many central aspects. Combining them all in one group under a single heading can easily be misleading by emphasising one feature that does not always have to be central to understanding them. Muslim Arab intellectuals often object with good cause that they are perceived by observers in the West *primarily* as Muslims and not foremost as Arabs, intellectuals or, for example, as Egyptians or Moroccans. Thus, if we use such sweeping terms as »the Muslim world«, we must bear in mind that, in doing so, we are not really doing justice to the diverse and contrasting social, ethnic, national, ideological, religious, political and other realities that prevail there. This is particularly true when we talk about the question of the potential for violence in Muslim societies. Statements on

how violent or peaceful Muslim – or Western – societies are in general therefore have to be made with the greatest caution if we do not wish to confine ourselves to clichés.

Of course, the same problem concerning sweeping generalisations also arises when using terms like »the West« or »Western societies«. Although the »West« sounds like a geographical description, what it really denotes is a type of political culture which, in the view of most, has developed into the modern »Western« society from Ancient Greece via the Christian Europe of the Middle Ages and Enlightenment. Although there is also a geographical dimension to this – a Western world understood in these terms originating from Europe and extending from there to other regions of the world (e.g. North America and Australia/New Zealand), it focuses on a particular set of philosophical, politico-cultural values and social mechanisms. However, this gives rise to two problem levels: on the one hand, »the West« remains just as diffuse, heterogeneous and contradictory as its counterpart, the »Muslim world«. Skinheads, punks and London bankers, the Vatican, Habermas, George Bush, Goethe and Britney Spears, liberation theologians in Latin America, white supremacists in the USA and European atheists – all these and numerous other forces and personalities are evidently part of the »West« and it is particularly difficult to define the content of the term in greater detail if we do not want to project our personal ideological predilections into the term.

This relates to the second problem: if, as can often be observed, the West wanted to define itself through its positive values and points of reference like the Enlightenment, human rights, democracy, secularity and tolerance, its dark side would remain hidden. It is not only hospitals, compassion and other welcome phenomena that have developed from Christianity; it also gave rise to the Inquisition, justification of racism, as well as wars. And it was not only good that emerged from the secular and non-religious currents of European intellectual history and politics: mass murder and destruction have also been easily justified without recourse to God if we consider the history of Stalinism or Fascism, to mention just two examples. As tempting as it might be for us to define »the West« as the embodiment of humanitarian values, it would also do violence to Western history. We cannot put

our own history together like a buffet, taking only those things we like; we have to recognise that it consists of democratic tolerance and the Holocaust at the same time.

»We can no longer afford to take that which was good in the past and simply call it our heritage,« writes Hannah Arendt, »to discard the bad and simply think of it as a dead load which by itself time will bury in oblivion.«[5]

France, Germany, the USA and other strongholds of Western civilization have not only performed acts of humanity over the past hundred years; they have also been responsible for unimaginable barbarity to differing degrees.

The British historian, Mark Mazower, expressed this correlation in the following terms: »It is as though one response to the bloody struggles of this (the 20th; JH) century has been to deny their internecine character: one side is made to stand for the true Europe – *l'Europe européenne* in the striking phrase of Gonzague de Reynold – while the others are written off as usurpers or barbarians. The intellectual tradition which identifies Europe with the cause of liberty and freedom goes back many centuries. But if we face the fact that liberal democracy failed between the wars, and if we admit that Communism and Fascism also formed part of the continent's political heritage, then it is hard to deny that what has shaped Europe in this century is not a gradual convergence of thought and feeling, but on the contrary a series of violent clashes between antagonistic New Orders. If we search for Europe not as a geographical expression, but as what Frederico Chabod called »an historic and moral individuality,« we find that for much of the century it did not exist.«[6]

And just as the Arab or Muslim world cannot simply act as though it had nothing whatsoever to do with mass murderers like Osama bin Laden or Saddam Hussein, nor can the West define its own history whilst leaving out its colonial crimes, its misanthropy, or its Stalins and Hitlers. Declaring our own political and cultural accomplishments to be the norm while putting

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5 Quotation from Mark Mazower: The Dark Continent – Europe's Twentieth Century, The Penguin Press 1999, p. xii

6 Quotation from Mark Mazower: The Dark Continent – Europe's Twentieth Century, The Penguin Press 1999, p. 396

down our crimes as exceptions – and applying precisely the inverse procedure for Muslim societies – would not only constitute a conceited form of self-deception; it would also make any dialogue with others impossible. Many Muslim intellectuals apply a similar logic, according to which »Islam« is inherently peaceable and charitable and Osama and Saddam are therefore not Muslims and are instead often even perceived as somehow being agents of the West. Although such self-deception may sometimes warm the heart, it does not get either side any further. Whatever the Western and Muslim worlds may be, in order to get on with each other and among themselves each first has to accept that it is inconsistent within itself, possessing both a bright and a dark side. This is especially true with regard to the question of violence.

The bloody 20th century

The history of man has seldom been without violence. Despite all the economic progress, all the scientific and technological developments and all its cultural progress, however, the 20th century has proven to be by far the bloodiest in the history of mankind. Even though there are no precise numbers of victims in some areas, with only estimates possible, these alone are shocking enough.

In his 1995 book entitled »Death by Government«, Rummel lists the countries and regimes responsible for the biggest mass murders (including genocide) in the 20th century:[7]

Country, regime (period)	Number of dead in millions
USSR (1917 – 1987)	61.911
People's Republic of China (1949 – 1987)	35.236
Nazi Germany (1933 – 1945)	20.946
Nationalist China/Kuomintang (1928 – 1949)	10.075
Japan (1936 – 1945)	5.964
China (Maoist guerrillas) (1923 – 1949)	3.466
Cambodia (1975 – 1979)	2.035
Turkey, Ottoman Empire (1909 – 1918)	1.883
Vietnam (1945 – 1987)	1.678
Poland (1945 – 1948)	1.585
Pakistan (1958 – 1987)	1.503
Yugoslavia (1944 – 1987)	1.072
China (»warlords«) (1917 – 1949)	0.910
Turkey (Atatürk) (1913 – 1923)	0.878
Great Britain (1900 – 1987)	0.816
Portugal (dictatorship) (1926 – 1987)	0.741
Indonesia (1965 – 1987)	0.729
North Korea (1948 – 1987), data uncertain	1.663
Mexico (1900 – 1920), data uncertain	1.417
Russia (1900 – 1917), data uncertain	1.066

This does *not* include the soldiers lost during the numerous wars throughout the century. These figures, even though they are only well-founded (usually conservative) estimations in most cases, are alarming. According to the table above, almost 170 million people have been the victims of mass murder as a form of political violence in the 20th century, with only the most significant instances taken into account, i.e. cases of genocide

7 Rudolph J. Rummel, Death by Government, Münster 2003, p. 4

and mass murder with more than 700,000 dead. It should also be pointed out that Rummel only considers data up to 1987, which means that mass murder and genocide committed since (e.g. the 800,000 victims in Rwanda in 1994) are not included.

Rummel comments as follows: »A number of less extensive cases of mass murder with six-digit numbers of victims include the Communist states of Afghanistan, Angola, Albania, Romania and Ethiopia, as well as the authoritarian-ruled countries of Hungary, Burundi, Croatia (1941 – 44), Czechoslovakia (1945 – 46), Indonesia, Iraq, Russia and Uganda. In view of their indiscriminate bombing attacks on German and Japanese civilians, the United States should also be assigned a place in this list. These and other cases of mass murder with six-digit numbers of dead add almost 15 million victims to the democide of our century (20th century; JH).«[8]

It should be stressed once again that soldiers falling in war are only included in these figures if they were killed while held as prisoners of war or intentionally murdered outside of battle. Furthermore, Rummel points out that his estimates by no means represent the upper limit of the numbers of victims. In his book entitled »Statistics of Democide – Genocide and Mass Murder since 1900«, he speaks of up to 300 million,[9] and in the »democide« already referred to of up to 360 million dead[10] in the 20th century. Based on the estimates, therefore, this would result in an average of almost 2 to 4 million dead per year over the period examined. The fact that such acts of state terror have not reached such proportions over the last one and a half decades is hardly cause for comfort – the 20th century was and remains an atrociously bloody one, a period of barbarism despite all its economic and technical progress.

8 Ibid, p. 6

9 Rudolph J. Rummel, Statistics of Democide – Genocide and Mass Murder since 1900, Münster 1998, p: VII

10 Rudolph J. Rummel, Demozid – Der befohlene Tod, Münster 2003, p.8

If Rummel's data on the biggest cases of genocide and mass murder in the 20th century (up to 1987) are classified according to region, the following picture emerges:

Region	Number of victims in millions
Europe (including the national territory of the Soviet Union)	88.137
Asia (not including countries with a Muslim majority of the population)	61.027
Countries with a Muslim majority of the population	4.993
America	1.417
Africa	–
Total	155.574

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the 20th century was an era of war in addition to being an age of massacre and genocide. Tilly summed up this aspect very aptly as follows:

»In absolute terms – and probably per capita as well – the twentieth century visited more collective violence on the world than any century of the previous ten thousand years. Although historians rightly describe China's Warring States period, Sargon of Akkad's conquests, Mongol expansion, and Europe's Thirty Years War as times of terrible destruction, earlier wars deployed nothing like the death-dealing armaments, much less the state-backed extermination of civilians, that twentieth-century conflicts brought with them. Between 1900 and 1999, the world produced about 250 new wars, international or civil, in which battle deaths averaged at least a thousand per year. That means two or three big, new wars per year. Those wars caused about a million deaths per year.«[11]

11 Charles Tilly, The Politics of Collective Violence; Cambridge 2003, p. 55

12 Lawrence H. Keeley, War before Civilization; Oxford/New York 1996, p. 175

Violence and history: early examples

Although the course of the 20th century may have been a particularly bloody one, the previous thousand or five thousand years were likewise frequently characterized by periods of excessive violence. This also applies to traditional societies conducting bloody »wars« long before the founding of states.

In his standard work entitled »War before Civilization«, Keeley makes emphatic reference to the frequency and devastating nature of war and violence also occurring in stateless societies: »The facts recovered by ethnographers and archaeologists indicate unequivocally that primitive and prehistoric warfare was just as terrible and effective as the historic and civilized version. War is hell whether it is fought with wooden spears or napalm. Peaceful pre-state societies were very rare; warfare between them was very frequent and most adult men in such groups saw combat repeatedly in a lifetime. … [T]he very deadly raids, ambushes, and surprise attacks on settlements were the forms of combat preferred by tribal warriors to the less deadly but much more complicated battles so important in civilized warfare. In fact, primitive warfare was much more deadly than that conducted between civilized states because of the greater frequency of combat and the more merciless way it was conducted. Primitive war was very efficient at inflicting damage through the destruction of property, especially means of production and shelter, and inducing terror by frequently visiting sudden death and mutilating its victims. The plunder of valuable commodities was common, and primitive warfare was very effective in acquiring additional territory even if this was a seldom professed goal.«[12]

He continues: »Primitive war was not a puerile or deficient form of warfare but war reduced to its essentials: killing enemies with a minimum of risk, denying them the means of life via vandalism and theft (even the means of reproduction by the kidnapping of their women and children), terrorizing them into either yielding territory or desisting from their encroachments and aggressions.«[13]

13 Ibid, p. 175

It can certainly be argued on good grounds whether modern warfare with its particularly effective means of destruction is less brutal and violent and, therefore, »more civilized« than its historical precursors were. This does not mean, however, that we can play down the cruelty and destructive nature of pre-historic wars. Although the numbers of victims may have only been a fraction of those in the 20th century, the populations were also extremely small compared with today's figures.

In the wars, massacres and other acts of political violence over the past one to two thousand years, there is no evidence of any differences in principle between the types of violence in different countries, regions or cultural groups. Waves of violence have never proceeded in a synchronised manner in all regions throughout history, occurring instead at different times and in different forms. Europe, Asia, America, Africa, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and other societies all have huge experience of political violence in the form of wars, mass murder, expulsion and repression.

In this context, Juergensmeyer underlines the fact that rulers of the most varied religions had more than extensive and brutal warfare in common; indeed, that was precisely what carved itself deeply into the shaping of the legends and religions of the different cultures and peoples.

»In earlier times warfare was at least as common to religion as sacrificial rites; perhaps more so. Whole books of the Hebrew Bible are devoted to the military exploits of great kings, their contests relayed in gory detail. The New Testament does not take up the battle cry immediately, but the later history of the church does, supplying a Christian record of bloody crusades and religious wars. In India, warfare is part of the grandeur of mythology. The great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, are seemingly unending tales of conflict and military intrigue. These epics, more than Vedic rituals, define subsequent Hindu culture. The indigenous name for India, Bharata, comes from the epics, as does the name, Sri Lanka, given to Ceylon by its people after independence. The epics continue to live in contemporary southern Asia. … Even cultures that do not have a strong emphasis on sacrifice have persistent images of religious war. In Sri Lanka, for example, Sinhalese legendary history as recorded in the Pali Chronicles, the Dipavamsa and the Mahavamsa which have assumed almost canonical status in Sri Lankan

society – amounts to a triumphal record of great battles waged by legendary Buddhist kings.«[14]

There was conquest, tyranny and war in just about all societies and state systems, with the extent and form varying much more according to political contexts rather than cultural or religious aspects. Some Christian and Buddhist kings, Muslim sultans and Hindu maharajahs distinguished themselves by pursuing intelligent, enlightened and considered policies, though these and other rulers of the same cultural groups were equally responsible for dreadful, large-scale acts of violence.

Changing political conditions and balances of power opened up opportunities for pillaging and plundering and the establishment of principalities or large empires, which were sometimes exploited or sometimes lost, but only rarely proceeded without the occurrence of violence. And the changes in the balance of power would lead to a new round of similar processes, i.e. to renewed processes of decline and conquest. The Middle Ages were certainly not a period in which violence and war were restrained, quite the contrary. Violence was practised at a generally high level both within and between societies, reaching particularly dramatic heights on repeated occasions. The murder of relatives in ruling families in order to safeguard power was as normal in the Christian West as in the Muslim Near or Middle East and Asia. The massacre of the Saxons by the Frankish Charlemagne, which was also intended to Christianise them, and the crusades, which mostly began with bloody pogroms against the Jews or Christian minorities, did not remain individual isolated cases.

»As far as can be estimated on the basis of the data available and always in the knowledge that these are, at best, approximate values, the Mongol khans together with their heirs to the throne and pretenders slaughtered around 30 million Persians, Arabs, Hindus, Russians, Chinese, Europeans, as well as men, women and children of other affiliations.«[15]

14 Mark Juergensmeyer, Sacrifice and Cosmic War; in: Mark Juergensmeyer (Ed.), Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World, London 1992, p. 107

15 Rudolph J. Rummel, Demozid – Der befohlene Tod; Münster 2003, p. 46

Even though this number may seem hardly credible in view of the very low population figures of the time, there is no doubt that the Mongol conquests and plundering of China and India that reached as far as Europe were extremely bloody.

»Nor may the truth about the crusades of the Middle Ages be withheld. During the … plundering of Jerusalem in 1099, in addition to the 40,000 to over 70,000 Muslims they are presumed to have butchered, the crusaders also drove surviving Jews into a synagogue and burnt them alive. In view of the Mongol and Chinese hecatombs, it is interesting to note that this massacre of unarmed Muslims and Jews «has long since been regarded as one of the greatest crimes in history.» In 1209, the Albigensian crusaders murdered between 15,000 and 60,000 inhabitants of the city of Béziers. The city was then plundered and razed to the ground. Then, in 1236, when the Jews of Anjou and Poitou resisted compulsory baptism, the crusaders are said to have trampled 3,000 of them to death with their horses.«[16]

Similar incidents also took place in Muslim societies. The expansion of the Islamic Empire from the Arabian Peninsula to Spain and India from the 7th century on was anything but peaceful; in fact, it was a highly successful campaign of conquest. The establishment and enlargement of the Ottoman Empire to North Africa, the Persian Gulf and up to the gates of Vienna were also violent campaigns of conquest, as were the raids and conquests in India carried out by Muslim rulers from Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia, which culminated in the conquest of the subcontinent by the later Mogul emperor, Babar.

New structures of violence: colonialism

The early modern era did nothing to change the omnipresence and extent of violence, though it did alter its structure. The level of violence remained high in Europe, as demonstrated by the burning of »witches«, presumed to have killed tens of thousands (climaxing between 1560 and 1680), the »holy« inquisition and the devastating 30-year war between 1618 and 1648.

16 Ibid. p. 50

Nor did the Enlightenment put an end to the violence in Europe in the 18th century. The early Modern Age did, however, see a fundamental change in Europe's relationship with its surrounding areas. While the balances of power between the most important global regions fluctuated up to the 15th and 16th centuries, with the bases for their economic and technological power differing only slightly, the Christian Europe of that time – or a number of countries on that continent – attained a long-lasting edge in terms of power, resulting from technological developments (e.g. shipbuilding) and, in particular, weapon-technology developments. This was the prerequisite for four and a half centuries of European colonialism, which repeatedly brought new waves of violence all over the world. Although it was not discernible that the Europeans or Christians, for example, might have been more violent per se than their victims, the new cutting edge of power that they were expanding and consolidating made their violence more significant, more far-reaching and more destructive. The violence of a continent and cultural area colonising and dominating the world to an ever increasing extent inevitably had to have a bigger impact and be more extensive than that of other, weaker and increasingly dependent societies.

»Over the last five centuries, acts of genocide have mainly been produced by colonialism. It changed the situation concerning property and ownership because the colonists – as conquerors or immigrants – regarded the inhabitants of the desired country as savages incapable of adapting to civilisation. This entitled them to take away the land from the indigenous people without offending their own sense of morals, as well as exploit or even kill them at will as subhuman creatures. Mass murder was mostly considered pointless and senseless. If the indigenous labour force was killed, it ruined the colonial economy. Seen in this way, exploitation prevented genocide, with this being the case by and large in Africa and Asia.

In contrast, the discovery of America and Oceania led to the original inhabitants being wiped out. Although the basic attitude of the colonisers was the same on all continents, the geographical conditions were different. The more insular a territory, the more radical the destruction was. The Aborigines of Australia and Tasmania fell victim to this eradication. In Central and South America, the Conquistadores overturned the local political

systems by first killing the rulers and then liquidating the population in genocidal proportions. This practice, motivated solely by greed for profit, extended over a period of three centuries.«[17]

In fact, the practices of the colonisers differed according to whether they only exploited a region economically or wanted to settle there themselves. Although both frequently took place with severe brutality, they did differ in their objectives and means. However, there were also shocking numbers of dead in those regions – such as the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Central and South America – where it was primarily a case of exploiting the indigenous labour force (e.g. in mining or on plantations).

»Based on the bare figures, these would appear to confirm the theory of Conquista as the «biggest case of genocide in history». According to present research findings, the number of indigenous inhabitants of America fell from around 70 million to approximately 10 million between 1500 and 1600, while in Mexico, Central America and Peru the numbers decreased by over 90 per cent. The inhabitants of the Caribbean islands had died out after just a few years. The figures mentioned do fluctuate considerably, however. Nonetheless, the lowest estimate – the first population statistics date back to the year 1574 – calculates the decline of the Indian population as amounting to at least two thirds compared with the level before contact. ... The, at least, initial enslavement of the Indians, the large-scale compulsory resettlements, as well as the ruthless treatment in the Encomienda and Mita systems[18] unquestionably overtaxed the physical powers of many Indians. Added to this were the physical beatings, also ending in death, and collective punishment campaigns, which claimed numerous victims. The brutality of the Conquista campaigns, in particular, is hardly imaginable.«[19]

17 Yves Ternon, Der verbrecherische Staat – Völkermord im 20. Jahrhundert; Hamburg 1996, p. 230

18 The Mita system was introduced in Central and South America under different names by Spanish colonizers at the end of the 15th century, signifying in actual terms a type of forced labour for sections of the indigenous population. This was then followed by the Encomienda system at the beginning of the 16th century which, although it was originally supposed to alleviate the abuses of forced labour, quickly developed into a system of de facto slavery.

Apart from the acts of violence of the conquerors, the numbers of victims among the Indios of Central and South America was also largely due to the introduction of what were actually harmless, new diseases from Europe but against which the subjugated population had no bodily defences, thus rendering them victims of severe epidemics. The picture was different in the settlement colonies of North America and Australia, however, where the indigenous population was systematically driven out or wiped out.

»Signs of the change in policy from the initially proclaimed peaceable 'domestication' of the Indians through Europeanisation and Christianisation to that of pushing them out and destroying them had already emerged after the Jamestown massacre in 1622. The 'extirpation' of the Indians had become part of the agenda for the New England settlers following this campaign of vengeance by the Indians for the injustice suffered by them. The Puritans, who primarily wanted to realise their own religious-political ideals of a »New Jerusalem« in the New World, underpinned their claim to land in expressly ideological terms. Perceiving themselves as the »New Israel«, they saw the »New Canaan« given to them by God in the land of the American Indians following the exodus from »Egypt«. Taking it away from the »Canaanites« and »Edomites«, the Indians, and eradicating them with fire and the sword corresponded, according to their understanding of the Old Testament of the Bible, to the »evident« will of God and His plan of salvation. The Puritan ideology – prevalent in New England – of the Indians as »children of Satan« whose land could be rightfully taken from them and who could be wiped out with a clear conscience consequently crystallised under the actual conditions of settlement colonialism.«[20]

What was remarkable about the settlers' policy vis-à-vis the indigenous population was the combining of very tangible interests (seizure of land, settlement) with their ideological justification, which assumed a Christian form in keeping with the times and based on the devoutness of the settlers (who were frequently religious refugees).

19 Horst Gründer, Genozid oder Zwangsmodernisierung? – Der moderne Kolonialismus in universalge-

schichtlicher Perspektive; in: Mihran Dabag / Kristin Platt (eds.), Genozid und Moderne, Vol. 1: Strukturen kollek-

tiver Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert, Opladen 1998, p. 136

20 Ibid. p. 139f

»It was in their dichotomic-Manichaean model of God and the Devil, of the Damned and the Chosen, that the Puritans therefore found the framework for interpreting the wars with the Indians, in which they were able to eliminate the hindrances to their colonialism through settlement. In the very first of these wars, the Pequot War in 1637, they destroyed an entire settlement near Fort Mystik in Connecticut with the help of Indian allies (Narragansetts and Mohegans). In less than one hour, 500 – 600 men, woman and children were butchered in a massacre – as opposed to two deaths on the English side. The survivors of the Pequot War were enslaved, i.e. the women and children were forced to become slaves of Puritans and Indians while the men were sold off to the Caribbean. One year later, the Pequot nation was declared as having been wiped out.«[21]

»The Puritans also regarded alcohol as a tried-and-tested means given by God to obliterate the Indians. In 1749, Benjamin Franklin ruminated during a rum-drinking celebration after the conclusion of trade discussions with Indians in Pennsylvania as follows: 'And, indeed, if it is the intention of Providence to wipe out these savages in order to make place for the (real) cultivators of the Earth, it would appear not to be ruled out that rum is the chosen means. It has already destroyed all the tribes previously living on the (east) coast.' Charles Dilke would later cite in his Greater Britain (1867) the statement uttered by an American: 'We can destroy them through war or thin them out more and more with whiskey, though the thinning-out process is disgustingly slow'. Virtually all the American colonies offered scalp bounties for dead Indians, including women and children, at times.«[22]

Similar tendencies towards wiping out the indigenous population were also evident in other settlement colonies, such as Australia, Tasmania and Siberia.

Now it could be supposed that the atrocities of colonialism, especially in its early, disordered and rapacious phases, occurred when private trading companies, troops of settlers and adventurers were still causing turmoil without any or with just the bare minimum of state control. In contrast, the

21 Ibid. p. 140

22 Ibid. p. 142f

modern phases of colonialism, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, were organised and controlled by European governments. Furthermore, it could be assumed that the Enlightenment taking place in Europe in the meantime would have had a civilising and subduing influence on the use of violence by European nation-states in the colonies, with the expectation of brutality and violent behaviour being reduced. There was, however, no question of any decline in the level of violence perpetrated by the colonial rulers in the Third World after the Enlightenment or on account of greater state control in the mother countries and the colonies. The leading edge in weapon technology enjoyed by Europe and North America had grown to a huge extent and this was quickly reflected in the numbers of victims. In the Matabele War, 50 British soldiers massacred 3,000 Africans in just a few hours using four modern machine guns. In the Sudan, the British lost 40 soldiers, while 11,000 Mahdists lost their lives. In the Congo atrocities at the turn of the century, hundreds of thousands were killed by the Belgian colonialists, with some estimates putting the number of deaths at as many as between 5 and 8 million; mutilation and massacre were an everyday occurrence.[23] The first case of genocide in the 20th century was committed by German colonial rulers against the Hereros in south-west Africa (now Namibia), who were massacred or driven into the desert to die without food or water. It is estimated that one third of the Libyan population fell victim to Italian colonialism, and when the Italians marched into Ethiopia in 1935, systematic air attacks were also launched against civilians, including the use of poison gas. Things did not necessarily get better after World War II: »Countries which had themselves been subjected to Nazi tyranny, acted with atrocious brutality – perhaps to an even greater extent than before the war. After the Setif rebellion in May 1945, for example, French forces killed around 40,000 Algerians and were responsible for the deaths of over 100,000 people in Madagascar.«[24]

This list could be lengthened at will. Colonialism was more than brutal, repeatedly manifesting itself in massacres, genocide and other acts of hard-

23 Ibid. p. 147, 145

24 Mark Mazower, Der dunkle Kontinent – Europa im 20. Jahrhundert; Frankfurt 2002, p. 303

ly imaginable bestiality. All the colonial powers were guilty of such atrocity. Even though the havoc caused by authoritarian, dictatorial and fascist regimes was particularly bad, countries constituted according to democratic principles internally also committed similar crimes. Although democracies may not wage war against each other, they are evidently not peaceful in principle.

The fact that the societies of the later Third World – including the Near and Middle East – systematically became victims of the violence committed by the colonial powers does not mean, however, that political and military violence would not otherwise have occurred in those countries and regions. On the contrary, things were also anything but peaceful in the Third World, with the violence also emanating locally. The internal African and Arab slave trades were no less brutal than their European counterpart and the treatment by Muslim or Hindu rulers of their own citizens was no less violent. The campaigns of raids and conquest conducted by Afghan, Turkish, Persian or Central Asian rulers in India, for example, were often accompanied by dreadful destruction and large numbers of victims, while the Indian sultans or Mogul emperors frequently ruled by means of brutal violence, with their practices in every way matching those of the European colonizers and other conquerors. Massacres and mass murder of internal opponents and external enemies were the order of the day. The opportunity to commit such atrocities only tended to diminish though Western dominance restricting the scope of action of Muslim rulers.

State-building and juridification: taming violence within society

Violence has always had very different faces. Political violence by ruling forces or in the form of resistance against rule, violence as a part of war or civil wars, violence in the private domain, e.g. in the family, criminal violence to achieve individual advantage, and spontaneous violence of a more emotional origin are just a number of rough categories. However, we do not want to attempt any systematic classification at this juncture, but rather to simply differentiate between violence within and outside society. If we look at the former, it then becomes clear that it has undergone drastic changes over the past few centuries.

The research into violence in historical terms concurs that the level of violence in Western European countries like England, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Spain experienced a dramatic decline in the early Modern Age (ca. 1500 – 1800). Julius R. Ruff furnished impressive evidence of this trend, which continued up to around the 1960s, when a reversal of the trend ensued for around a further three decades – though without ever reaching the drastically high levels of the early Modern Age again. Although domestic violence, crimes of murder and homicide, violence by undisciplined soldiers or deserters outside of hostilities, ritual group violence, the violence of public protests or organised crime – as well as the initially extremely brutal and violent form of state jurisdiction – did not diminish to the same extent or at the same time everywhere, overall violence did decrease dramatically. At the beginning of the early Modern Age, killings (not including the murder of newborn children) appeared to have been in the range of 10-60 cases per 100,000 inhabitants per year, figures which fell to just 1.0 – 1.5 in north-west Europe by 1929 – 31[25] and which declined further after World War II. In a number of Mediterranean countries (e.g. Italy), this reduction did not occur until very late (the rates in Southern Italy or Palermo, for example, only falling from 40 to 60 killings per 100,000 inhabitants in the 1880s to around 1 after World War II, a figure long since normal for north-west Europe). This trend was not as far-reaching everywhere, with the number of killings in the USA still at 10.1 in 1980 and 6.3 in 1998 respectively.[26] All in all, however, the Western world has experienced a quite remarkable reduction in social violence since around 1500. There are, as yet, no comparable figures for the societies of the Near and Middle East, which makes a comparison of these countries with Europe impossible over this period.

The causes of the dramatic reduction in violence between 1500 and 1800 – and beyond – reflect important aspects of the modernisation process taking place during those centuries, which may also explain why they were first observed in countries such as England, the Netherlands and France, and then finally in Italy. The state machineries of north-west Europe initially

25 Julius R. Ruff, Violence in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800, Cambridge 2001, p. 120f, 250

26 Ibid, p. 120

gained greater importance among their societies, with soldiers becoming more disciplined, and their initially rudimentary police systems growing more extensive and reliable. Private justice was thus made less necessary and eventually itself became illegal. The states – where they were in a position to do so – gradually asserted their own monopoly of violence and developed mechanisms to protect the social order. Social mentalities developed parallel to this which were increasingly less prepared to accept violent and brutal behaviour as something to be taken for granted, rejecting »unnecessary«, »unjust« or »excessive« violence to an ever greater extent. In other words, the diminishing of violence in European societies can be understood, above all, as a process of expanding statehood, as a process in which functions of state order and justice decreased the level of violence in society through stronger control and juridification of social relations and reduced the possibility of unpunished acts of violence by private persons, while at the same time diminishing its necessity or meaningfulness. In a further stage, this led to a different attitude to violence on the part of large sections of the population, with its being perceived increasingly less as a self-evident part of life, less as a normal option for solving social or political problems and increasingly becoming taboo. Although the »monopoly of violence« gradually asserted by the state was never absolute because there were still groups and individuals practising violence in a deviant manner at least in situative terms, it did lead to violence being extensively dispelled from social relations, at least in comparison with earlier times. Tilly confirms this finding and cites four causes:

»From the eighteenth century onward, however, widespread domestic pacification occurred. Both rising governmental capacity and democratisation deeply altered the conditions for domestic collective violence. Four currents of change flowed together.

1. Built up by preparations for war, states began disarming their civilian populations, imposing tighter control over routine social life, and installing specialised police to contain both criminal activity and small-scale interpersonal violence (...).

2. Contentious repertoires shifted away from direct retaliation and toward non-violent displays of political potential (...).

3. Ordinary people began turning to courts and police for protection from small-scale assaults on persons and privacy (...).

4. Instead of confronting each other in quasi-military fashion, local authorities (notably including police) began bargaining out agreements on non-violent political uses of public space (...).«[27]

However, the empirically proven tendency towards a dramatic reduction of violence in Western Europe by the sixties (and then again from the nineties on) illustrates only one, albeit important part of the reality. Ruff, for example, points out the following – though, interestingly enough, only in the final section of his book: »These developments, whose origins we found in the early modern period, have not completely extirpated violence from western Europe. Indeed, the triumphant modern state of the previous century created new forms of violence of hitherto unimagined intensity to ravage the continent. Two World Wars, the Holocaust and other acts of genocide, and the lingering threat of weapons of mass destruction are proof of this. But in terms of quotidian threats of violence, modern western Europeans, as we suggested in the introduction, are far from living in the worst of times.«[28]

These observations are undoubtedly not only appropriate and accurate; they are also extremely illustrative through their selection and significance. The advancement of the state with its extensively asserted monopoly of violence indeed made it possible to guarantee social peace as a rule – where it did not itself become an agent of violence, e.g. in the context of the Holocaust or Stalinist mass extermination (or the ethnic cleansing and mass murder in the Balkans), putting the previous, private potential for violence well and truly in the shade. Another significant feature of Ruff's formulation is his focus on the living standards of Western Europeans, the reason being that the theory could impose itself that the reduction of social violence in Europe was associated with the export of that violence to the outside world – e.g. to the European colonies which were becoming increasingly extensive in Africa, Asia and Latin America during the period examined. Tilly also sug-

27 Charles Tilly, The Politics of Collective Violence; Cambridge p. 60

28 Julius Ruff, loc. cit., p. 253

gests such a question when he writes: »Except occasionally to wring their hands at other people's barbarity, residents of rich Western countries have not much noticed. Outside of two brutal world wars, they have managed mostly to export or individualise their violence«[29] (p. 59).

The brutal policy of violence pursued by Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, British, German and French colonisers proceeded, after all, at a time parallel to the reduction of violence and social civilisation in Europe. The mass murder by the British in conquered Bengal inflicted through tax policies and hunger, the slave trade from Africa to America, the partial wiping out of the indigenous peoples in North and South America and the numerous other excesses of violence perpetrated in the name of European colonialism – were these all linked to the indisputable process of civilization in Europe in the early and late Modern Age? Was this a case of actually exporting violence – as had been the case, at least to a certain extent, in the first Christian »crusades« when »superfluous« and dangerous sections of the population were sent to the Near East – with a decline in the level of violence in France and Germany? Or is this merely a coincidence?

Conclusive answers can hardly be given to these questions in empirical terms and the plausibility of their presumption cannot replace proof of a causal link. It does, however, appear reasonable to see the decrease in violence witnessed in European societies in overall terms as a combination of the strengthening of the role of the state within and the export of potential for violence without. Although counter-examples are certainly conceivable, e.g. in the case of Scandinavia, it is just as impossible to refute this thesis as it is to subsequently verify it.

So if we take the two factors of state penetration of societies in conjunction with the juridification of social relations on the one hand and the export of violence (through wars against neighbours or to the colonies) on the other hand, the question arises of whether corresponding processes brought about a decrease in social violence in the Third World in general or in the Muslim regions of the Near and Middle East in particular. Posing the question in this manner already implies the answer: exporting violence was

29 Charles Tilly, The Politics of Collective Violence; Cambridge 2003, p. 59

not alien to those societies; quite the contrary, rather, since wars, pillaging and the violent conquest of neighbouring territories had been the order of the day for quite some time. In the course of colonisation and European dominance, this possibility was increasingly limited, however, if we disregard exploitation of the Third World's potential for violence as auxiliary troops of the colonial powers. At the same time, the development of functioning state systems performing their task within the country of achieving social pacification through juridification or bringing about the establishment of an effective judicial and police system and asserting a state monopoly of violence was lagging an entire historical phase behind. Then, when this did take place, it was often under conditions distorted by colonialism, with the modern state apparatus only asserting itself during the colonial period under colonial conditions or those of external dominance in a whole range of countries. The state thus remained extrinsic and superordinate to society, and was evidently not an instrument for the establishment of social peace but, rather, one of external control, of subjugation. As such, the state apparatus with its direct or indirect colonial influence did not fulfil its function as observed in Europe, or did not do so to an adequate extent, and was, indeed, often itself a decisive factor of internal violence, with the result that it could hardly be accepted as legitimate by the population. This observation does not apply equally to all countries and points in time. Although, for example, the external factors in the Ottoman Empire of the 19th century (which was itself seen more and more in the region as a colonial empire) differed from those in Libya under Italian colonial rule, they became increasingly and distinctly similar almost everywhere in the 19th and up to the middle of the 20th century in particular in the course of the assertion of European dominance and colonisation. In most cases, state machineries in the Near and Middle East thus remained inwardly more repressive and less socially integrative than in Western or Northern Europe, for instance, often becoming the prey of certain elitist groups which maintained their hold on power with the help of European forces turned against broad sections of their own populations and achieving only a low level of efficiency, rule of law and participation. Resistance against the specific state apparatus or against statehood thus attained greater legitimacy.

Violence and the Modern Age

It has been pointed out above that the state apparatus in Europe was not only the most important instrument for social pacification; it also had the potential to be the most horrendous player in terms of violence. The countries of Europe did not exclusively bring about a dramatic reduction in social violence inwardly; indeed, they also created the Stalinist mass murders, the Holocaust, colonialism and two world wars.

The question therefore arises of how a cultural group or area that, on the one hand, produced humanist philosophy, the Enlightenment, social tolerance, a highly developed culture and science, as well as concepts of human rights was at the same time able to wage devastating world wars, as well as carry out ethnic cleansing, pursue racist policies of extermination like the Holocaust, and practice such a brutal and bloody colonial policy. In other words, how can we explain the fact that the modernisation process – which, after all, brought about something like a »Modern Age« – gave rise to elements of the civilisation of social interaction and greater peace while at the same time creating violent excesses of almost unimaginable cruelty? If we consider the particularly bloody 20th century, is there perhaps even a correlation between the Modern Age and growing violence? Wilhelm Heitmeyer phrases this question very appropriately as follows:

»Numerous analysts have viewed the era of the Modern Age as a leap forward in civilization and merely interpreted violence as a pre-modern phenomenon (e.g. from previous centuries); to them, the violence of the 20th century appears to be a temporary phenomenon. This is not really in line with the contrasting assessment of the 20th century as a century of violence (Hobsbawm). What is controversial is the relationship that exists between modernity and barbarity.«[30]

30 Wilhelm Heitmeyer, »Politische Gewalt in westlichen und muslimischen Gesellschaften: Fragen und Diskussionsanregungen«, manuscript for the workshop on »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften«, Institute for Cultural Foreign Relations, Malta 19 – 20 November 2004, p. 3

31 Ibid. p. 4

According to Heitmeyer, the scientific and media debate displays four different starting points for dealing with this problem:

»The first position interprets violence as a temporary excess which is, as it were, »offset« against the gains of civilisation (e.g. security), with the result that development leads to a positive balance.

A second position supports the diametrically opposed position. The focus of this observation is not the imperfection of the Modern Age but, rather, its »instrumental success«, making the civilising Modern Age itself appear in essence as barbarity.

A third position emphasises the ambivalence of the progress of modernisation and the continuation of violence, i.e. assuming an increase in the potential for humanity as well as the potential for destruction.

The fourth position denies that there is any correlation between civilisation and the eruptions of violence in the 20th century because such correlations and their underlying premises are themselves denied. In anthropological terms, violence appears more to be the unchanging fate of the human species (Sofsky).[31]«

It is, of course, difficult in methodological terms, if not quite impossible, to decide these issues purely according to historical experience, even if certain assumptions do appear more or less plausible on the basis of such experience. Observing the process of modernisation as leading to a reduction of violence in principle would only be reasonable from a historical viewpoint if the export of violence from the »modern« or modernising countries were disregarded and the primary wish was to invoke the traditions of intellectual history. However, major difficulties would even be encountered in this case and we will need to go into these somewhat later. An unbroken understanding of modernisation as a process of civilisation is faced with too many historical-empirical and intellectual history counter-examples for it to be credible – which, although it does not refute such an assumption in principle, does nevertheless make it appear unlikely. After all, it is conceivable in principle, despite all the history, that all the experiences of violence under colonialism, Fascism, Stalinism, and in less dramatic contexts are »exceptions« to the rule of a Modern Age promoting peace, even if this does stretch the imagination to its limits.

The converse assumption that the Modern Age in itself is the problem, that it is, in the final analysis, a form of violent barbarism, is also based on weak foundations, with too many examples of a systematic reduction of violence in the course of the historical modernisation process contradicting this just as much as the experience of excessive violence in pre-modern societies, which was often hardly less murderous than in the past few centuries; it was, rather, »simply« more laborious since many of the means of human extermination did not yet exist.

Finally, although the assumption that violence is anthropologically predetermined and inevitable may appear plausible at a certain level of abstraction, it leaves the exceedingly fluctuating nature of the degrees of violence within and between societies unexplained; it depoliticises violence, removes it from its context and offers hardly any analytical means for understanding it.

Let us attempt to cast a second glance at the relationship between violence and the Modern Age. Many people believe they can explain violence by referring to corresponding emotions or attitudes of mind which appear to the »modern« citizen to be »pre-modern«, like remnants of a bygone age.[32] Political violence is accordingly associated with fanaticism, blind rage, tribal thinking, nationalism, ethnicity, racism, religious mania, lack of self-control and domination by one's physical urges – while the Modern Age is supposedly characterised by rationality, cool deliberation, reason, cost-benefit considerations and pluralistic tolerance. This leads to many people actually viewing violence, slaughter and massacre as an anachronism from an earlier time which, although it has not yet been surmounted, is becoming increasingly inappropriate through the consistent further development of the Modern Age and can thus be repressed. Interim outbreaks of extensive violence are accordingly interpreted as exceptions, as relapses to an earlier level of civilisation which should become ever rarer during the further course of history.

32 Hans Joas, Kriege und Werte – Studien zur Gewaltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts; Weilerswist 2000, p. 51

Regarding the relationship between politics and religious violence, von Bredov commented on this view as follows: »It could be thought that there are now hardly any set relationship or cross-over lines between religion and politics in some (modern, European; JH) societies, e.g. in the society in which we live. Religiously motivated violence was normal to a certain extent in the Middle Ages and particularly dramatic after the Reformation. However, the relationship between religion and politics was cooled down to some extent in a comprehensive process of secularisation, becoming free of violence. Religion came to terms with the political balance of power, with the latter developing further through other momentum with the constantly decreasing influence of religion.«[33]

Such an impression would, however, be more than misleading. On the one hand, some of the patterns of thought and attitudes of mind regarded as anachronistic are not in conflict at all with the Modern Age; they are, rather, quite compatible with it or even proceed from it. Religion, religiousness, as well as religious fanaticism are absolutely harmonious with modern societies, as experience in the USA shows, where there is no lack of religious extremism despite all the modernity. In addition, the ideologies of nationalism and racism are, in particular, edifices of thought with an essentially »modern« character, first emerging in the course of social modernisation – even though there have been older embryonic forms. On the other hand, we should also remind ourselves that modern functional rationality, cost-benefit considerations and cool calculation do not in themselves act against potentials for violence; conversely, indeed, it would hardly be possible to organise the highest degree of violence without such modern ways of thinking. The Holocaust presupposed a highly developed, coolly organised system of registration and logistics unimaginable in that form in pre-modern societies.

Zygmunt Bauman expresses the lesson emerging from this situation in the following words: »What we have learned in this century is that modernity does not solely mean producing more and travelling faster, getting richer or moving more freely. Modernity consists – and consisted – just as much

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33 Wilfried von Bredow, Religion, Politik, Gewalt; in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 January 2005, p. 8

in the highly mechanised, quick and efficient nature of murder, in scientifically planned and managed genocide; in an art which modernity has ambitiously exploited for its own, modern purposes while also placing it at the service of any type of heterophobia – tribally or class-related, ethnic, racist or any other – which was regarded as »pre-modern« and obsolete.«[34]

Modern society actually opened up the possibilities of violence that were denied to all previous ones: mass murder through poison gas, biological weapons, aircraft flown into skyscrapers, napalm, atomic bombs, missile and air attacks – the list could be extended at will. Torture through electric shocks, throwing »missing« prisoners from aircraft high above the sea, human medical experiments on inmates of concentration camps – there would, indeed, appear to be no limits to the imagination of modern man with regard to devising bestial behaviour, with the products of science, modern technology and medicine providing the crucial aids, both now and in the past. No pre-modern society would have dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima – not because the people may have been »more human« at that time or had more scruples but, rather, because they did not have any and could not have had any. The mass murder of millions of people in death factories would never have come about in tribal societies by virtue of their having far fewer inhabitants and not having the technical know-how or the relevant management and logistic skills at their disposal. Does this automatically signify a genocidal nature of the »Modern Age«? Hardly! What it does mean, in particular, is that such efficient means led to murder being able to take on previously undreamt-of dimensions. We are not speaking here only or even primarily of the effectiveness of modern weapon systems and instruments of torture but also and, in particular, of the new skills of social organisation, of bureaucracy and administration, of division of labour and specialisation without which murder and destruction can hardly be possible on a really grand scale. And it is not just the specific technical aspects of the organisation of violence that are meant in this regard; there are also the psychological implications of this. Violence does not have to be an ex-

34 Zygmunt Bauman, Das Jahrhundert der Lager? In: Mihran Dabag / Kristin Platt (eds.), Genozid und Moderne, Vol. 1: Strukturen kollektiver Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert, Opladen 1998, pp. 81-99, here: p. 82

pression of evil, sadism, the desire to kill, or even one's own fanaticism; it can also become an unemotional administrative task determined by bureaucratic rules and efficient division of labour rather than a yearning for violence and devastation. This does, however, undermine anthropological interpretations of the act of violence. The acts of genocide in the 20th century, in particular, were often organised in a bureaucratic manner based on the principle of the division of labour and required experts, specialists, organisers and bureaucrats as perpetrators rather than human monsters.

»Firstly, every personally executed act in a modern organisation is an indirect action; each person acting is, according to Stanley Milgram, confronted with an »agentic state«: virtually no agent will ever have the chance to develop the impulse of his »authorship« up to the eventual outcome of the process as each agent only executes an order or requires another to execute an order; he is not the author but, rather, the translator of the intention of another. There is a long sequence of executors between the idea triggering the process and its final result; none of these can be clearly determined as an adequate, definitive link between the design and the product.

Secondly, there is the horizontal, functional division of the overall task: each person acting has one specific, self-contained piece of work to perform and produces an object without any established definition, a reference that becomes important for different observations; no individual contribution would appear »to determine« the eventual result of the process and most display only traces of a logical connection with the final outcome – a connection which those involved claim in all good conscience only becomes apparent after the event.

Thirdly, the »targets« of a process of action, i.e. the people affected by the design of the action itself or by chance, rarely appear to the persons acting as distinct »human beings«, as objects of a moral responsibility or even as ethical subjects. As Michael Schluter and David Lee noted in a witty but apt manner, it is necessary »in order to be part of a higher level to be broken into small pieces and throw away most of this self«. And with regard to the tendency of *Gleichschaltung* or forcing into line which inevitably follows such fragmentation, they pondered: »The institutions of the mega-community act much more deftly with capacities that are the same for everyone than

with those which characterise each single person as an individual and as being unique in his way.« It can consequently be said that the majority of persons acting in organisations have nothing to do with human beings but, rather, with facets, characteristics and statistically represented features, while it is exclusively human persons alone that can be the bearers of what is morally valid.«[35]

Large-scale violence cannot make itself conditional on the violent actions of the individuals involved; it must, rather, be organised in such a way that it can be brought about through the interaction of large numbers of »normal« people. Only when evil becomes »banal« can it become general and common. And this has only become possible at a high level through the organisational forms of the Modern Age – which, conversely, does not blatantly mean that every modern organisation is a murderous one.

We have so far spoken about the »Modern Age« and, in doing so, combined a range of intellectual history, mentality, technical and organisational factors. For our question, it should be emphasised, however, that one particular form of expression of the Modern Age frequently was and still is of central importance, i.e. the nation-state, which gradually asserted itself in the various regions of the world between the 16th and 20th centuries, even though the nation-building process has not yet been completed in every case in some areas.[36] Historical experience over the last few centuries shows that the increase in the potential for violence and destruction has tended (i.e. not necessarily in every individual case) to coincide with the advancement of the nation-state as a typically »modern« organisational form of society.

»What is certainly indisputable is that modern, nation-state thinking has nurtured totalitarian desires and been able to use totalitarian means. Technical modernisation has provided the old desire to destroy the other with previously undreamt-of resources. »Engineered dehumanisation«, where the perpetrators hardly have to get their own hands dirty, has only become possible in our time.«[37]

35 Ibid. p. 85f

36 With regard to the history of the »classic« forming of nation-states in Europe, see: Liah Greenfeld, Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity; Cambridge 1992

The question could be asked whether the Modern Age as such, its technical abilities or its predominantly nation-state form of organisation bear central responsibility for violence or whether the potential for violence springs from other factors. Theoretically, it could also result less from the material and organisational products of the Modern Age and more from its ideologies and mentalities. This may appear astonishing at first since the Modern Age is, after all, normally associated with the values of the Enlightenment, tolerance and reason. It is mostly forgotten, however, that the ideological development of the Modern Age also has a dark side, given that phenomena like Fascism and Stalinism were certainly also spawned by the Modern Age in Europe, embedded in particular modern traditions of intellectual history. Although the emancipatory and humanitarian elements of Marxism were removed in Stalinist ideology (even in its early Leninist form) and replaced by a stereotyped black-and-white way of thinking with the end justifying all the means, even this crude structure of thinking focused on social and technical »progress«, i.e. a classically modern figure of thought, often liking to present itself as a »scientific« method and aimed in essence at the systematic construction of a »new society« to be created as an engineer creates a machine. So although Stalinism was lacking in any humanity and the central tolerance values of the Enlightenment, the »modern« nature of that system of violence cannot be disputed either on account of its ideology or its methods.

The picture was quite similar for Fascism in Europe, e.g. in its variant of German »national socialism«. Even if much of its ideology and some of its manner does appear »romantic«, retrogressive and pre-modern (and a number of its less important sub-streams may have actually possessed such a nature), it was, nonetheless, also a modern phenomenon in essence. It, too, wanted to shape society, wanted to form an entire continent like an engineer creates something new in the laboratory, wanted to apply the scien-

37 Burkhard Liebsch, Vom Versprechen, das wir sind – Versuch einer Annäherung an das Thema »Genozid und Moderne«; in: Mihran Dabag / Kristin Platt (eds.), Genozid und Moderne, Vol. 1: Strukturen kollektiver Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert, Opladen 1998, pp. 39 – 80, here: p. 45; see also Yves Ternon, Der verbrecherische Staat – Völkermord im 20. Jahrhundert; Hamburg 1996, p. 83f

tific and medical principles of hygiene to society and the state, also seeing itself as the practical application of Darwinist and Mendelian research findings to mankind – its racism was not a vague ethnic prejudice, but rather the result of modern science. In the words of Liebsch:

»While Hobbes describes the individual, for whom his own self-preservation is the uppermost imperative, as being disquieted by fear of the other as his potential murderer and against whom mistrust also possibly justifies preventive violence, it could be concluded from the theory of evolution that the history of the peoples should be understood in a quite similar manner. History has apparently had to obey a law according to which peoples are first of all interested in their own survival, indicating the fear of succumbing to other peoples. Insofar as the theory of evolution appeared to have discovered a »natural law« which also prevails through the history of the genus, it was also possible to conceive arbitrary, preventive enforcement of this law against others accordingly without first waiting for the judgement of history.«[38]

Today, following so many massacres, acts of genocide, ethnic cleansing and the Holocaust, we regard racism as something deeply repulsive – which it is, of course – and irrationally pre-modern. We should not forget, however, that racism not only shaped social consensus in different forms for a long period, but was also seen as the simple result of science long before the German fascists discredited the term. And not only that.

»In the mid-18th century, Linné differentiated between four races of people while a quarter of a century later Blumenbach distinguished between five races (Caucasians, Mongols, Ethiopians, Americans and Malays). Although this model of racial reduction is not systematically prominent in Enlightenment philosophy, the distinction between different races is by no means to be found only among second-rate authors; it can also be seen in Voltaire, Hume and Kant and was part of the common and unproblematic corpus of knowledge in philosophy in the mid-18th century.«[39]

38 Ibid. p. 50

39 Bernhard Giesen, Antisemitismus und Rassismus; in: Mihran Dabag / Kristin Platt (eds.), Genozid und Moderne, Vol. 1: Strukturen kollektiver Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert, Opladen 1998, pp. 206-240, here: p. 208f

In a superb essay, Giesen outlined the development of different trends of racial and racist thinking from a consensus among intellectuals of the 18th and 19th centuries to an ideology of destruction, so it is not necessary to give a detailed description of this process here. He describes one of the decisive turning points in the following terms:

»In the mid-19th century, the distinction between races not only asserted itself as a central axis of scientific anthropology; it also influenced the writing of history. The race paradigm was not used only as a classification of different types of people with a purely descriptive intention as in scientific racism; it was also made temporal and dynamic, with the time horizons of the past and future broadening considerably in the 19th century. Knowledge about the past grew, the historical sciences became distinct from each other, museums were established and monuments opened, architectural styles alluded to the past – with planning horizons, utopias and belief in progress also increasing. In these stretched-out time horizons, it was less a case of merely overcoming physical distance; the concern was more with a sharpened perception of the present as a moment of historical crisis and decision-making. In the present, the past and the future suddenly meet and require a decision to be made. Seen against this background, the term »race« was increasingly used in conjunction with metaphors of battle and destruction.«[40]

Even though there are a number of interim stages missing here, central connecting points have been mentioned to which later ideologies of destruction and the German fascists could relate. And it can already be seen from this that the racism practised by the Nazis had developed from one of the strands of Western, European and modern thinking rather than being an unqualified accident of European intellectual and factual history.

Interim appraisal

We can state that the hope of raising the level of civilisation and lowering the level of violence through modernising traditional societies proves to

40 Ibid. p. 216

be false. The modernisation process produced dreadful new means of power which, even with the potential of violence remaining constant, simply had to increase its effect to a huge extent and drastically increase the numbers of victims. At the same time, it created new organisational forms ranging from effective bureaucracies and administrative institutions to the nation-state as a political form of organisation. These not only enabled the societies' tendencies to be strengthened with regard to civilisation and, for example, the welfare state and rule of law; it also fortified their potential for destruction and violence. The enhancement of social efficiency also increased that of violence and, with it, the scope of such violence. Finally, modernisation also created ideological models which could and did serve to legitimise the most massive violence up to and including genocide. All this does not mean that modernity or modernisation as such implied genocidal tendencies in principle, but it does indicate that a lowering of the level of violence could not and cannot necessarily be expected from them and that a dramatic increase in the extent of world-wide violence could even occur – as was the case, in empirical terms, in the course of the colonisation of the Third World and, finally, during the 20th century. Bauman summarises this finding as follows:

»Modernity does not make people more cruel; it simply invented a way via which cruel deeds could be carried out by people who are not cruel by nature. Against the background of modernity, evil no longer requires wicked people. People acting rationally – men and women – who are firmly established in the impersonal, adiaphoristic network of modern organisation become perfect executing agents.«[41]

And the Near and Middle East?

Up to now, we have hardly spoken of the countries of the Near and Middle East or predominantly Muslim societies and concerned ourselves more with violence in a context beyond specific cultural or religious fea-

41 Zygmunt Bauman, Das Jahrhundert der Lager? In: Mihran Dabag / Kristin Platt (eds.), Genozid und Moderne, Vol. 1: Strukturen kollektiver Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert, Opladen 1998, pp. 81-99, here: p. 88

tures, or related to Western societies. This is not a region in which violence has solely been brought in from outside over the past few years; it has also grown out of the societies themselves. In the past, Muslim societies have shown themselves to be no less violent that those in the West. And, like societies in Japan, Europe and North America, for example, they have often tended to suppress or deny their own violence.

Turkey and genocide against the Armenians

In conjunction with World War I, in which the Ottoman Empire took part on the side of the German Reich and Austria, systematic acts of expulsion, massacre, rape and other crimes were perpetrated in 1915 which by and large took on the character of genocide.[42] However, the dramatic violence of that year did not take place in an unqualified manner; it occurred, rather, in the context of Armenians already having been repressed and murdered for a number of decades. There had already been numerous massacres as long ago as the 1890s under the »red« (bloody) Sultan Abdul Hamid II, which are thought to have claimed around 200,000 victims. In April 1909, there was a large massacre in Adana, in which around 25,000 Armenians were butchered. The pinnacle of the violence was, however, reached in 1915 by the government controlled by the Young Turks movement.

»The programme of genocide was carried out in four phases under the guise of «resettlement». In the first of these, the Armenians were deported from Cilicia, especially from the areas of Sejtun and Dörtyol, notorious for their spirit of resistance. The Cilician deportations lasted up to the end of May 1915. It was followed from May to the end of June 1915 by the deportation of the West Armenian population from the then provinces of Erzurum, Sivas, Charberd or Mamuret-ul Asis, Diyarbakir, Bitlis and Trapesunt (Trabzon in Turkish). Then, in August and September 1915, the Armenians were expelled from West Anatolia and Mutessariflik Ismid, as well as from the

42 For an overview, see among others: Rouben P. Adalian, The Armenian Genocide, in: Samuel Totten/William S. Parsons/ Israel W. Charny (eds.), Century of Genocide – Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views, New York/London 1997, p. 41ff

provinces of Brussa, Kastamuni, Ankara and Konya. At the end of the autumn of 1915, the Armenians in the cities of Mesopotamia and Northern Syria were subjected to the same fate; the Armenians from Baghdad had already been deported to Mosul in the late summer of 1915.« [43]

Although these deportations are not disputed in Turkish historiography and politics, they are, however, justified in a predominantly defensive manner based on the argument that the Armenians were not loyal to the Ottoman Empire, preferring to collaborate with foreign powers (especially Russia). Though this was true for individual sections of the Armenian population, they were nonetheless exceptions – though it does not explain why entire (Armenian) units of the Ottoman army were shot. Some apologists for the genocide have even justified the expulsions and measures in terms of »protection« of the Armenians, a cynical playing down of the situation which has even gained acceptance in standard Western works. [44]

»Deportation is a euphemistic generic term for an appalling act. The course of events was virtually the same in every case: the leading Armenians of a city, often up to 400 – 500 people, were first required by way of a notice or public announcement to report to the authorities, then arrested, often tortured and after a few days led outside the city, where they were beaten to death in a remote spot or butchered using bayonets. The women, children and elderly were then deported a few days later if they had not already fallen victim to pogroms or other excesses beforehand. Those deported had to cover huge distances as far as the Mesopotamian and Syrian deserts, mostly on foot and without sufficient food, and were at the mercy of ill-treatment and attacks by the local Muslim population, often Kurds, as well as their guards on route. Women and children were raped, abducted and forced into Islam.« [45]

43 Tessa Hofmann, Verfolgung und Völkermord – Armenien zwischen 1877 und 1922, in: Tessa Hofmann (ed.), Armenier und Armenien – Heimat und Exil, Reinbek 1994, pp. 15 – 32, here: p. 24f

44 E.g.: Stanford J. Shaw/Ezel Kural Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic, first edition Cambridge 1977, p. 315

45 Tessa Hofmann, Verfolgung und Völkermord – Armenien zwischen 1877 und 1922, in: Tessa Hofmann (ed.), Armenier und Armenien – Heimat und Exil, Reinbek 1994, pp. 15 – 32, here: p. 25

It was, in fact, a systematic policy of eradication conducted with great consistency and brutality. Although the numbers of victims are uncertain and can only be estimated, the figure is likely to have been between 1 million and 1.5 million dead. »The Turkish Minister of the Interior and main organiser of the crime, Talaat, himself spoke of 300,000 victims to the German Turcophile, Ernst Jäckh, in the autumn of 1915, while the German embassy (which had a high-profile presence in Anatolia as an ally of the Ottoman Empire; JH) estimated the number of victims at 1,500,000. What is beyond doubt is that after the atrocities in what were actually the settlement areas of Central and, in particular, East Anatolia, the Armenian people no longer existed.«[46]

The genocide committed against the Armenians comprised different aspects. Kurdish players were involved out of greed for booty or as mercenaries of the Ottoman authorities, while various local elites also expected advantages and benefits. In isolated cases, however, individuals or small groups of ethnic Kurds or Turks helped persecuted Armenians to survive the massacres. Despite the vehement protest of Minister of the Interior Talaat, for example, Turkish General Vehib Pascha had two police officers executed who had ordered 2,000 of his Armenian soldiers to be shot. The Ottoman Governor Ali Suad Bey endeavoured to provide humanitarian assistance for up to 15,000 Armenians deported to the desert town of Der-Es-Sor – »When the government found out, he was moved elsewhere.«[47]

In overall terms, the numerous individual acts of brutality and humanity should not, however, be overestimated in our context: the genocide was not founded on personal crimes but, rather, on a systematic, state-organised policy of expulsion and annihilation. This differed perceptibly from the earlier mass murders committed against Armenians under Sultan Abdul Hamid II, who had attempted, among other things, to restore the strength of the Ottoman Empire on the reconciliatory basis of religion – Sunni Islam – and persecuted the Christian Armenians for that reason. The vast majority of the Young Turks showed very little interest in religious matters, even though

46 Wolfgang Gust, Der Völkermord an den Armeniern, Munich/Vienna 1993, p. 12

47 Ibid. p. 18, 57

there were repeated cases of forcing people into Islam in the course of persecuting the Armenians (conversion or death), and were more concerned with the establishment of a modern nation-state on a Turkish-national basis. The genocide committed against the Armenians took place in the context of the transformation of the multiracial state founded on religion and dynasties into a modern nation-state following the European example. The violence was designed to »cleanse« and homogenize the new Turkey. Mihran Dabag demonstrated the correlation between nation-state ideology, modernisation and genocide in the Ottoman Empire in a brilliant essay.

»The genocide committed against the Armenians was not only a specific partial process of the development of the Ottoman Empire into a modern Turkish nation-state. The genocide itself represents an individual, self-contained social transformation process which left behind long-lasting changes over generations. It was not a case of just any social transformation but, rather, a development whose starting point was provided by the visions of equality, liberty, participation and progress. The realisation of this vision went hand in hand with the redefining of history and identity, a redefinition based on estimates and fractions and using ideologems and discourses.

Initially related to the genocide against the Armenians alone, it can be expounded that the devastating, so radically murderous violence was in no way triggered as a side effect or dilemma of socio-political momentum and not even in causal terms as the action of a specific political regime. The violence of the genocide shows itself – in just the same way as the violence of the Young Turks movement and their political action – to be inextricably linked with the visionary conceptions or devoted to these conceptions which sought realisation of a vision full of progress, a nation and the Modern Age for the future of Turkish society within one generation.«[48]

48 Mihran Dabag, Jungtürkische Visionen und der Völkermord an den Armeniern; in: Mihran Dabag / Kristin Platt (eds.), Genozid und Moderne, Vol. 1: Strukturen kollektiver Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert, Opladen 1998, pp. 152 – 205, here p. 203

The division of Pakistan, 1970/71

Pakistan had been established in 1948 as the »Land of the Indian Muslims« on the ideological basis of a »two-nation theory«. After this, two different »nations« would exist in India in the form of the Muslim and Hindu communities, which were both to be given separate states – something that also happened when Great Britain relinquished the Indian crown colony. The new state of Pakistan was, however, anything but homogeneous, comprising very different ethnic and national groups that were supposed to coexist from then on. Centres of power asserted themselves in the guise of an informal coalition of the traditional, land-owning elite from the Pakistani part of the Punjab together with the civil and military bureaucracy. Over the first few decades, this coalition was strongly influenced by leading »Muhadshir« (»refugees« from northern and central India). Other groups (especially Pashtuns, Sindhi, Belutch and Bengali) were clearly dominated by the new elitist groups. The central state was – quite rightly in most cases – thus perceived as a form of rule of the Punjabis over the rest of the country. The situation was particularly complicated by the fact that the new Pakistan had been divided into a western and eastern section (the present Pakistan and today's Bangladesh), with around 1,500 kilometres of Indian territory lying between them. The official language chosen was Urdu, which was only mastered in the west by most of the Muhadshir on account of it being their mother tongue. West Pakistan was itself very diverse in both linguistic and ethnic terms, while East Pakistan was almost completely Bengalese, accounting for virtually the majority of the overall population. East Pakistan increasingly saw the relationship with the central state as a colonialist one, characterised by neglect, dependence, economic exploitation and cultural discrimination. In the 1970 parliamentary elections, the East Pakistan Awami League won almost all the mandates in its part of the country and, therefore, the majority of the seats in the overall Pakistani parliament, which meant that it could have taken over the government. However, the West Pakistan elitist groups would not permit this, least of all the military, which launched a tough and bloody campaign of oppression against the Awami League and all forms of opposition in East Pakistan, which in turn

quickly led to violent resistance. When India, which had previously support-
ed the Awami League, intervened in this civil war, the Pakistani military
units cut off from West Pakistan were soon beaten. The former East Pakistan
became independent under the name of Bangladesh.

The Pakistan civil war demonstrated that the slogan of the »one Muslim
nation« had failed, with the Bengali nationalism nurtured by alienation and
discrimination proving to be stronger than the common bond of religion.
The victims of the war and the massacres were mainly Muslims on both
sides, though the Hindu minority was also hit hard by the Pakistani troops.
It is difficult to determine the precise numbers of victims, but the figure was
almost certainly in the millions. Rounaq Jahan speaks of 3 million dead.[49] In
addition, 3 – 10 million East Pakistan residents or 7 million according to a UN
estimate (out of around 75 million) fled across the border to India.

»The human death toll over a period of just 267 days was incredible. Just
to give some incomplete statistics published in Bangladesh newspapers or
by an Inquiry Committee – for five out of the eighteen districts – the
Pakistani army killed 100,000 Bengalis in Dacca, 150,000 in Khulna, 75,000
in Jessore, 95,000 in Comilla, and 100,000 in Chittagong. For eighteen dis-
tricts the total is 1,247,000 killed. This was an incomplete toll, and to this
day no one really knows the final toll. Some estimates of the democide are
much lower – one is of 300,000 dead – but most range from 1 million to
3 million. In a television interview with David Frost, Sheik Mujib himself
claims that 3 million people were wiped out. In view of these figures, it can
be assumed that between 300,000 and 3 million men, women and children
were murdered, most probably around 1.5 million.

As the democide figures in Table 13.1 (Rummel, loc. cit.; JH) show, the
Pakistani army and allied paramilitary groups killed about one out of every
sixty-one people in Pakistan overall; one out of every twenty-five Bengalis,
Hindus, and others in East Pakistan. If the rate of killing for all of Pakistan is
annualised over the years the Yahya martial law regime was in power
(March 1969 to December 1971), then this one regime was more lethal than

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49 Rounaq Jahan, Genocide in Bangladesh, in: Samuel Totten/William S. Parsons/ Israel W. Charny (eds.),

Century of Genocide – Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views, New York/London 1997, p. 291

that of the Soviet Union, China under the communists, or Japan under the military (even through World War II).«[50]

Both during and after the war, there were also bloody, revenge-motivated massacres of all Bengalis rightly or wrongly suspected of sympathizing with (West) Pakistan or who came from there, with an estimated 150,000 people falling victim to such acts of violence. The Encyclopaedia Britannica describes this in the following terms: »Revenge was brought against those who had collaborated. Local paramilitary forces, known as Razakars, had been raised. The Bengali force was called Al-Badr while another, Al-Shams, was recruited from Urdu speakers – still called Bihāris – though most had been born locally. A terrible retribution ensued, with Kader Siddiqi as public executioner. The Bihāris had to flee into enclaves where their numbers gave some security, but many were killed. Hundreds of thousands of Bihāris were placed in overcrowded refugee camps, where decades later many still awaited immigration to Pakistan.«[51]

The great massacre: Indonesia 1965[52]

Following Indonesia's independence from the Netherlands (Declaration of Independence 1945, recognition of this by the Netherlands 1949), the internal politics of the newly independent country was marked by instability. The country was and still is extremely heterogeneous in ethnic and linguistic terms (approx. 300 ethnic groups with 250 languages), even though the numerous ethnic groups do overlap to some extent. Indonesia was and still is predominantly Muslim (around 88% of the population), though also with distinct cultural influences from Hinduism and Buddhism, while the small but prosperous Chinese section of the population are mainly followers of Confucianism and Buddhism. There are also a number of scattered Christian communities (approx. 8%). Politically speaking, Indonesian society

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50 Rudolph J. Rummel, Death By Government, Second Printing New Brunswick, New Jersey 1995, p. 331

51 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, CD-ROM edition 2004, Article Bangladesh, History, Author: Hugh Russell Tinker

52 See, for example, Robert Cribb, The Indonesian Massacres, in: Samuel Totten/William S. Parsons/ Israel W. Charny (eds.), Century of Genocide – Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views, New York/London 1997, p. 236ff

was made up of three major blocs in the 1950s and up to the mid 1960s, i.e. the influential and sometimes large Muslim parties, a nationalist party and the Communists, with around 3 million members alone. On the other hand, the basic political constellation of that time could perhaps best be characterised in terms of two poles of power, the military and the Communist Party, which were both kept in check by former President Sukarno for the purpose of maintaining his own power and increasing his scope of political action. Up to 1965, the country was marked by frequent changes of government as well as political and social instability.

»On the night of Sept. 30, 1965, a group of army conspirators kidnapped and murdered six army generals. ... The following morning the 30th September Movement announced that it had seized power to forestall a coup against the president by a council of generals. In the meantime General Suharto, commander of the army's strategic reserve, began to gather the reins of power into his own hands. By evening he had seized the initiative from the conspirators. The PKI (Communist Party of Indonesia; JH) maintained that the coup attempt was an internal affair of the army. The army leadership insisted that it was part of a PKI plot to seize power ...«.[53]

General Suharto took advantage of the situation to gradually marginalise (and subsequently remove) President Sukarno as well as wage a bloody battle against the Communist Party and all its (supposed) sympathisers, with the military going on man-hunting sprees together with a number of Muslim organisations.

»Violent anti-Communist demonstrations broke out in Jakarta and the rest of Java, and the mobs and the army set about slaughtering Communists wherever they could find them. By the time the massacres subsided, several hundred thousand people had been killed. The dead included most of the leaders of the PKI. The party had 3 million members, and the army now systematically hunted down all its cadres and shot them. Most of those who died, however, were villagers and many had nothing to do with the PKI; they were victims of local hatreds. So many bodies were thrown into the rivers

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53 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, CD-ROM edition 2004, Article Indonesia (History: Indonesia since 1965), Author: John David Legge

that they became a serious health problem. In one district in West Java, suspects were decapitated by guillotine, and their heads piled up in the villages, to set an example. Many Chinese (according to one estimate, 20,000) were among the victims, and mobs attacked the Chinese embassy.

The total number of those killed remains in dispute. The official government figure is 80,000. Muslim leaders, whose people did most of the killings, admit to 500,000 and other estimates go up to 1 million. The usual compromise estimate is that 400,000 people were killed.«[54]

The large-scale massacre was supported by the US government in a concealed manner, something that can be verified through statements by witnesses and documents from the US embassy and other US agencies which have now been published. Among other things, one of the perpetrating civilian organisations (»Kap-Gestapu«, whose work was described by US Ambassador Green as »very successful«) was paid a sum of 50 million rupiahs and a list of names of communist functionaries supplied to the Indonesian military by the US embassy was used for the murders.[55] The coup and the massacre led to the establishment of many years of dictatorship by Suharto, who was not overthrown until 1998. This situation put an end to the instability for more than three decades and produced dynamic economic development in the 1970s and 1980s. However, it paralysed society politically and, to some extent, socially at the same time.

Saddam Hussein's tyranny

Iraq was likewise heterogeneous and unstable after independence and practically ungovernable according to its own king.[56] Although the anachro-

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54 Patrick Brogan, World Conflicts, London 1992, p. 205f

55 Numerous declassified US documents were made accessible to the public by the National Security Archive in 2001. See: CIA Stalling State Department Histories – Archive Posts One of Two Disputed Volumes on Web: State Historians Conclude US Passed Names of Communists to Indonesian Army, which killed at least 105,000 in 1965 – 66, Washington 27 July 2001, accessible at: www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB52/, here: p. 379/380

56 Hanna Batatu, The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq, Princeton 1982, p. 25

nistic conditions prevailing in society and politics were overturned by the revolution of 1958 (which occurred in the form of a military coup), a decade of greater instability followed in which military regimes replaced each other in rapid succession. This did not change until 1968 when the Arab nationalist Baath Party seized power and did not relinquish it again until the Iraq War of 2003. Its policy model – at least up to the 1980s – was to use the very substantial oil revenues that had been flowing since the 1970s for the country's economic, technical and social development (and for arming the military), combining this with brutal repression for the purpose of stabilising the country using the »stick and carrot« principle in order to make it an important power factor in the Persian-Arabian Gulf. A high-ranking Iraqi diplomat once remarked to the author concerning the mentality of his government in the early 1990s that: »We are prepared to sacrifice one or two Iraqi generations to make Iraq a powerful state.« Such expressions also indicate the shift in the ideology of the Baath Party, which initially pursued an overall Arab and then increasingly an Iraqi nationalist course. The power politics of the dictatorship (also pursued formally by Saddam Hussein from 1979 on) was directed both inwardly and outwardly. In 1980, Iraq – certainly with the encouragement of the West – attacked its neighbour, Iran, which had been militarily weakened by the »Islamic Revolution«, in order to assert its own idea of supremacy in the Gulf region. The war dragged on until 1988 and is thought to have cost more than one (to one and a half) million lives, of which two thirds are estimated to have been Iranians. In 1990, Iraq then occupied the small and wealthy neighbouring country of Kuwait to solve its foreign debt problem (incurred through the war with Iran) by appropriating the Kuwaiti oil deposits, which gave rise to the US-led and UN-authorized coalition declaring war on Iraq and driving it out of Kuwait. From then on, the country suffered under tough economic sanctions imposed by the UN, completely destroying an economy already shattered by war, preventing its reconstruction, impoverishing its people to an even greater extent and claiming numerous victims among the civilian population, e.g. through a twofold increase in infant mortality.

The Saddam dictatorship showed itself to be just as unscrupulous inwardly as it was outwardly. Although every form of opposition was bru-

tally suppressed, wherever it came from, the Shiites and Kurds suffered particularly severely under the repression. According to the Human Rights Watch organisation, between 250,000 and 290,000 people »disappeared« and were very likely murdered during the 35 years of the dictatorship alone.

»The government's notorious attacks on the Iraqi Kurds have come in phases. Between 1977 and 1987, some 4,500 – 5,000 Kurdish villages were systematically destroyed and their inhabitants forcibly removed and made to live in »resettlement camps.« Commencing in the spring of 1987, thousands of Iraqi Kurds were killed during chemical and conventional bombardments. From February to September 1988, the Iraqi government launched the official »Anfal« campaign, during which Iraqi troops swept through the highlands of Iraqi Kurdistan rounding up everyone who remained in government-declared »prohibited zones.« More than 100,000 Kurds, mostly men and boys, were trucked to remote sites and executed. The use of chemical weapons reached a peak in March 1988; in the town of Halabja alone, a documented 3,200 people are believed to have died from chemical gas attacks, and the actual number may be more than 5,000. The killings constitute acts of genocide. The killings, forcible and arbitrary transfer of populations, and chemical weapons attacks amount to crimes against humanity.«[57]

In addition to these murders, the Iraqi government also organised the Arabisation of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and its surroundings, during which around 120,000 Kurds, Turkmen and Assyrians were expelled from 1991 on and replaced by Arabs from the south of the country. However, other sections of the population also fell victim to the dictatorship.

»During the early years of the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqi government arrested thousands of Shia Muslims on the charge of supporting the 1979 revolution in Iran. Many have »disappeared« or remain unaccounted for; others died under torture or were executed. This campaign was followed by the forced expulsion of over half a million Shia during the 1980s to Iran, after the separation out of many male family members. These men and boys, esti-

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57 Human Rights Watch, Justice For Iraq, December 2002, here: http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/mena/ iraq1217bg.htm

mated to number between 50,000 and 70,000, were arrested and imprisoned indefinitely without charge; most remain unaccounted for.

After the Gulf War, in southern Iraq, members of the Shia majority rose up in revolt against the Iraqi leadership. In response, thousands of Shia, including hundreds of clerics and their students, were imprisoned without charge or »disappeared« in state custody. Hundreds were summarily executed. Many Shia shrines and institutions were demolished by government forces. In the southeast, after tens of thousands of Shia Muslim civilians, army deserters and rebels, primarily from the cities of Basra, al-Amara, and al-Nasiriyya, sought precarious shelter in remote areas of the marshes that straddle the Iranian border, Iraq's military and security forces shelled and launched military raids against them. The raids caused thousands of so-called »Marsh Arabs« to flee to Iran and many others to become internally displaced within Iraq. Many of these attacks against the Shia amount to crimes against humanity.«[58]

»In addition to abuses particularly aimed at the Kurds and Shia Muslims, the Iraqi people under Saddam Hussein have suffered a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognised human rights, including political imprisonment, torture, and summary and arbitrary executions. In addition, a ubiquitous network of security services and informants has suppressed independent civilian institutions and terrorised the Iraqi population into virtual silence. Torture techniques have included hangings, beatings, rape, and burning suspects alive. Thousands of Iraqi political detainees have died under torture.«[59]

In addition to the groups of victims mentioned – a complete list cannot be given here – all actual or potential opponents were brutally persecuted, with an estimated 50,000 of them murdered (including Communists and leftists, Baath Party members falling into disfavour, etc.). Anyone travelling through Iraq today will have great difficulty in finding a family that has not experienced appalling accounts of torture, maltreatment, forced expulsion or murder committed against relatives. The country is strewn with small and large mass graves, especially in the north and south.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

»Mass grave sites in Iraq have been located as far north as Mosul and as far south as Basra, and some sites are believed to contain thousands of victims of extrajudicial executions. Burial sites of individual victims have been located in cemeteries near prisons or on the grounds of security headquarters throughout Iraq. Most of the graves uncovered so far have contained Iraqi victims, but other graves may also hold the remains of Iranian and Kuwaiti soldiers who were executed while in Iraqi custody.«[60]

Altogether, it can be said that the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party constituted an extremely bloody attempt to enforce political stability through the most brutal repression of their own people to assert a powerful nation-state that could then be used for wars of conquest against neighbouring countries. It was certainly one of the worst systems of repression over the past 50 years and traumatised the Iraqi population in the most severe way.

Summary of case examples

We have seen that Muslim societies have also produced dramatic outbreaks of violence equal to those of Western societies in terms of the degree of their inhumanity, brutality and systematology. We have singled out four dramatic cases of political violence in which perpetrators from Muslim countries were involved in the 20th century. The – Muslim – assassins in the Ottoman Empire, in Indonesia, Pakistan, Iraq or elsewhere were clearly no better or worse than their European counterparts: when mass murder or genocide was in their interests and they were not checked by internal or external political restrictions, they were capable of exactly the same crimes as Christian, agnostic or atheist mass murderers. And the victims of this violence were also as varied as in the cases of Western violence. Sometimes it was national and sometimes religious minorities, though sections of the majority were likewise not spared from repression and annihilation. And, in the same way as Christians were very often the victims of Christians in Europe (or atheists the victims of atheists), it was mostly Muslims who fell

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60 Human Rights Watch, Iraq: State of the Evidence, November 2004, Vol. 17, No. 7, ibid. p. 23

victim to Muslims in the Near and Middle East. Even though violence was often justified by religious arguments, belonging to the »right« faith or confession rarely guaranteed protection if political considerations stood in the way.

We have seen that the outlined cases of large-scale murder sometimes involving the loss of millions of lives do not relate to religious sources or causes; they mostly relate to highly secular processes. As little as French, German or Dutch colonial soldiers or US marines in Vietnam committed massacres for religious reasons, the torturers and uniformed gangs of killers acting for Saddam Hussein, the Young Turks engaging in genocide, the Pakistani or Indonesian soldasteska and the Somali warlords were likewise on a political rather than a religious mission. The cases described all happened within the context of developing, protecting or stabilising projects for the building of nation-states – i.e. in the course of »modernising« the respective countries – for the purpose of political, ethnic or religious homogenisation or subjugation. In this sense, these mass murders proceeded in a quite similar way to those in Europe, where the unconditional and ruthless breaking of resistance, forcing people into line on ethnic, national or other grounds, as well as campaigns of ethnic cleansing and eradication were mostly used directly or indirectly to assert, concentrate and monopolise central, state power. Religious justifications were given by both Western and Muslim perpetrators, who may sometimes have even believed their own explanations; nonetheless, they were most predominantly political rather than religious crimes. In the new Turkey, in Pakistan, Indonesia and Iraq, it was a matter of forcing through particular projects for the building of nation-states with centralised power, i.e. catch-up modernisation attempts through violence. Both in European history and in Muslim societies, it is, indeed, the state (rather than culture or religion) that is at the centre of the issue of violence in the positive as well as the negative respect.

Tilly commented on the correlation between violence and the state in the following general terms: »… (V)iolence and government maintain a queasy relationship. Where and when governments are very weak, interpersonal violence commonly proliferates in the populations under the nominal jurisdictions of those governments. Where and when governments grow very

strong, violence among civilians usually declines. Politicians and political philosophers often advocate good, strong government as a bulwark against violent victimisation. But all governments maintain control over concentrated means of violence in the form of arms, troops, guards, and jails. Most governments use those means extensively to maintain what their rulers define as public order.

In all governments, furthermore, some rulers also use violent means to further their own power and material advantage. When large-scale collective violence occurs, government forces of one sort or another almost always play significant parts as attackers, objects of attack, competitors, or intervening agents. International war is simply the extreme case – but, on the whole, the most lethal of governmental involvement in violence.«[61]

The political or ethno-religious homogenisation of the cases outlined was a means to an end, serving to eliminate real or potential opposition, forcing one's own society into line, unifying perpetrators through the deed, and creating a climate of state power over society. All this was certainly criminal, but it was not unknown, especially to Europeans.

Causes and basic structures of political violence

People do not turn to political violence easily or as a matter of course. There are many psychological levels of inhibition in this regard, as well as political restrictions and personal risks. Although the obstacles to exercising violence are not the same in different political and social contexts or at different points of time in history, they can be relativised or can be overcome. What is true in almost all cases, however, is that political violence is a sign of social, economic or political crises which are frequently also reflected in radical ideological or spiritual changes.

When violence is used by political power elites or governments and their armed bodies, this can meet offensive or *defensive* intentions: a government not supported by the people or a state system threatened by loss of power or even being overthrown can try to pit itself against this by using violence,

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61 Charles Tilly, The Politics of Collective Violence; Cambridge 2003, p. 26f

as described above in the example of Pakistan. It is then likely that those directly bearing the threat, i.e. the opposition, will become the target of the violence, though active cadres and politicians possibly presenting a danger to the rulers also often cause groups identified with them to be affected, e.g. political organizations, parties or movements, as well as religious, cultural, ethnic or national groups. The genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994 certainly came into this category of extensive use of political violence in order to avert the danger of loss of power in a preventive and conclusive manner. In such contexts, it is not always clear whether the ruling group is really under acute threat, merely perceives this as being the case or wants to preclude a long-term threat, as in the massacre of Islamists and sections of the Syrian population in the city of Hama in 1982. It can be the case in contexts of this nature that, in addition to those directly or indirectly subject to a threat related to power politics and groups associated with them becoming targets of violence, there is a danger of other sections of the population which do not play any part in the power struggle being turned into scapegoats. The tendency to settle old scores at the same time, which may not be linked to any political causes whatsoever, can also be observed repeatedly. The wide-ranging massacre in Indonesia already referred to serves as an example of this.

An *offensive* way of using political violence can occur where a regime wants to extend its own power outwardly (through war), as in the case of Iraq in 1980 and 1990 when Saddam Hussein invaded Iran and Kuwait respectively, or the US attack on Iraq in 2003. Such acts of aggression are often associated with internal repression in order to eliminate political opponents inside the country at the same time. The use of state violence can also be regarded as offensive, however, where a regime pursues a concept of transforming its own society in political, ethnic, national or racialist terms and seeks to marginalise, expel or eradicate entire groups of the population to this end. Typical examples of this are, of course, the extermination of European Jews through German Fascism, the annihilation of the »kulaks« in Ukraine through Stalinism, the acts of ethnic »cleansing« and genocide in the Balkans, especially by the Greater Serbian nationalists, and the genocide committed against the Armenians by the Young Turks. Such mass murders

cannot be justified as »defensive«, even though repeated attempts are made to do so with the use of rhetoric – these concern practices aimed at »purifying«, homogenising and fundamentally reordering one's own society, while at the same time eradicating all those elements seen to be interfering with this aim.

Between these two extremes of political violence for defensive or offensive purposes is the »normal« policy of violence pursued by rulers governing at the expense of and without the approval of their peoples – in this case, violence merely performs a functional role of selectively eliminating opponents and intimidating one's own people. In successful dictatorships, the extent of violence actually exercised can be astonishingly small by virtue of the population already being paralysed by the threat and this strategy normally being linked with positive incentives for good conduct.

If we disregard this »routine« use of violence by dictatorships or authoritarian rulers, there is much to indicate that social or even regional imbalances or rejections have already emerged in relation to both the offensive and the defensive variant, with violence serving to eliminate such imbalances and rejections.[62] A greater degree of violence indicates a latent or acute socio-political or economic crisis which is to be overcome by violent means.

Such a premise can also be assumed for large-scale and sustained violence on the part of non-state protagonists, whether this emanates from liberation movements, those fighting for independence, political parties or movements, terrorist organisations, or ethnic or religious groups.

62 This can also be observed in post-war situations, as described by Nizar Saghieh using the example of Lebanon since 1989: Nizar Saghieh, Formen der Gewalt im Libanon: Die ausgelöschte Vergangenheit und die vergessene Zukunft, manuscript for the workshop on »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften«, Institute for Cultural Foreign Relations, Malta 19 – 20 November 2004, original in Arabic

Poverty, social and developmental problems[63]

Poverty is frequently cited as being a central cause of political violence in general and of terrorism in particular. Such a correlation would appear plausible and it is not wrong in principle – it does, however, function in a more indirect manner and via a number of interim stages. Although poverty is, in itself, dreadful, it is not necessarily a direct trigger mechanism or cause of violence. If all the people in a society are more or less equally poor, there are hardly any incentives to use violence on grounds of poverty. If, however, there are glaring *differences* in the level of poverty, i.e. if a society is deeply divided into rich and poor, the potential for latent violence will grow, though it does not necessarily have to erupt. The situation becomes tense, however, when such differences in the level of poverty become noticeable, i.e. when they decrease or become more widespread – that is precisely the point at which the likelihood of violence can increase substantially. An increase or decrease in the gap between the rich and the poor always results in winners and losers and it is their reactions that can lower the violence threshold. Under certain circumstances, poverty can produce mental trauma which – if other factors also occur – can turn into violent reaction, just as it can also lead to apathy, self-hatred, crime, depoliticisation, individual survival strategies etc., though it does not have to do so. The poverty factor is thus linked with other factors. Paul Brass points out the correlation between inequality, imbalanced competitive situations and ethnic fragmentation in situations of modernisation with regard to nationalist mobilisation with the potential towards violence in the following terms: »(I)t is not inequality as such or relative deprivation or status discrepancies that are the critical precipitants of nationalism in ethnic groups, but the relative distribution of

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63 The following sections can be found in a slightly modified form in: Jochen Hippler, Die Quellen des Terrorismus – Hinweise zu Ursachen, Rekrutierungsbedingungen und Wirksamkeit politischer Gewalt, in: Friedensgutachten 2002, edited by Reinhard Mutz, Bruno Schoch, Ulrich Rasch, Christoph Weller, for the Department of Peace and Security Politics at the University of Hamburg (ISFH), Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK), Forschungsstätte der Evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft (FEST), Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) and the Institut für Entwicklung und Frieden (INEF), June 2002, pp. 52 – 60

ethnic groups in the competition for valued resources and opportunities and in the division of labour in societies undergoing social mobilisation, industrialisation, and bureaucratisation.«[64]

Inequality, poverty and associated socio-economic problems have to coincide with overall situations of social change, competition within society and their corresponding ideologies in order to become politically explosive.

Poverty and the disquieting differences in the degree of poverty are therefore a *raw material* of the development of violence but no more than that. They do not automatically lead to violence and violence can also come about without them. Despite this, it is precisely changes in the structure of poverty (e.g. impoverishment of the middle classes, a huge increase or decrease in the poverty differential or the mere fear on the part of previously privileged sections of society of their status being lowered and falling behind others) that can be important factors for the dynamics of violence in society.

»A dramatic worsening of basic economic conditions often has a considerable catalyst effect in this context insofar as it places excessive demands on the adaptability of societies undergoing development and transformation. Under such conditions, a tense social climate frequently emerges in which those in danger of their social status being reduced or groups perceiving this as being so become susceptible to the claims of political elites with regard to power and control.«[65]

Whether the violence threshold is actually exceeded in this regard, whether this is carried out selectively or systematically, spontaneously or in an organized manner, by small groups or on the basis of a broad social movement, by the state or non-state players, through damage to property, civil war or terrorism – all this will depend on the specific context and course of the conflict, history and culture, as well as the basic economic and political conditions prevailing in a country.

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64 Paul R. Brass, Ethnicity and Nationalism – Theory and Comparison; New Delhi 1991, p. 47

65 Tobias Debiel, Politische Gewalt, gesellschaftliche Konflikte und der »Faktor Kultur«, manuscript for the workshop on »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften«, Institute for Cultural Foreign Relations, Malta 19 – 20 November 2004, p. 7

Repression and the nature of the state

The same applies to the »political repression« factor. The denial of rights of liberty and participation and the use of repression can become powerful factors which provoke political resistance and eventually also lead to violent forms of expression. In frequent cases, dictatorial regimes also have fewer incentives than democratic systems, even with regard to refraining from the use of violence when managing conflicts.[66]

As Tobias Debiel puts it: »The structural causes of violence and the essential objects of conflict include, in particular, the continuing threat to cultural identity through state repression or a dominant section of the population, exclusion from the exercising of power at state level, stubborn refusal of regional autonomy and local self-determination and, finally, the curtailment of both individual and collective development opportunities. When, under such conditions, the collective feeling of discrimination and repression is combined with the ability of the groups affected to organise themselves, violent conflicts are, as it were, pre-programmed.«[67]

Although a correlation between political – and terrorist – violence and repression and an absence of democracy may exist, it is complicated and indirect. There are numerous dictatorships which manage with a remarkably low level of political violence while, conversely, a considerable degree of political violence can be found in a number of democracies or semi-democracies – e.g. India and Pakistan (in the 1990s) with their internal ethnic and religious conflicts as well as the rivalry surrounding Kashmir. Columbia, Turkey and Indonesia are also countries that hold elections and have a certain degree of democracy but nevertheless suffer or have suffered from large-scale political violence. Democratic countries can, in addition, produce terrorism, as experienced by West Germany and Italy in the 1970s. On the

66 Regarding the situation concerning political freedoms and repression in Arab countries, see: United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Arab Human Development Report 2004, New York 2005, p. 81ff and 125ff

67 Tobias Debiel, Politische Gewalt, gesellschaftliche Konflikte und der »Faktor Kultur«, manuscript for the workshop on »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften«, Institute for Cultural Foreign Relations, Malta 19 – 20 November 2004, p. 6f

other hand, there are numerous authoritarian regimes or dictatorships that manage to keep the level of internal and external violence relatively low. Democracy and the application of democratic rights of freedom can indeed prevent the waging of violent conflicts and terrorist violence by eliminating certain grounds for resistance while at the same time providing political mechanisms to facilitate the peaceful settlement of conflicts. However, this applies only in principle and in the long term. In the short term, democratization processes can even further increase the potential for violence through the repressive instruments for avoiding violence which have been developed consensually but to an inadequate extent being weakened, or a phase of instability can occur with huge shifts in the balances of power. Despite these provisos, it can be said that functional and developed democratic societies (not necessarily »new« democracies) tend to be less susceptible, particularly in relation to terrorist violence, and – should terrorism occur nonetheless – remain more isolated from it in social terms. On the other hand, harsh dictatorships which do not permit civil mechanisms for the settlement of conflicts will give rise to more violent and, in some instances, even terrorist resistance over the longer term – not by virtue of its dictatorial nature alone in almost all cases but, rather, because this factor is linked with other, economic, social, religious and political features. The nature of state systems is therefore crucial to the issue of violence. The Arab Human Development Report 2004 characterises the Arab state machineries as follows: »The general features of this Arab model, which some have named the »authoritarian state« (...) and which has been described at length in a number of studies (...), are captured in the recent comments of an Arab journalist and activist. The latter describes governance in his country as a system in which there are no free and transparent parliamentary elections, resulting in a »monochrome« parliament. Under that particular system, press freedom is also restricted, as is political and human rights activity, the judiciary is used to make an example of opponents and the constitution establishes a regime that is »unlimited by time and not subject to the control of parliament or the judiciary.« In such a regime, even the ruling party becomes a mere piece of administrative apparatus run by »civil servants with neither enterprise nor efficiency (...).

We can call this the model of the «black-hole State», likening it to the astronomical phenomenon of extinguished stars which gather into a ball and are converted into giant magnetic fields from which even light cannot escape. The modern Arab state, in the political sense, runs close to this model, the executive apparatus resembling a »black hole« which converts its surrounding social environment into a setting in which nothing moves and from which nothing escapes. Like the astronomical black hole, this apparatus in turn forms into a tight ball around which the space is so constricted as to paralyze all movement.«[68]

State machineries of this kind are fixed on ensuring social and political control to such an extent that they fail in the fundamental responsibilities of the state (e.g. development, legal certainty, participation, transparency) or do not even attempt to deal with them in the first place. Although such dictatorships or semi- and sham democracies may often be able to contain terrorism and similar forms of violence for years through systems of spies and informers as well as repression, what they eventually produce is a build-up of conflicts which can explode all the more dangerously at a later stage.

The role of perception

Neil Kressel has examined the psychological conditions of political violence, especially the factors of hate, anger and frustration.

»Economic deprivation, persecution, epidemics, military defeat, and other problems may breed frustration on a societal scale. But harsh circumstances alone do not lead directly, or necessarily, to seething frustration and anger. People in many lands endure such conditions with equanimity, and, conversely, the absence of apparent deprivation hardly guarantees that people will not experience frustration. People become most disheartened when the rewards they get out of life fall far short of those they expected. Thus, rising, or unrealistically high, expectations sometimes contribute as much to mass frustration as does actual deprivation.

68 United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Arab Human Development Report 2004, New York 2005, p. 126

Similarly, a frustrated society need not, automatically, become an angry one. Only when people view their situations as unacceptable and as the result of injustice will anger prevail. When many people in a society decide that they are suffering unbearably because of oppression or mistreatment, the risk of mass hatred increases substantially. Experiences of real injustice lie at the heart of some destructive impulses, but a sense of inequity need not arise out of any actual persecution, nor from the deeds of the eventual targets.«[69]

An important element relating to the emergence of potential for violence is indeed the divergence of the hopes and expectations of a large part of the population and the social realities that prevail. Poverty among the population or a lack of democracy does not in itself lead directly and automatically to political violence – extremely poor societies can be remarkably peaceful. However, where dictatorial conditions or poverty are no longer accepted by broader sections of the population because the people consider greater prosperity and freedom to be desirable and possible but they are being denied both, a potential for conflict will then emerge with a possibly violent component.

If we apply these general comments to the region of the Near and Middle East, it can be ascertained that corrupt and inept governments deny their own people fundamental political rights and are, at the same time, unable to offer any economic prospects for the future. Mass youth unemployment, the shameless division of societies between rich and the poor (with the former often demonstratively pro-Western) as well as a huge divergence between a society's public values and standards and the social reality are the warning signs in this regard. Saudi Arabia, in particular, provides a glaring example of how official – religious – values can conflict with political and personal realities. Conversely, it is becoming clear that the distinctly more peaceful internal situation in Western Europe after World War II is not so much a result of »Western values« and other cultural or religious factors but has more to do with functioning social and political systems which also offered the majority of people economic prospects in their lives and only

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69 Neil J. Kressel, Mass Hate -The Global Rise of Genocide and Terror; New York, 2nd ed., 2002, p. 214

then provided a basis for corresponding attitudes and values. Such positive social and political conditions are very conducive to the development of peaceful mentalities and attitudes. However, the conditions are exactly the opposite in quite a number of countries in the Near and Middle East, with chronic crises existing within societies together with a growing atmosphere of hopelessness and anger.

Social sponsors of violence: mobilisation and recruitment

Social organisers of resulting political radicalism (and later possibly of their violent practices) can often be found in sections of the middle classes, e.g. among the sons of rural families who acquire new elements of education in the cities or even abroad (especially at universities) – and then do not find any (appropriate) employment but cannot or do not want to return to their villages. Although the potential for political conflict feeds on social deprivation and desperation, it is not normally organised by the poorest but, rather, by representatives of the technical intelligentsia, doctors or lawyers. The poorest and most marginalised members of society are frequently taken up with their personal struggle for survival, with the result that the scope and freedom for being engaged in continuing political organisation – including organised terrorism – is a »luxury« they can ill afford. Although the poorest certainly can become involved in political violence, e.g. in spontaneous revolts like the »IMF riots« or hunger demonstrations, or as cannon fodder in ethnic or ethno-religious rioting, those that are really poor or the lumpenproletariat come to the fore as planners and organisers only in rare exceptions for the very reason that they are often lacking in the necessary (or at least very useful) political culture techniques and educational elements. In today's world, the illiterate and those with no knowledge of computers are hardly suitable as political organisers. Conversely, political activism – and, in certain circumstances, also political and terrorist violence – is more realistic for sections of the middle classes, as well as being a potential strategy for political advancement. More extensive and permanent forms of violence therefore often presuppose great mental trauma among large parts of the population as well as additional specific problems on the part of sections of

the middle classes in order for both to correlate in an effective political context in which sections of the more educated middle classes can then justify their struggle in terms of the suffering of society as a whole. If there is an absence of political and non-violent mechanisms of opposition and change in such a context, violence can become a wide-ranging and effective weapon.

The complicated correlation between the deeper causes of conflict on the one hand and the role of the groups engaging in political radicalism and potential violence on the other hand can thus only be understood if the sections of the population primarily affected on account of the socio-political crisis are considered as the third factor. The cadres and organisations of political violence – as well as those involved in civil resistance – often relate in ideological terms to the lower social strata that suffer most, even though they do not belong to them and derive a large part of their motivation and legitimacy from their suffering. At the same time, they need them as (at least a part of) their social basis. Political violence is not aimed solely at its actual victims and destruction; rather, it represents a symbolic, communicative act directed at the exertion of political influence. The aim is to impress some sections of the population and win over their sympathies, while others are to be intimidated. It is necessary to motivate and mobilise one's own potential supporters and followers, influence public opinion and demonstrate the helplessness of the government or cause it to overreact in order to weaken it among society and undermine its credibility. In this sense, it is not the organisers of political violence that constitute the main problem but, rather, the political effect of the acts of violence on disadvantaged, oppressed or marginalised sections of the population, the middle classes and the public at large. In this regard, a political or ideological link can emerge between particular radicalised elements of the middle and sometimes even the upper classes – with their educational possibilities and powers of articulation, as well as financial resources – and the broad masses of the lower classes, which are often pushed to the fringes of society but rarely manage to remain politically effective in a sustained manner. The ability to influence and mobilise them can very much be affected by cultural factors but depends to a great extent on whether there is an existing system that offers them positive prospects for their lives and hope of im-

proving their own situation. So, although anyone wishing to combat political violence – and its repulsive special form, terrorism – must not ignore the perpetrators of violence, of course, the long-term success of such a strategy does depend on isolating the organisers and cadres of violence from society both politically and socially. It was only their success in this respect that enabled Italy and Germany to overcome their own forms of terrorism in the seventies and eighties: the perpetrators were isolated and gave up or were apprehended by the police. However, this task of isolating the perpetrators politically cannot be resolved by the police, secret services or military; it has to be brought about by creating well-founded hopes of positive development, through jobs, social security, respect for one's own people, advancement opportunities, a tolerable cost of living and possibilities for participation. Those not solving these problems can cut off many of the heads of the Hydra of terrorism and violence without, however, making any long-term progress.

Summary of the causes of violence

To summarise, it can be said that the starting point of an emergence of political violence normally includes a far-reaching political and economic crisis in which a widespread lack of prospects and hope becomes a fuel that can be ignited by political activists under certain circumstances.

In most cases, there is a second factor that plays a central role as a catalyst with regard to transforming an existing potential for conflict into political violence, i.e. the symbolism of political conflicts at regional level. For the Muslim cultural area, these are Palestine in particular as well as Iraq to an ever-increasing extent[70] and Kashmir to a lesser degree (mainly in Pakistan and Afghanistan). These conflicts have a strong emotional and mobilising effect, representing the repression of entire peoples. Where a potential for political violence emerges, the experience of a lack of social

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70 With regard to the effects of the conflicts in Palestine and Iraq on the population, see among others: United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Arab Human Development Report 2004, New York 2005, p. 30ff and 33ff

prospects and frustration within one's own society is combined with political emotionalisation through external violent conflicts with symbolic significance in the same way as the Vietnam War played a key role for radicalising sections of the European student movement in the sixties and early seventies, as has the Israeli policy of occupation in Palestine for several generations of Arab activists. In the case of Palestine, in particular, this mobilisation can take place on a *national* basis (Palestinians are Arabs) or at a *quasi-religious* level (Palestinians are predominantly Muslims), the foundation being identification with those who are oppressed.

In overall terms, it can be said that political violence, with all the diversity of its various manifestations, does contain a range of common elements: The presupposition of a socio-political crisis which is or can be expressed in social, economic, political or ideological aspects. Political violence will hardly develop beyond a sporadic form without conditions of this nature.

The perception of such crisis phenomena in relevant sections of society as unacceptable, »unjust« and being the fault of other groups. A possible gap between expectations and the realities as well as the apportioning of blame for a situation regarded as unreasonable and intolerable are central in this regard rather than the severity of the situation itself.

The real or perceived difficulty or impossibility of improving the situation by peaceful means in the foreseeable future. Although a political blockade on participation or reform constitutes a key factor in this respect, the perception of such a blockade is once again more important than the blockade itself. Related to the emergence of the civil war in Lebanon, Picard refers to the problems of the radical socio-economic changes preceding it before continuing in the following terms: »The tensions could have been resolved through »civil« forms of social actions, such as demonstrations, union negotiations, and national political battles, as one observes in other societies. But in Lebanon, the recourse to political violence was the result of a blockage, that is to say incapacity on the part of the political process to deal with the social demands.«[71]

71 Elizabeth Picard, The Lebanese Shia and Political Violence in Lebanon; in: David E. Apter (ed.), The Legitimization of Violence, New York 1997, pp. 189 – 233, p. 197

Political interplay between the active organisers of political violence (usually cadres from the middle class with above-average educational levels) and broad sections of the population which are poorer and politically less articulate and who the cadres, which are often elitist, have to connect with and influence to provide them with the necessary political clout in the first place.

An effective ideological mechanism for legitimizing political violence which does not draw solely on the threat to one's own partial interests but which postulates, rather, on an emotionally effective way of promoting the general interest through acts of violence. Such ideologies can be of a nationalistic, religious, racist or other nature as long as they incorporate the speci-fic experience of the crisis into the context of an indisputably »good cause«. This point will be looked at in greater detail below.

In other words, understanding political violence centres on the nexus of claims to power, specific solutions to problems (claimed or real) and the wrestling for legitimacy between the ruling power elites and any opposi-tional section of society. In the words of David Apter: »Political violence dis-orders explicitly for a designated and reordering purpose: to overthrow a tyrannical regime, to redefine and realise justice and equity, to achieve inde-pendence or territorial autonomy, to impose one's religious or doctrinal beliefs. Boundary smashing goes together with boundary resetting. Just as there are reasons of state, so there are reasons of the anti-state. Indeed it is as an anti-state which gives a social movement its rationale as a 'discourse community'. The key to political violence is its legitimacy.«[72]

Terrorism as a special form of political violence

Over the past few years, especially since the attacks of 11 September 2001, the international discussion has frequently been determined by the issue of international and, in particular, Islamic terrorism, often focusing on the phe-nomenon of suicide attacks. International terrorist networks like al-Qaeda

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72 David E. Apter, Political Violence in Analytical Perspective; in: David E. Apter (ed.), The Legitimization of Violence, New York 1997, pp. 1 – 32, here: p. 5

have left a bloody trail through brutal and spectacular attacks like those in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, New York, Madrid, Istanbul, Tunisia and the Near and Middle East, while the US government has declared a »war on terrorism« reaching far beyond any combating of actual terror. The issue of terrorism and the US reaction to it have emotionalised the international debate and directly or indirectly placed questions on the agenda with regard to whether this new terrorism is closely linked to Muslim radicalism and how the relationship between Muslim and Western societies has changed. It is simple, though also a simplification, to deny any link between »Islam« and terrorism since Islam is, indeed, peaceful in principle. Neither Islam nor Christianity has a positive or negative relationship with political violence per se, of course (nor with democracy).[73] However, when a large number of perpetrators use precisely Islam to justify their deeds and commit violence in the name of God, this may be questionable in theological terms but cannot simply be ignored politically. If we remind ourselves of the relationship of »the Modern Age« and nationalism with violence, we see that although the two are not violent per se, there is, nevertheless, a repeated close correlation between them which cannot be overlooked.

Terrorism is to be understood in this context as politically intended violence against non-combatants (especially civilians). It is evident in this respect that terrorism as such is, first of all, not bound to a particular ideology or religion – and not to Islam, either. The term originates from the time of the French Revolution, during which the actual or supposed adversaries were to be persecuted, killed or intimidated by means of terror. »The revolutionary tribunal and its counterparts in the provinces are presumed to have executed up to 20,000 members of the nobility, political opponents and supposed traitors.«[74]

Following this period, terrorism continued and still continues not to be a specifically religious or Muslim phenomenon, occurring in very different political and cultural contexts, e.g. in Tsarist Russia and subsequently in the

73 Azmy Bishara, Democratisation in the Middle Eastern Context, in: Jochen Hippler (ed.), The Democratisation of Disempowerment – The Problem of Democracy in the Third World, London 1995, p. 173ff

74 Rudolph J. Rummel, Demozid – Der befohlene Tod; Münster 2003, p. 51

Soviet Union, in Germany, Italy, France and other Western countries (especially in the 1970s and 1980s), in Japan, Columbia and other countries of Latin America, in India and Sri Lanka, as well as in numerous Muslim countries, such as Turkey, Lebanon, Algeria, Egypt, Pakistan and Iraq. Terrorism is, in principle, a political – and not a cultural or religious – phenomenon that has occurred or can occur in just about any society.

Terrorism is a form of violence, a crime. At the same time, it is, however, a form of politics and a way of communication. This aspect is normally even more important for the perpetrators than the destruction caused. Terrorist violence can express determination and an iron will, communicating opposition in principle and not only in tactical terms (though it certainly often pursues tactical aims). It can be a means of demonstrating one's own courage or may be aimed at proving one's own relevance and ability to act. These and other communicative intentions may be directed at the adversary but can also be aimed at one's own side. In the first case, the intention can be to build up potential for exerting pressure and intimidation or to force or wreck a negotiating situation. They can express pure general protest or be aimed at a specific policy area that is to be influenced. However, the intention of terrorism can also be to impact politically, especially on one's own group, e.g. a political, ethnic, national or religious reference group, even where the destruction is directed against third parties. The intention is to demonstrate that the perpetrators' organisation is committed more resolutely and more consistently to their »own cause« (e.g. Arab, Muslim, Irish, revolutionary, national, Tamil cause, etc.) than competing organisations, that it seeks to bond and homogenise its own political, ethnic, national, religious or otherwise defined group and distinguish it from others. There is very little that is as suited to drawing up frontiers and forming an identity as political violence since it rarely leaves people indifferent, requiring them to take sides. Terrorism – like political violence as a whole – has a polarising effect. It can be used to clearly structure a previously diffuse political situation into perpetrators and victims, friend and foe.

Having pointed out a number of the political »advantages« of terrorist tactics compared with peaceful demonstrations, petitions, mere verbal expression of opinion, etc., terrorism also often shows itself to be tactically

superior to other forms of violence. It can be practised by smaller groups, normally at a relatively low cost, and can achieve a substantial effect measured against the effort and outlay required. It uses the tactic of surprise attacks, without any prior warning in principle, and since anyone can be the target it is difficult and often impossible to protect oneself against it. Specific targets can be protected against attack but not an entire society. In many contexts, terrorism therefore has important tactical advantages over other forms of struggle – but not always and not everywhere. Violent attacks on civilians constitute a criminal act and are also perceived as such by most people. Terrorism that is perceived as not being legitimate (e.g. because possibilities of peaceful resistance exist, because it is seen as »excessive«, because it hits the »wrong« targets, or for other reasons) can isolate the perpetrators and cause revulsion among their own ranks. For this reason, too, it is associated with a high personal risk in most cases. In the final analysis, the tactical advantages can only be exploited in the long term if terrorism (and, once again, political violence as a whole) is perceived as *legitimate* by the majority of one's own group and potential supporters. We will come back to this point later. Without a minimum degree of legitimacy, it loses a large part of its political nature and can therefore not fulfil its function, sinking to the level of mere banditry.

Terrorism and suicide attacks

Some political observers believe that terrorism in general and suicide attacks in particular can be explained by psychological factors such as fanaticism, irrationality and the like. This may sound plausible at an abstract level: how could a reasonable, rational person kill him or herself? How could a person sacrifice his or her own life in order to blow up a bus, restaurant or police station if that person is not fanatical and irrational? Don't people have to be morally inferior, of perverted character and emotionally unstable to commit terrorist acts or even suicide attacks?

»According to Gen. Wesley Clark, unlike nineteenth-century Russian terrorists who wanted to depose the tsar, current Islamic terrorists are simply retrograde and nihilist: 'they want the destruction of Western civilisation

and a return to seventh-century Islam.' Senator John Warner (R-Va.) testified that a new security doctrine of pre-emption was necessary because 'those who would commit suicide in their assaults on the free world are not rational.' According to Vice President Dick Cheney, the September 11 plotters and other like-minded terrorists 'have no sense of morality.'«[75] Scott Atran is sceptical about such assessments: »In truth, suicide terrorists on the whole have no appreciable psychopathology and are often wholly committed to what they believe to be devout moral principles.«[76]

He continues: »A common notion in the U.S. administration and media spin on the war on terrorism is that suicide attackers are evil, deluded, or homicidal misfits who thrive in poverty, ignorance, and anarchy. This portrayal lends a sense of hopelessness to any attempt to address root causes because some individuals will always be desperate or deranged enough to conduct suicide attacks. Nevertheless, as logical as the poverty-breeds-terrorism argument may seem, study after study shows that suicide attackers and their supporters are rarely ignorant or impoverished. Nor are they crazed, cowardly, apathetic, or asocial. The common misconception underestimates the central role that organisational factors play in the appeal of terrorist networks.«[77]

The fact that suicide attacks cannot be explained by psychological defects of the perpetrators does not mean that there are no individual or psychological aspects present in them. There is, indeed, serious evidence to show that, in addition to other, political reasons, suicide assassins are also motivated by personal experiences, such as the loss of family members or humiliation. This has quite rightly been pointed out by Basem Ezbidi. »According to Eyad El-Sarraj, the founder and director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, today's suicide attackers are, for the most part, children of the first Intifada (1987). Studies show that during the first uprising, fifty-five per cent of children saw their fathers being humiliated or beaten by

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75 Scott Atran, Mishandling Suicide Terrorism; in: *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 2004 pp. 67 – 90, here p. 75, quotation from: http://www.twq.com/04summer/docs/04summer_atran.pdf

76 Ibid.

77 ibid. p. 73

Israeli soldiers. ... When life is nothing more than constant degradation, death can easily be perceived as the only source of pride. In 1996, practically most if not all Palestinians were against the «martyr operations». Not any longer. Now, all feel that they can no longer bear the situation as it is; they feel that they simply explode under all this pressure of humiliation. It is despair when dying becomes no different from living.«[78]

Even if there is repeated evidence of a link between suicide attacks and humiliation in the Palestinian context, any supposition that the perpetrators are mainly uneducated, impoverished people with no personal prospects can be deemed to have been empirically disproven. If we look at the level of education of the 168 Palestinian suicide bombers for the years 2000-2003, for example, the following picture emerges: 25 of them had only primary education, while 78 had attended high school and 63 had gone to university – not a matter of course in Palestine.[79] This pattern is very typical: as already mentioned, it is not the poorest people in society, not the lowest sections of the population that are responsible for terrorist actions – or civil forms of political opposition – but, rather, certain sections of the middle classes. And, as a rule, these are the »modern« sections of society rather than the most culturally backward.

Before looking at this issue in greater detail, however, it is helpful to remind ourselves of the beginnings of modern suicide attacks, the most important groups of perpetrators and the increase in their numbers since the early 1980s. In doing so, it becomes clear, among other things, that we are not concerned solely with a manifestation of radical religiousness but, rather, with a political means of struggle also resorted to by non-Muslim and secular[80] groups.

78 Basem Ezbidi, An Anatomy of Suicide Bombing: The case of Israel and Palestine, Notes to be presented at the workshop in Malta, 19 – 20 November 2004, p. 3

79 Middle East Resource Exchange Database (MERED); Data Shows Suicide Bombers Young, Well Educated; MERED, 14 August 2003, http://www.mered.org/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=132&FORUM_ID=1&CAT_ID=1&Forum_ Title=News&Topic_Title=Data+Shows+Suicide+Bombers+Young%2C+Well+Educated

80 It is pointed out that »secular« does not mean »anti-religious« here; it signifies that religion and state are viewed as separate, different spheres.

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»In modern times, suicide attacks have been employed by a large variety of groups, including Muslim (both Shiite and Sunni), Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and secular organisations, especially in the Middle East but also in many other regions of the world. A partial list of terrorist groups that actively use suicide attacks includes Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades of Yassir Arafat's Fatah movement, Al-Ansar Mujahidin in Chechnya, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), Hezbollah, Lashkar-e-taiba of Pakistan/Kashmir, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) of Algeria, Barbar Khalsa International (BKI) of India, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE or Tamil Tigers) of Sri Lanka, the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) of Turkey, and Al Qaeda.«[81]

Robert Pape reaches the same, empirically proven conclusion: »First, although religious motives may matter, modern suicide terrorism is not limited to Islamic Fundamentalism. Islamic groups receive the most attention in Western media, but the world's leader in suicide terrorism is actually the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a group who recruits from the predominantly Hindu Tamil population in northern and eastern Sri Lanka and whose ideology has Marxist/Leninist elements. The LTTE alone accounts for 75 of the 186 suicide terrorist attacks from 1980 to 2001. Even among Islamic suicide attacks, groups with secular orientations account for about a third of these attacks.«[82]

He describes the development in the numbers of suicide assassination attacks as follows: »The rate has increased from 31 in the 1980s, to 104 in the 1990s, to 53 in 2000 – 2001 alone. The rise of suicide terrorism is especially remarkable, given that the total number of terrorist incidents world-wide fell during the period, from a peak of 666 in 1987 to a low of 274 in 1998, with 348 in 2001.«[83] Since then, the number of suicide attacks has continued

81 Audrey Kurth Cronin, Terrorists and Suicide Attacks; *CRS Report for Congress*, Washington, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, 28 August 2003, p. 5, quotation from: http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL32058.pdf

82 Robert A. Pape, The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism; in: *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3, August 2003, pp. 1-19, here p. 1; quotation from: http://danieldrezner.com/research/guest/Pape1.pdf

83 Ibid.

to rise considerably, which can be ascribed, in particular, to the failure of the peace process in the Near East and the war in Iraq. Since 2003, by far the most suicide attacks have taken place in Iraq, followed – up to Palestinian President Abbas taking office – by Palestine and Israel. »Since 1993 (up to August 2003, JH), 303 suicide bombers have launched themselves against Israeli targets. Of that total, 242, or 80 percent, have come since September 2000, according to data released this week by security sources.«[84] Of these, 89 were committed by Hamas, 59 by Islamic Jihad (i.e. two primarily religious parties), with 58 and 8 carried out by the more secular Fatah and the PFLP respectively.[85]

This in itself shows that this particular form of struggle has not been and is not used only by religious forces.

Croitoru cites cases of South Korean suicide operations in the Korean War as well as North Korean suicide units in the military, and refers to the suicide attack on Tel Aviv airport by members of the Japanese Red Army in 1972.[86] He mentions that the first Palestinian suicide attack (on Kirjat Schmona in 1974) was carried out by the secular PFLP-GC rather than religious groups. In the same year, and once again in 1978, there were a handful of further suicide attacks committed in Israel by three non-religious Palestinian organisations. The year 1982 then saw the first suicide bombing executed by the Shiite Hisbollah in Lebanon, i.e. on the Israeli Headquarters in the Southern Lebanese area of Tyros. Although the Kurdish PKK was certainly anything other than a religious organisation, it nonetheless carried out around 15 suicide attacks between 1995 and 1999.[87]

84 Middle East Resource Exchange Database (MERED); Data Shows Suicide Bombers Young, Well Educated; MERED, 14 August 2003, http://www.mered.org/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=132&FORUM_ID=1&CAT_ID=1&Forum_Title=News&Topic_Title=Data+Shows+Suicide+Bombers+Young%2C+Well+Educated

85 Ibid.

86 Joseph Croitoru, Der Märtyrer als Waffe – Die historischen Wurzeln des Selbstmordattentats; Munich 2003, pp. 71 – 75

87 Ibid. p. 82f, p. 122, p. 213

Audrey Cronin points out another example: »The employment of suicide attacks as a terrorist technique is not exclusive to one culture or religion: with the invention of dynamite in the late 19th century, the use of bombs in terrorist attacks became a generally favoured method, and this also applied to suicide tactics. For example, the Russian radicals of the late 19th century, in putting themselves close enough to the target to assure success, usually also consciously sought their own demise. Proximity was important to the successful targeting of the crude explosions. In those instances where the terrorists survived and were captured, they often refused offers of clemency and were executed. Dying for the cause was a highly valued fate, a source of legitimacy for the cause, and a rallying point for future recruits. It was not, on the other hand, an effective long-term strategy in this case: the Russian regime successfully rooted out such well-known groups as Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) well before the Russian revolution, and they were not admired by the Bolsheviks.«[88]

Even though suicide attacks are not something specifically Near Eastern or Muslim in principle, it can however be said that they have mainly taken place in that region or been carried out by Near Eastern groups of perpetrators over the past few years – if we disregard the Tamil LTTE. Looking at the regions and political contexts, we see – with the remarkable exception of al-Qaeda – that suicide attacks occur almost exclusively in conflicts with a significant dimension of national liberation, state-forming aspirations or military occupation by an outside power (or perceived as such). The most important examples of this include the struggle of the Kurdish PKK in Turkey in the second half of the 1990s, the Tamil struggle for independence by the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the resistance struggle by Chechnyan fighters against Russian occupation and repression, the resistance of the Palestinians against Israeli occupation, or the attacks in Iraq against US troops or the Iraqi police and military units associated with them. Regardless of the cultural-religious context and the concrete ideologies of resistance, terrorism in general and its suicide variations in particular appear to be thriving, especially in cases

88 Audrey Kurth Cronin, Terrorists and Suicide Attacks; *CRS Report for Congress*, Washington, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, 28 August 2003, p. 4; http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL32058.pdf

of denial of self-determination at national level or military occupation (or a combination of the two). »In general, suicide terrorist campaigns seek to achieve specific territorial goals, most often the withdrawal of the target state's military forces from what the terrorists see as national homeland. From Lebanon to Israel to Sri Lanka to Kashmir to Chechnya, every suicide terrorist campaign from 1980 to 2001 has been waged by terrorist groups whose main goal has been to establish or maintain self-determination for their community's homeland by compelling an enemy to withdraw.«[89]

Joseph Croitoru also points out this correlation in the following terms: »Rigid repression of ethnic minorities and inhuman conditions have created a breeding ground in several Islamic countries for the further spread of the suicide attack phenomenon taking place since around the mid-1990s. The reason for this is that, although they see themselves primarily as Islamic warriors of God, all those engaging in this self-sacrifice, be it in Algeria, Kashmir or Chechnya, are at the same time also engaged in a national liberation struggle against a far superior adversary in military terms.«[90]

In such a political context, it is crucial to analyse terrorism and its suicide variants from two contrasting perspectives, i.e. on the one hand from that of an individual and collective psychology, without which we would hardly find any perpetrators.[91] The experiences of repeated and insurmountable humiliations as well as the loss of friends and relatives are indeed decisive in this regard. Atran comments as follows: »Among Palestinians, perceptions of historical injustice combine with personal loss and humiliation at the hands of their Israeli occupiers to nurture individual martyrs and general popular support for martyr actions. Saleh observes that a majority of Palestinian sui-

89 Robert A. Pape, The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism; in: *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 3, August 2003, pp. 1 – 19, here: p. 2

90 Joseph Croitoru, Der Märtyrer als Waffe – Die historischen Wurzeln des Selbstmordattentats; Munich 2003, p. 213

91 In relation to the psychological aspects of violence, see, for example, Klaus Wahl, Vorpolitische Prozesse politischer Gewalt, for the workshop »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften« organised by the German Foreign Office/Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations. Malta, 19 – 20 November 2004 and the literature quoted there

cide bombers had prior histories of arrest or injury by Israel's army, and many of the youngest suicide shooters had family members or close friends with such a history. Shikaki has preliminary survey data suggesting that popular support for suicide actions may be positively correlated with the number of Israeli checkpoints that Palestinians have to pass through regularly to go about their daily business and the time needed to pass through them (this can involve spending hours at each of several checkpoints, any of which can be arbitrarily closed down at any time to prevent passage). Humiliation and revenge are the most consistent sentiments expressed by recruits as well as their supporters, though expressed more as community grievances than as personal ones.«[92]

On the other hand, i.e. in addition to the psychological factors, terrorism can only be understood outside of its state form if it is seen as an instrumentally rational political instrument used by a structurally inferior party to a conflict. Terrorism offers decisive tactical advantages over other forms of combat which can be substantially strengthened still further through suicide terrorism, i.e. the element of surprise, the element of attack on unexpected targets which are, as a rule, poorly protected and hardly possible to protect and where a conventional military attack would be pointless.

»… Suicide attacks generally result in a larger number of casualties on average than do other types of terrorist attacks. From 1980 to 2001, suicide attacks reportedly represented only 3% of all terrorist attacks but accounted for 48% of total deaths due to terrorism. Looking just at Palestinian attacks between 2000 and 2002, suicide attacks represented only 1% of the total number of attacks but they caused about 44% of the Israeli casualties.«[93]

These figures demonstrate the high degree of effectiveness of suicide attacks compared with »simple« terrorism. This is underlined dramatically by the spectacular example of the terror attack carried out on 11 September 2001, which claimed almost 3,000 dead and with economic damage calcu-

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92 Scott Atran, Mishandling Suicide Terrorism; in: *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 2004 pp. 67 – 90, here p. 81, from: http://www.twq.com/04summer/docs/04summer_atran.pdf

93 Audrey Kurth Cronin, Terrorists and Suicide Attacks; *CRS Report for Congress*, Washington, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, 28 August 2003, p. 9, from: http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL32058.pdf

lated at $ 83 billion.[94] Destruction and damage to that extent would certainly not have been possible with conventional forms of resistance or violence. A number of the »classic« suicide attacks also emphasise this point. If we consider the attacks on the military headquarters of the USA, Israel and France in Lebanon in the year 1983, for example, it quickly becomes clear that these made a decisive contribution towards finally driving the foreign military troops out of the country – something that would have been inconceivable through open military attacks since the balance of power was so uneven. In this sense, terrorism and comparable violent actions, though not directed against civilians, can be understood as a weapon of the weak against superior adversaries. We should, however, remember at this juncture that not every attack using unconventional means and not every suicide attack necessarily has to constitute terrorism. Where such violent actions are directed against foreign soldiers or other armed forces in the context of a violent conflict, and not against civilians, they are of a military or paramilitary nature rather than having a terrorist character.

Key example: politics and religion in relation to Osama bin Laden

Osama bin Laden and the international terror organisation *al-Qaeda* represent a particularly dramatic example of the blending of violence and Islam. In certain respects, *al-Qaeda* is extremely untypical of Muslim groups prepared to use violence. The technological level, the international networking, the planning horizon, the operational mode and structure and the form of its interpretation of Islam make it fundamentally different to other groups in the region that are also radical. Nevertheless, certain elements of the reasoning context and justification of violence are extremely illustrative.

If we look at the infamous declaration published by Osama bin Laden and a number of extremists from Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh in February 1998, for example, the following picture emerges in concise terms.

94 Raphael Pearl, Terrorism, the Future, and U.S. Foreign Policy; *Issue Brief for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, Updated 11 April 2003, p. 1, http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/IB95112.pdf

Three substantial accusations are raised:

• The occupation of Islamic countries, especially »the most sacred of all sites, the Arabian Peninsula« in order to »plunder its riches, dictate to its rulers« and for other ends of the USA;

• The effects of US policy (»the Crusader-Zionist alliance«) of the Gulf War and the continuing embargo on the Iraqi civilian population »with more than one million dead«;

• The »occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims« by Israel, as well as US American support.[95]

This list represents an important example of the cross-border mobilisation power of symbolic regional conflicts for the purpose of mobilising and focusing a subliminal potential for violence that exists on account of conflicts within a society through identifying with victims of outside injustice. The experience of repression and injustice that is not directly suffered but, rather, politically imparted (related to external violent conflicts) will bring about the tendency for any emerging terrorism, despite its unavoidably emotional components, to take place more in a »cool«, calculating, organised and planned way, as demonstrated by the globally operating *al-Qaeda* network.[96] Modern instrumental rationality, modern infrastructure and modus operandi as well as long-term preparation of attacks are a matter of course and a corresponding social background of the perpetrators (e.g. tertiary education) is the rule.

The three central justifications of the violence of Osama bin Laden are, in essence, political rather than religious, even though this is concealed by embellished religious rhetoric. The presence of US soldiers in Saudi Arabia, the policy of sanctions against Iraq up to the Iraq War of 2003 with its dramatic consequences for Iraq's civilian population, and the Israeli occupation of the lands of Palestine and Jerusalem are, first and foremost, *political* rather than religious points of criticism. The very first sentence of the appeal contains a quotation from the Koran aimed at justifying violence, and the

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95 Text of Fatwa Urging Jihad Against Americans, published in *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 23 February 1998, quotation from Internet website: www.ict.org.il/articles/fatwah.htm

96 See, for example,: Georg Elwert, Terroristen: Rational und lernfähig, in: *Wege zum Menschen*, Vol. 54, 2002, pp. 345 – 359

second goes on to compare the »crusaders« (the USA and the military) with »locusts« that have invaded the Arabian Peninsula. The starting point is thus political criticism which is, however, then embedded in a religious context. Political arguments are important to the authors of such appeals and their target group, but not enough. They are more concerned with embellishing their criticism by couching it in moral terms, i.e. not formulating it on their own behalf but, rather, in the name of a higher or, indeed, the highest authority: »All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on God, His messengers (meaning the Prophet Mohammed, JH) and the Muslims.«

Political conflicts are ideologised and elevated by expressing them in religious terms in this way. Certain policies are then not only presented as being wrong, but also as breaching moral principles and – in a third stage – as being a violation of the will and commandments of God, of God Himself. Although this does nothing to change the political essence of the criticism, it is intended to lend it particular weight, transform it from a dispute among people into a conflict between people and God, finally placing it beyond human criticism. *If* the policy pursued by the USA and Israel really were a »declaration of war against God«, God's »defenders« would largely avoid any criticism of their own policy and violence. If the violence of the devout were only carrying out the will of God, how could Muslims criticise such violence without themselves coming into conflict with God?

Religious ideologisation of one's own political practice in general – and of one's own violence, up to and including terrorism, in particular – is intended to place this beyond criticism and raise it to being a moral guideline for others.

The wording of the declaration quoted culminates in an appeal for violence against the USA and all those who support it: »We call – with God's help – on all Muslims who believe in God and want to be rewarded by Him to follow God's commandment by killing the Americans and stripping them of their money wherever and whenever they find it. We call on all Muslim clerics, leaders, youth and soldiers to begin attacking the satanic US troops together with the fiendish supporters allied to them and bring down those who stand behind them and teach them a lesson.«

The form of terrorism practised by al-Qaeda differs fundamentally from other types, i.e. that of the Palestinians. It is more global and embedded in a world-wide political context, while also being less situative and less dependent on context. Although the Palestinian forms of terrorism are mostly organised and planned, they have more personal dimensions related to their own country.

The religious factor

We have so far analysed political violence in a *functional* manner, even though – related to the relationship between violence and the Modern Age – we referred at an earlier juncture to a correlation with developments of ideology and intellectual history. Everything points to political violence being practised in Western and Muslim countries because it mostly appears or actually is *useful* and not because it originates from one culture or another. Even though both Western and Muslim societies have shown themselves to be particularly violent and regrettably continue to do so, this is not due to their Western or Muslim nature (just as it is not due in other societies to their Buddhist or Hindu cultural traditions or religiousness) but, rather, to the functional advantages of violence, which serves to assert, stabilise or question power and balances of power. This is also true for non-state players and in all societies. The leader of the Peruvian guerrilla and terror organisation »Shining Path«, Abimael Guzmán, put his finger on the question of the fixation of power in the following terms: »What is fundamental for Maoism is power ... [therefore] the Party should and must direct absolutely everything. Everything, with no exceptions.«[97] The Shining Path also drew its political power from a deformed modernisation process and ideological breaks with traditional and modern identities – and used violence to establish alternative structures of power.

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97 Quotation from: Carlos Iván Degregori; The Maturation of a Cosmocrat and the Building of a Discourse Community: The Case of the Shining Path; in: David E. Apter (ed.), The Legitimization of Violence, New York 1997, pp. 33 – 82, p. 47

The fact should not be overlooked, however, that both state and non-state perpetrators in history and the present have repeatedly invoked God and religion (or other supreme values), and this relatively independent of any specific theology. How can this be explained?

Political violence occurs in an area of conflict between cost-benefit considerations and ideological legitimisation. In this respect, the need for legitimisation increases a) when the cost-benefit ratio is unfavourable, b) the risk is high; c) with the intensity of violence; d) in the case of certain symbolically significant forms of violence; e) where there is little direct plausibility, and f) with public attention. A relatively low level of violence with a high degree of plausibility (e.g. self-defence) or acts of violence hardly noticed by the public only require little effort with regard to legitimisation and ideologisation – there is no absolute need to refer to God or other supreme values in order to defend oneself against an attack. The need for ideology increases if things are the other way round.

Apter reduced a central aspect in this regard to a succinct formula: »People do not commit political violence without discourse.«[98] Political violence – as pointed out above – requires legitimacy to be politically effective. First of all, it must appear legitimate to the perpetrators themselves as it is otherwise very difficult to cross the threshold of using violence. Violence is an incisive, existential, drastic and non-self-evident act which contains considerable emotional aspects. Nobody commits an act of violence unless he has what he believes to be a good reason and people do not kill thoughtlessly or for pleasure, leaving aside pathological personalities for a moment. Political violence therefore also presupposes two things (and for pragmatic reasons): belonging to a group or community (in the twofold sense: an organisation and a political-cultural identity group, which are seldom identical) and justification. Political or religious ideologies establish the link between the two: they can legitimise violence under certain circumstances (to defend freedom, faith, to protect the nation, the race, to promote an indispensable political goal) and serve to consolidate membership of a group, a

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98 David E. Apter, Political Violence in Analytical Perspective; in: David E. Apter (ed.), The Legitimization of Violence, New York 1997, pp. 1 – 32, here: p. 2

sense of community, as well as the distinction between the in-group and out-group. Without ideology (in the broader sense, whereby utilitarian thought structures can certainly also be included), the use of violence would remain isolated from other areas of life and situative, it would be »meaning-less«, without any justification endowing it with meaning. The importance of ideology lies at different levels:

• Self-motivation and self-legitimisation of the perpetrator(s);

• Establishing an in-group identity and promoting group cohesion of the reference group and organisation to which the perpetrator(s) belong(s);

• Justification of the deed and its meaningful embedding in relation to the large group for which one acts or purports to act (nation, race, religious community, class, etc.) and political communication with and within this large group;

• Distinction from other sections of society and organisations.

In the end, it is a matter of linking three aspects, i.e. the act of violence a) as special-interest politics, b) in relation to the psychological dimension of the perpetrator(s) and his/her/their reference group and c) as a »selfless« deed for a community in a legitimising, mental and conceptional way. Ideology thus has to make the violent actions easier for the perpetrators, has to declare this as the means to the end and at the same time make it appear non-personal, as an expression of the interests of a collective for which the perpetrators act only in a representative manner. These functions can fulfil secular, worldly and religious ideologies. The type of justification of political violence depends in specific societies on what contexts of discourse exist and which ideologies are particularly credible and can be legitimised. This is the reason for violence generally being justified in terms of Arab National-ism or National Liberation in the Near and Middle East in the period bet-ween the 1950s and 1970s and increasingly in the guise of religion since the 1970s/1980s: the social discourse shifted from nationalism to Islamic or Islamist forms, with the legitimisation of violence thus changing according-ly. Only a socially accepted and dominant ideology can effectively fulfil the function of justifying violence.

Interestingly, an ideologically critical, intellectual history or theological approach is only helpful to a limited extent. If the extremely different reli-

gious systems and secular ideologies can practically all be instrumentalised to legitimise the same situation – i.e. political violence up to and including war and genocide – despite their absolutely fundamental differences, the problem must lie in what they have in common rather than their dissimilarity. And what they have in common does not lie in the *content* of all these ideologies and religions but, rather, in the *openness of their interpretation* on the one hand and their social and political *function* on the other hand – with the polysemy resulting from their function.

In other words, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Marxism-Leninism, Fascism, the Modern Age, »neutral« instrumental rationality, secularity – all of these are value systems and »ideologies« which inherently have hardly anything in common. Mono- or polytheism, atheism, religious tolerance or a-religiousness – all these different references to religion, and others besides, are contained in them. They stem from the most varied eras of the last 2,500 years and comprise extremely diverse implicit and explicit social and moral images. They could hardly be more different in terms of intellectual history and the substance of their intellectual structures – a factor strengthened even more by their also being extremely heterogeneous in themselves. One thing that is certain, nevertheless, is that in addition to not preventing excessive violence, wars, massacres, terrorism and genocide, they have also all been used repeatedly to legitimise such criminal acts. This was not on account of the *contents* of the holy books or fundamental secular writings, even though these were, from case to case, often easy to instrumentalise (albeit to differing extents); it was due, rather, to their social functions, which are not confined to regulating, for example, man's relationship with God; they also became social values and ideologies of supremacy in each case which were used by the power elites to justify their power (or by counter-elites to question such power). The violent results of religion thus stem from their socio-political rather than their religious dimensions – it is not the spiritual interpretation of man's relationship with God in itself that is a source of violence (leaving aside practices of ritual sacrifice) but, rather, the inevitable adaptation and distortion of religion when this becomes a social phenomenon. The process takes place in very different ways depending on a) the theological substance of a specific religion, b) the socio-

political context of the specific society, i.e. its balances of power, inconsistencies, problems, and c) the precise function the religion is to perform in this context, e.g. an integrative, power-safeguarding, mobilising or polarising function.

In this process, religion invariably takes on a secular – worldly, non-religious, political – function, even though this may be disputed by the players involved. The theological substance of the religion concerned will then normally also change through suitable ideological elements being strengthened and emphasised and conflicting elements abandoned or reinterpreted accordingly. For example, a »warlike« version emerged from the originally pacifist religion of the Sikhs on account of their persecution, while the Christian ideals of loving one's neighbour and even one's enemy as oneself did not stop Christianity from justifying racism and wars, and a militant interpretation of the »jihad« also led to Islam being used to serve the purposes of political violence.

Even though the Bible and the Koran were said to be the word of God, He could not prevent man turning His word into power or anti-power ideologies or models for the justification of violence – something that has long since been discussed on repeated occasions by theologians of many religions. Although some theologians may complain with good cause at this juncture that this has »falsified« the »real« meaning of a religion – which is true as a rule – we do have to make the sobering point that this has *always* happened with *all* religions and political philosophies. Thus, the impression forces itself upon one that precisely this may be one of the social functions of such ideologies. Although this may be perceived as regrettable, disputing it does nothing to change the facts. An important aspect of this situation lies in the fact that beyond its theological substance religion is also a linguistic-cultural code for the formulation and meaningful interpretation of personal, political or social problems. It *shapes* thinking in a certain sense, in the same way as a language does, but in the end can be formed is such a way that its meaning is dependent on context. »People use religion as a foundation for their fraternity and solidarity, as well as their militancy and fantasies of killing. Religious symbolic language forms are ambiguous to a really frightening degree.«[99]

This polysemy of religious language and theology can function in two directions: on the one hand, and as already mentioned, it helps to adapt religion to the social and political realities. It can, however, also take a »subversive« course, i.e. it cannot be ruled out, especially in crisis situations, that religion will transcend the social realities in ideological terms with reference to God or the sacred or even break with them. In this way, the divine cannot only be made into an emotionally powerful justification of the actual balance of power; such balances of power can, rather, also be called into question by invoking the divine. It is precisely this that makes fundamental resistance possible in the first place in some societies since resistance often calls for more than mere courage, also requiring a breach with deeply rooted mentalities and ideologies in many cases and possibly a prevailing social consensus, which can be made easier by invoking the supernatural, i.e. God. In terms of definition, the divine transcends even such powerful social conventions and when the two are perceived as being contradictory, the breach with conventions becomes legitimate. Violence – as well as non-violence – can also be justified in this way.

Let us now come back to the role of devoutness for legitimising political violence. Islam plays an important part in the context of the numerous conflicts and potential for violence in the region. However, it does not represent the source of the violence; it can, rather, be the form of articulating political criticism and the source for legitimising resistance – also in its violent form. Its significance does not, therefore, lie in being the cause of violence but, rather, in its ability – and that of other religions – to provide multi-contextual legitimisation models with very considerable persuasive power in terms of emotions which, at the same time, can hardly be refuted. It is difficult for the sacred scriptures to defend themselves against being instrumentalised for political purposes. The role of Islam in our context thus lies predominantly in the possible individual and collective motivation of perpetrators of violence who then do not fight only for themselves or their group but, rather, »for God« – with a corresponding, theologically specific exculpation or reward (e.g. for »martyrs«). The role of Islam also lies in its – context-

99 Wilfried von Bredow, Religion, Politik, Gewalt; in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 January 2005, p. 8

dependent – mobilisation potential, i.e. in the chance of achieving a social and political basis for its own politics and violence which is broader than if this were to be argued on purely pragmatic grounds. In a society where most of its members are either pious or would like to appear so, »Islam« can take on a political integrating function or undermine competing legitimisation models if the social and political reality supports its argumentation or makes it appear plausible. Removed from the social realities, »Islam« is, *in political terms*, nothing other than the ideological expression of them; but it can make exaggeration and the scope for interpretation into a significant power factor.

Furthermore, the Islamic discourse in politics, again given the appropriate basic conditions, can do more than provide meaning, especially in confusing and tense situations. It can possibly also contribute to a desired polarisation (or integration) of the social and political debate, no longer solely being a matter of solving questions regarding the matter itself (for which very different solutions may be conceivable) but more a case of taking up a position for or against God and His commandments. Reducing political options to good and evil – also ardently practised in Washington – is indeed the declared objective of many groups with a propensity to violence in Muslim countries. The aim of Osama bin Laden's terror attack in September 2001 was also to force the (Muslim) world to choose between the forces of the Devil and Islam – and in so doing, itself to epitomise the latter.

The fact that the Islamic discourse now plays such a crucial role in the Near and Middle East can be explained purely from a historical rather than a theological viewpoint. There too, as in Western countries, nationalistic and socialist/communist ideologies were long misused to justify violence, with the vast majority of aeroplane hijacks, assassinations and bomb attacks by Palestinian groups carried out using political, non-religious grounds in the seventies and eighties, e.g. in the context of Arab Nationalism or Marxism-Leninism. However, these ideologies were destroyed with the defeat of the Arab countries in the Six-Day War of 1967 and the collapse of the Soviet Union respectively and can hardly be used any longer as legitimisation. The Near and Middle East has since experienced an ideological vacuum which has been filled by different variations of political Islam, i.e.

Islamism, due to the lack of an alternative. Since then, a large number of discourses on political and social issues have been conducted in terms of abstract religious concepts.

It has been pointed out above that religion does or can also modify itself ideologically in the process of entering into the social sphere through its specific structures and problems. It is also possible and very frequently the case that the specific religion integrates elements of other – even secular – ideologies that have a powerful effect in society. The uniting or fusion of religious and nationalistic thought patterns is typical of this phenomenon, which means that religion can easily play a role in contexts of national liberation, in ethno-national conflicts or nation-building. Religious ideologies frequently play a part in the forming of national identities or with regard to the positive or negative relationship of many citizens to the nation-state. Examples of this include the fusion of Buddhism and Singhalese nationalism in the Sri Lankan civil war,[100] the role of Protestantism in the development of the North American colonies into the United States, as well as the growing role of Islamic discourses in the Palestinian resistance against Israel. Bruce Lawrence also emphasises the embedding of religious factors in nation-state discourses:

»… Islam is a dependent as well as an independent variable in the construction of nation state interests. Internal cohesion, regional prowess, international accessibility – all are aspects of the new world-system that has emerged only in the twentieth century, in large part due to the demands of the world capitalist economy. To speak of Islam as though it operated outside of or independent of this system and its strictures is to ignore the level of change that pervades the contemporary era. Rhetorical strategies may invoke an independent role for Islamic values, even as they conjure up a revered past of Islamic successes, but the structural restraints of modernity impose on Islam – as on Christianity and Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism, Confucianism and Shinto – a subordinate role in each nation state.«[101]

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100 For fascinating reading matter on this topic, see: H.L. Seneviratne, The Work of Kings – The New Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Chicago 1999, which clearly reveals amazing parallels between Buddhist orders in Sri Lanka and Islamist parties in the Near East, despite the considerable theological differences between Buddhism and Islam.

In relation to Muslim violence, he comments further: »Islam has ceased to be, if it ever fully was, an independent variable in Muslim societies. The dominant rubric for the social as well as the political domain is the nation state. The nation state not only controls the mechanisms of power; it also curtails, without eliminating, the possibility of violence induced by Islam. Muslims may still fight, kill and die, but they do so, with rare exceptions, as members of nation states or, in the case of Palestinians and Azerbaijanis, as members of umbrella groups struggling to become a nation state.«[102]

Religion and secular ideologies can thus play an important role in the context of political violence – where the basic political conditions evoke this. They can provide forms of discourse in which political, social or economic conflicts can be articulated in a manner that brings about consensus. Although they can motivate and mobilise, their effectiveness and significance depend only secondarily on their theological or intellectual structures and predominantly on how they can be instrumentalised for political purposes. Although it is possible for ideologies – including religious ideologies – to become violent factors in their own right, this is normally a small-group phenomenon with little political relevance.

Western legitimation of violence and the »War on Terror«

As in other cultures, the ways in which the West legitimises violence are very varied, diverse, context-related and inconsistent. In the age of colonialism, a nationalistic, civilisational, sometimes even religious sense of mission and an uninhibited will to dominate were used to justify violence, later followed – in some countries – by a discourse of the »master race mentality« or racism, before an anti-communist ideology justifying violence was then deemed necessary to fend off left-wing claims to power. There have long since also been patterns of thought which justify violence directly or indirectly by explaining that there is something natural about it or that it is the

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101 Bruce B. Lawrence, The Islamic Idiom of Violence – A View from Indonesia; in: Mark Juergensmeyer (ed.), Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World, London 1992, pp. 82-100, here: p. 88f

102 Ibid, p. 84

result of a rational weighing-up of interests. The famous quotation of Henry Kissinger (former National Security Advisor and then Secretary of State of the USA), that »oil is much too important a commodity to be left in the hands of the Arabs«, reported by two former UN diplomats[103] is evidence of this way of thinking. The statement made on an American TV channel by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in 1996 (under President Clinton) on the humanitarian consequences of US sanctions against Iraq also underlines the uninhibited, and on occasions openly cynical way in which important politicians deal with death on a massive scale. In reply to the question put by CBS journalist Lesley Stahl: »We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?«, Albright answered quite clearly: »I think this is a very hard choice, but the price – we think the price is worth it.«[104]

Such comments do not refer to trivial matters but, rather, to the conscious sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of lives for what was a rather unclear objective at the time, i.e. exerting pressure on an Iraqi government which treated its own citizens in an extremely brutal manner. The former UN head of the humanitarian aid programmes in Iraq, Denis Halliday, described the consequences of this policy as »genocide«.[105]

There are many more examples of such unemotional and ideologically weak justifications, though most of them have attracted little public attention, with many being a mixture of cynical and ideological policy justifications. When, for example, this author spoke in 1986 to a high-ranking US Ministry of Defence official about the war in Afghanistan, which was strong-

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103 Hans von Sponeck / Denis Halliday, The Hostage Nation, in: *The Guardian*, 29 November 2001, quotation here from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,608578,00.html

104 CBS— 60 Minutes, 12 May 1996, quotation from: Matt Welch, Iraqi death toll doesn't add up – Sanctions imposed 12 years ago blamed for a million fatalities, in: *National Post* (Canada), 10 August 2003, http://www.mattwelch.com/NatPostSave/Sanctions.htm; and: Matt Welch, The Politics of Dead Children – Have sanctions against Iraq murdered millions? In: *ReasonOnline*, March 2002, http://www.reason.com/0203/fe.mw.the.shtml

105 Former UN official says sanctions against Iraq amount to 'genocide', in: *Cornell Chronicle*, Cornell University, 30 September 1999, http://www.news.cornell.edu/Chronicle/99/9.30.99/Halliday_talk.html

ly justified in the public domain on the basis of anti-communist arguments and liberating the country from Soviet troops, the official made it clear that they did not want to let the Soviet Union withdraw from Afghanistan. Instead the intention was »to nail them down and bleed them out«. »To this purpose we will fight to the last Afghan. This may sound cynical to you, and maybe it is. But this is our policy.«[106]

This shows the linking of ideological arguments (»freedom«, anti-communism, »American jihad«, etc.) with power politics considerations of an instrumentally rational nature. Searching precisely for such combinations of ideological arguments and strategies involving power politics often proves to be enlightening, both in Western and Muslim cultures. The noble words, »moral values« and religious justifications often conceal more violent intentions. However, even though many justifications of violence can be traced back to a core of firm interests determined in a rational manner, this is not a sign of being particularly civilised. Purnaka Silva pointed out the deficiencies of such »subdued« rationalisations of violence with good reason in a different context.

»…(D)ependence on violence as a strategic and tactical means to settle conflicts and power struggles betrays a serious deficiency in the civilisational development of human socio-political formations – despite the manifold technological developments of the space age and the information age. No amount of theorizing about strategic thinking, 'just wars' and 'future wars' can take away from the barbarism and brutality of situated practices of political violence. In fact, such efforts only underline the underdeveloped character of contemporary moralities and the uncivilised aspects of contemporary human politico-economic culture and praxis.«[107]

The last few decades have seen a certain, albeit superficial »civilisation« of discourses, i.e. a certain turning-away from openly racist and directly imperial justifications of violence. This discourse-shifting process was

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106 Author's records.

107 Purnaka L. de Silva, Post-Cold War Futures – Peacemaking, Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action; in: Ronaldo Munck / Purnaka L. de Silva (eds.), Postmodern Insurgencies – Political Violence, Identity Formation and Peacemaking in Comparative Perspective, New York 2000, pp. 237 – 270, here: pp. 240

prompted by the experiences of the two world wars and the subsequent strengthening of international law and founding of the United Nations, later intensified by the increased self-confidence of Western countries following their victory in the Cold War. »Humanitarian« grounds for intervention, as well as the enforcement of international law and democracy came to the fore to a greater extent. This was also related to wars and major forms of political violence being seen in increasingly sceptical terms in ever-larger sections of Western societies and »morally good« arguments therefore having to be emphasised to a greater extent in contrast to imperial arguments. And since what was to be regarded as morally good had changed substantially among the populations of the West, the justifications for violence also changed in the same direction, i.e. to »humanitarian«, »peace enforcement« or »international law enforcement« grounds.

Illustrative examples in this context were the argumentation models used by the US government in relation to its response to 11 September 2001 and the Iraq War. When an appalling act of suicide terror brought down the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, killing almost 3,000 people in full view of the media, the war against terrorism became a highly effective emotional form of argumentation. Naturally enough, Washington's policy was then indeed characterised by fighting terrorism – no government could have afforded to appear reckless in this respect after September 11. However, even after such a ghastly experience, a superpower cannot and will not reinvent its policy in all areas and suddenly subordinate its entire foreign policy to the aspect of combating terror. A superpower has many interests and does not abandon these because of a terror attack. Thus, the destruction of the World Trade Center brought about the temptation and the opportunity to justify existing interests, policies and strategies also related to terrorism to a greater or lesser degree on the basis of the »War on Terror« – thus making it difficult to attack such a policy. Who would be opposed to fighting terrorism following the massacre of 3,000 people in New York? Although the »War on Terror« was not made the centrepiece of US foreign *policy* in reality (trade policy issues, safeguarding energy supplies, relations with Russia, China and other countries, consolidating the country's own global hegemony, etc. were simply too important for this), it did become the central ele-

ment for *justifying* policy. The key to understanding this process lies in the terminology: what could have been a mere combating of terrorism (long since carried out by secret services, the police and justice departments) became a *war*, the »War on Terror«. In this way, an important fight against criminal and violent gangs was politicised and militarised, with the criminals turned, so to speak, into »war opponents«, raising them in principle to one's own level of legitimacy – an incredibly stupid thing to do as it played right into the hands of the terrorists. This effect was, however, accepted approvingly since the formula of the »war« on terror contained an important political advantage: it created preventative justification for one's own violence. If the act of terror on 11 September 2001 signalled the beginning of a war, the USA then saw itself as a country under attack which had the right to engage in violence of its own because it was now at war. This self-created political leeway was exploited immediately. In addition to attacking the al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan, the Taliban government, which enjoyed hardly any international recognition, was also toppled and the region covered by a tight network of military bases which, after only a short time – after the Iraq War – then encircled Iran on all sides (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, then Iraq, and before that Turkey).

It was, however, Washington's war against Iraq, in particular, that revealed a rather more troubled relationship with violence in Western societies – with, for example, the resistance in »Old Europe« on the part of governments and populations demonstrating at least in part that people can learn from their own bloody histories. The war served imperial purposes, i.e. the control and political reorganisation of the world's central energy supply region. Two thirds of the global oil reserves are in the Gulf, with the region of Central Asia (north of Iran and Afghanistan) developing into the second most important energy region in the world on account of its oil and, in particular, gas reserves. Establishing the USA's own dominance in this region and »politically reorienting« the local regime where required (i.e. being able to topple governments and bring others to power at will) was a clearly recognisable objective of the war, also sometimes expressed with distinct clarity – albeit in somewhat more diplomatic terms. The war was

thus waged on »instrumentally rational« grounds, for »realistic« reasons in political terms i.e. the expansion of power. The forms of legitimisation, on the other hand, changed in quick succession, demonstrating their arbitrary nature.[108] The main argument put forward for the war was Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction – which had long since ceased to exist – in order to officially classify the campaign as being for a good cause, i.e. stepping in against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore – especially after 11 September 2001 – it was claimed that Iraq had links with international terrorism and Osama bin Laden in particular, as stated by Vice-President Cheney in August 2002, for example.[109] Arguments of this nature were then soon withdrawn because even the CIA could not find any serious proof of this.[110] Eventually, they were pushed to the fore once again in the concluding phase of preparations for the war, e.g. in US Secretary of State Powell's address to the UN Security Council in February 2003, although there were still no serious indications of such a situation.[111] There were also attempts to combine the two arguments by justifying violence against Iraq on the grounds that it would otherwise pass on its (still non-existent) weapons of mass destruction to Islamist terrorists (with whom there was no actual link). On other occasions, Iraq's threat to its neighbours was emphasised – although they themselves did not feel threatened, with neither Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, nor Jordan taking Iraq seriously as a military threat after Iraq had been bled dry for more than a decade. Furthermore, the dictatorial and brutal nature of the regime was also used as grounds for a

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108 The subsequent passages come from: Jochen Hippler, Der Weg in den Krieg – Washingtons Außenpolitik und der Irak, in: Friedensgutachten 2003, ed. by Reinhard Mutz, Bruno Schoch, Ulrich Rasch, Christoph Weller, for the Department of Peace and Security Politics at the University of Hamburg (ISFH), The Hessian Foundation for Peace and Conflict Research (HSFK), Forschungsstätte der Evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft (FEST), Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) and Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), June 2003, pp. 89-98

109 Cheney Says Iraqi Strike Is Justified, in: *Washington Post*, 27 August 2002; page A01

110 U.S. Not Claiming Iraqi Link To Terror, in: *Washington Post*, 10 September 2002; page A01

111 What Powell Achieved – He may not have swayed doubters, but the Secretary of State shortened the odds on a UN resolution authorizing force against Iraq, in: *Time* Magazine, Wednesday, 5 February 2003, http://www.time.com/time/world/printout/0,8816,419939,00.html

confrontational policy as if neither had existed at the time when the USA was still supporting Baghdad or as if this were not also true of a number of US allies.

On occasions, US President Bush described his policy on Iraq as a »battle for the future of the Muslim world«,[112] while also justifying the war as a means that would lead to solving the Middle East conflict between Israel and the Palestinians and creating a »truly democratic Palestinian state«.[113]

Iraq's non-compliance with UN resolutions and international law was stressed repeatedly – although there are currently around 90 other resolutions being ignored by countries other than Iraq, without Washington feeling the need to initiate similar confrontations[114] – and without taking into account that the USA was itself causing untold harm to the UN through the war and violating international law. During the preparations for the war, President Bush stated very concisely that »We will change the Iraqi regime in the best interests of the Iraqi people.«[115] Finally, there was also talk of the aim of reorganising the entire Near and Middle East, with the Iraq War merely the first step in this process. Occasionally, all the reasons were bundled together, e.g. by Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's National Security Advisor at the time: »He (Saddam Hussein; JH) is an evil man who – if he is left to do so – will again inflict devastation on his own people, his neighbours and, if he maintains weapons of mass destruction and carrier systems, on us all. ... There are very powerful moral grounds for regime change. We certainly cannot afford the luxury of inaction.«[116]

The numerous, constantly changing arguments in favour of a policy of war against Iraq merely served to justify a predetermined policy. The *Wash-*

112 Quotation from: Bush to Cast War as Part of Regional Strategy, in: *Washington Post*, 26 February 2003, p. A19

113 Quotation from: President Details Vision for Iraq, in: *Washington Post*, 27 February 2003, p. A01

114 Stephen Zunes, The Bush Administration's Attacks on the United Nations, 14 February 2003, http://www.presentdanger.org/commentary/2003/0302paxam.html

115 Quotation from: Bush is Ready to Go Without UN, in: *Washington Post*, 7 March 2003, p. A01

116 Rice Lays Out Case for War In Iraq – Bush Adviser Cites 'Moral' Reasons, in: *Washington Post*, 16 August 2002; Page A01

ington Post quoted an official of the US Ministry of Defence back in the early autumn of 2002 as follows: »There is no debate on the need for regime change. We have been concentrating on its consequences.«[117]

On the fringes of and outside the Bush administration, arguments could be heard which, although they carried weight within the government, were nonetheless dealt with very discreetly. Former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski outlined this as follows: »It is not a case of Iraq; it concerns our global role.«[118]

Altogether, it has to be said that the changing justifications for war were evidently of a purely opportunist nature, merely designed to »sell« a policy of war based on reasons of power politics.

The problem of such a practice lies in numerous arguments that are right being instrumentalised for a policy that is wrong, thus causing them to be undermined and discredited because of the way they are contextualised. The war on terror, efforts to stem the spread of weapons of mass destruction and promoting democracy are, of course, high objectives that could and should be shared by all in principle. However, using such objectives so crudely to serve imperial aims does them great harm. Taking the concepts of democracy and human rights as a pretext for conducting imperialist wars necessarily leads to their being weakened in the Near and Middle East, in particular, and stripping them of all credibility. This effect set in all the more when certain policy elements – e.g. the US prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, the practices of maltreatment and torture at the Abu Ghraib prison (near Baghdad), and the massive military force against the Iraqi city of Falluja – became symbols directly conflicting with claims and standards of democracy and human rights.

117 More Public, but Still Private – Quiet Role in Iraq Debate Masks Powell's Position on War, in: *Washington Post*, 17 September 2002, p. A17

118 US in a Tough Position as Isolation Increases, in: *Washington Post*, 6 March 2003, p. A01

Common and contrasting problems with political violence

Over the past few decades, it has to be said that Muslim countries and regions have been particularly affected by wars and political violence. In addition to the examples of Pakistan, Indonesia and Iraq referred to above, other countries that need to be mentioned include Somalia, Lebanon, Algeria, the Kurdish settlement areas of Turkey, the Western Sahara, Jordan (1970), Syria (1982), Libya/Chad, Sudan (in the south and west), Nigeria, Palestine, Yemen, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Indonesia/East Timor and others. In addition to these cases in which at least thousands and sometimes hundreds of thousands or more people were killed, we also have to take account of those countries with smaller numbers of people falling victim to repressive governments, violent resistance movements or terrorists now or in the past. And when we maintain above that it is not only since the onset of the early Modern Age and via the orgies of violence in the 20th century that the West has repeatedly produced large-scale violence, it also has to be stated that Muslim countries have a similarly serious problem concerning violence.

Double standards

This fact should be obvious, but is repeatedly ignored or disputed in many Arab or Muslim countries. In the same way as Japan still does not really acknowledge its war crimes in China and Korea, preferring instead to evade, play down, »overlook« or even deny its responsibility, and in the same way as the USA and Europe do not like to be made aware of their own violent acts, a culture of denial and suppression also continues to prevail among governments and most intellectuals in Muslim societies.[119] In Turkey, the crimes of genocide against the Armenians are still taboo and can hardly be mentioned without fear of intimidation, isolation or sanctions. In Pakistan,

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119 Heitmeyer speaks here of realisation gaps and idealisation attitudes, in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Politische Gewalt in westlichen und muslimisch geprägten Gesellschaften; Fragen und Diskussionsanregungen zum Workshop »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften«, Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, Malta 19 – 20 November 2004, p. 5

it is still almost impossible to talk openly and frankly about the atrocities committed by the country's own military in what is now Bangladesh, while in the Arab world there is still a sad tendency to overlook, deny or play down the acts of violence committed in Arab countries by their own regimes or other Arab perpetrators. Although the earlier violence of Western colonialism, the Israeli violence in Palestine and the US war in Iraq are condemned loudly and rightly, a strange silence prevails with regard to terrible crimes of violence carried out by Arab or Muslim perpetrators. Where was the storm of protest by Arab intellectuals against Sudan's brutal policy of war in the south of the country, in which hundreds of thousands of people – often Christians – were killed? Where was the protest against the expulsion, massacre and presumed genocide committed in the West Sudanese province of Darfur by the same government[120] – this time with Muslim victims? Why did Arab governments and intellectuals gloss over, ignore and even justify the crimes of dictator Saddam Hussein against the Iranian people, as well as the mass murder of Kurds and Arabs for so long? Why was Iraq's military invasion of Iran in 1980, which cost the lives of at least one million people – Muslims once again – accepted for tactical reasons and even co-financed, also in the good company of the West, of course?

This list of looking the other way and justifying horrendous actions could be added to almost at will. Even if we take into account that freedom of speech is very limited or sometimes non-existent in a large number of Arab (and other Muslim) countries and it is therefore difficult to express differing political opinions – the silence that prevails in relation to the violence carried out in Muslim societies is shocking. Even in private conversations, many Arabs and intellectuals from Muslim countries tend, according to political appropriateness, to play down or justify even dreadful acts of violence in their own regions – with the tacit or open sympathy for the murderer of his own people, Saddam Hussein, representing a repulsive example of this. The

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120 See, for example: Human Rights Watch, Darfur Destroyed – Ethnic Cleansing by Government and Militia Forces in Western Sudan, Human Rights Watch, Vol. 15, No. 6(A), May 2004; Human Rights Watch, Targeting the Fur: Mass Killings in Darfur, A Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, 21 January 2005, or: Scott Straus, Darfur and the Genocide Debate, in: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 1, January/February 2005, pp. 123 – 133

reasons for such cases of Arabs and Muslims »overlooking« violent excesses in their own societies appear, on the one had, to be associated with considerable political opportunism, as is also frequently the case in the West – after all, US and European governments also continued to support Saddam long after his criminal acts were known, and even after the massacres of the Kurds in 1988 using poison gas. There is, however, also a mentality of forgiving the enemy of one's own enemy everything: anyone taking up a position against Israel or the USA is excused the most horrible crimes because they are considered to be secondary in that conflict. Such a viewpoint does, however, precisely undermine the values of justice, humanity and international law that the same people want to outwardly defend. It is not only wrong in itself; in the final analysis, it also weakens one's own position since the legitimacy – for example – of resistance against Israeli or US occupation be-comes questionable when one supports murderers oneself. Reference to the often ambiguous politics of Western governments does nothing to alter this. The singular vision of Arab and Muslim intellectuals and politicians on the issue of violence is often related to themselves feeling so much on the defensive in terms of power politics and political culture that they make the end justify any means. In a certain sense, it is partly the result of an intellectual and emotional siege mentality. And although the almost untold military, economic and political superiority of Western states in international relations cannot be disputed, the question does arise as to why, of all things, one's own blindness and political-moral bankruptcy should do anything to change the situation since, in the final analysis, it is simply a case of placing oneself between the hammer of external dominance and the anvil of internal repression.

It will not, however, be possible to solve the problem of violence within Muslim societies in this way: a problem first has to be admitted and acknowledged as such in order for it to be overcome. And in the same way as Western societies and their intellectuals (and governments) have the duty to recognise, acknowledge, analyse and combat violence in and by its own societies (something that is also attempted in an outline manner in this book), Muslim societies also have the same responsibility to reflect on their *own* violence, examine it together with its sources and causes, address it

and take steps to counter it. Only in this way is it possible to gain sufficient credibility of one's own in order to be able to successfully oppose violence, even that suffered from outside.

There is, unfortunately, hardly any evidence of this in Arab countries, in particular, where double standards are applied to a high degree, i.e. the victims of Western violence on their own side are emphasised and placed very much to the fore, sometimes exaggerated or even invented (as if there was not already enough violence in reality), while violent actions in their own societies are systematically »overlooked« – as long as they are not themselves affected by such actions. To prevent misunderstandings, it cannot, of course, be a case of accepting or ignoring the suffering of Arab or Muslim people inflicted by the West; quite the contrary. Where Muslims suffer under Western violence or that perceived to be from the West in Chechnya, the Balkans, Palestine or at the hands of US troops in Iraq or Afghanistan, they are entitled to our sympathy and support – not because they are Chechnyans, Arabs, Pashtuns or Muslims but, rather, because they are *people*. Where people are maltreated and tortured in Abu Ghraib (Iraq) or Bagram (Afghanistan), where they are shot and humiliated in Palestine, where people are displaced or massacred in Bosnia, these are outrageous crimes, irrespective of the national or religious affiliation of the victims – and, in order not to be misunderstood, also regardless of the affiliations of the perpetrators. A Christian or atheist torturer or assassin is no better than his Muslim counterpart – and no worse, either. Furthermore, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim or atheist victims are equally deserving of protection. Defending outside victims to a lesser degree than those of one's own religious or national group, mourning them to a lesser extent and deploring the crimes of the perpetrators less vociferously contributes to further violence, justifies new violence and raises the level of violence. And such conduct is, of course, hypocritical. Criticising the West for such hypocrisy – often quite rightly – (when, for example, the 3,000 victims of the terror attack on the World Trade Center are considered more important by many people than just as many or more victims in Africa, Asia or Latin America), while at the same time being guilty of similar hypocrisy (and regarding Arab or Muslim victims as being worse than those on the Christian side), is unacceptable from a political, legal and moral standpoint.

This is not intended to deny that Muslims frequently have been and are victims of violence enacted by non-Muslims. The genocide committed against Muslim Bosniaks, the crimes against the Chechnyans, the violence carried out against Kashmiris by Indian troops, as well as the repression, human rights violations and murder suffered by the Palestinians have already been referred to as examples. Occupied countries and peoples do, of course, have the right to defend themselves, like the Afghans against the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union or France against occupation by fascist Germany, or the Palestinians against military occupation by Israel. It should not, however, be concluded from this that *any form* of armed resistance is justified. Not even repression can give anyone carte blanche for their own criminal acts. The right to resistance does not mean being able to place oneself above all laws and morals. The occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union did not justify the blowing-up of orphanages or the methods of torture practised by the Mujaheddin, it is no defence for attacking crowded bazaars or buses with missiles and it could not legitimise massacres of civilians by the Mujaheddin. Violent resistance can be legitimate and legal where it is directed against military occupiers, whereas violence against women, children and other civilians is always a crime. This was true for the ANC's struggle against the South African apartheid regime, for SWAOP's fight for the liberation of Namibia, and it is also true for the struggles of the Palestinians, Iraqis and Kashmiris. However, those who use bombs against restaurants, schools, buses or other civilian targets and kill civilians in this or any other manner are committing serious crimes. This standard applies to everyone, and not only to political opponents: anyone who kills Palestinian, Israeli, Iraqi, Afghan, American, Kashmiri, Indian, Pakistani, Serbian, Kosovar or other civilians cannot invoke higher values: not international law, not national liberation, not God, not democracy – such people are murderers in any case. And this same standard applies just as much to liberation movements as it does to countries and armies. The USA must also abide by this when waging its »War on Terror«, while the Israeli and US occupying forces, as well as the resistance movements in Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq likewise have to submit to this humanitarian precept if they do not want to sink to the level of common criminals.

Linked violence

Both Muslim and Western societies have a complex problem with political violence and not only in the sense that both sides suffer from it, albeit to a differing extent; they are both also perpetrators. In history and in the present, both Western and Muslim (and other) societies – or important sections of societies, groups, organisations and state machineries – have been guilty of horrendous crimes of violence, ranging from torture and political assassination to massacres and genocide. At the same time, they share the tendency to overlook, play down or justify their own violence while that practised by others is recognised in precise terms, emphasised and sometimes also exaggerated for propaganda purposes. This selective perception of violence, which likes to see »the mote in the eye of the other« but does not notice the »beam in one's own eye«, results in it not being possible to solve the common problem of violence. In this sense, our societies in Europe, North America, and the Near and Middle East overestimate the degree of their civilised nature. Technical progress and a wealth of resources are only signs of modernity and prosperity but not of being cultured or civilised. Both sides suffer from a moral superiority complex founded on illusions about themselves, which makes it difficult to solve the common problems.

What is striking is that significant cases of political violence in both cultural areas can be observed, in particular, in two overlapping contexts:

Political violence is used to question, secure and expand power.[121] This occurs within countries, e.g. through state repression, political resistance or the imposition of power or models of power, as well as between countries and societies, e.g. through wars or international terrorism. The probability of violence is highest where (primarily illegitimate) power is either threatened or is attempting to expand.

121 See also Heitmeyer, e.g. in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer, »Politische Gewalt in westlichen und muslimisch geprägten Gesellschaften; Fragen und Diskussionsanregungen«, manuscript for the workshop on »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften«, Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, Malta 19 – 20 November 2004, p. 3

Political violence is a phenomenon that frequently occurs within the context of »modernisation«. In this respect, it can be used to force modernisation per se or impose a particular model of modernisation or to defend against (certain aspects of) modernisation. It can accompany successful modernisation processes (as has often been the case in Western countries) or be the result of faltering, corrupted or failed modernisation, as in a number of Third World countries, including the Near and Middle East. In addition to radical socio-economic changes, the focus in this regard is also on issues of statehood, especially its function of order, claims to power, allocation responsibilities and ideological functions.

Within the context of globalisation, issues involving power politics and modernisation processes take place in a globally networked rather than a localised manner. Although this therefore means that local and regional violence dominates, as in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Chechnya, Kashmir, Palestine and elsewhere, international and global factors are becoming increasingly more significant. In many cases, they play an important role in triggering or causing local violence, e.g. through global economic factors. In other or similar cases, external players are directly involved in the violence, e.g. through supplying weapons or sending troops. Attempts to overcome the violence can also be undertaken or hindered from outside, which means that, all in all, factors relating to violence are closely interlinked at local, regional and international level. It is no coincidence that the same is also true for modernisation processes, even for the difficult, contradictory and often violence-laden processes of nation-building – as demonstrated by the developments in the Balkans, Somalia, Palestine, the Kurdish settlement areas, Afghanistan and elsewhere. The increasing combination of internal and external aspects in modernisation, social transformation, and nation-building (and the associated processes of violence) necessarily leads to the differing interests and policies of Western and Muslim countries clashing to a greater extent. The global dominance of Western states (especially the

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122 A 33-page list of US military operations can be found in: Richard F. Grimmett, Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798 – 2001, *CRS Report for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, Order Code RL30172, updated 5 February 2002

USA)[122] causes these to become a central factor of a constructive or destructive nature for the regional and local intensification or resolving of conflicts (e.g. unilateral, through ad-hoc coalitions, within the context of the European Union or the UN), while the local and regional potential for conflict and violence in the Near and Middle East is the centre of attention. This link between external and internal factors of conflict exists at different levels: a) case-specific, whereby the special constellations of the players' interests are crucial; b) at the level of a general north-south conflict – also effective in the Near and Middle East – characterised by asymmetric power constellations and sometimes contradictory interests; and c) at a political-cultural level (articulated sometimes in religious or quasi-religious terms over the past few decades).

In this constellation, the fact should not be overlooked that the violence of Westerners (really »Northerners« if we consider the North-South context) and players from Muslim countries is structured very differently. Western players still mostly use violence in an imperial way, even though they often like to conceal this behind humanitarian and generally humane grounds. Furthermore, there are, however, initial signs in parts of the Western world of wanting to regulate international violence through juridification (strengthening international law mechanisms for the management of conflicts), through International Organisations (particularly the UN) and on the basis of really humanitarian criteria – a tendency regrettably called into question or rebuffed repeatedly by imperial politics, especially where precisely such measures are misused for propaganda purposes. An arduous and highly inconsistent civilisation process has taken place in Western politics over the past number of decades in this respect, though this is seriously called into question on account of the Western dominance after the end of the Cold War. It is not without cause that Schoch points out »that ... civilisation is not a process that has been completed once and for all. Relapses are still possible.«[123]

123 Bruno Schoch, Demokratie, Demokratisierung und Gewalt. Die Ideologie des deutschen Sonderwegs als Lehrstück, manuscript for the workshop on »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften«, Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, Malta 19 – 20 November 2004, p. 1

A dominant position of power has the potential to make people arrogant and ruthless, a temptation to which Western politics also appears to succumb to differing extents. It is therefore extremely important for the enlightened forces of the people in Europe and North America who are interested in a peaceful foreign policy to exert yet greater influence on their own elitist groups to refrain from »arrogance of power« (an expression used by former US Senator, William Fulbright).

In contrast, the policy of violence in the Near and Middle East often stems from the problems, weaknesses or failure of internal modernisation processes and the premises of building strong nation-states which are as homogeneous as possible internally, as well as the weakness in the international system externally. There is a tradition of rigid and poorly performing regimes which often treat their own people with disdain and ignore their needs while, at the same time, being characterised by boasts and corruption and only being able to hold onto power through revenues from oil exports or foreign assistance, using violence themselves against any opposition or even independent forces, and tending towards violence against their neighbours. The 2004 Arab Human Development Report puts its finger on the internal situations in a large number of Arab countries in the following way:

»The current situation of Arab governance, with its associated weakness in terms of effective representation of societal forces means that Arab states are facing a chronic crisis of legitimacy, often relying on inducement and intimidation in dealing with their citizens.« [124]

On the other hand, the conflicts resulting from such situations are often conducted in a violent manner not only by governments, but also from within the respective societies, and in both cases over the last two or three

124 United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Arab Human Development Report 2004, New York 2005, p. 129

125 With regard to the political role of cultural identities and changes in it, see: Jochen Hippler, Wissen, Kultur und Identitäten: Trends und Interdependenzen, in: Development and Peace Foundation, Globale Trends 2002 – Fakten, Analysen, Prognosen, ed. by Ingomar Hauchler, Dirk Messner, Franz Nuscheler, Frankfurt 2001, pp. 135 – 155, also at: www.jochen-hippler.de/Aufsatze/Kulturelle_Identitaten__Global/kulturelle_identitaten__global.html

decades, they have often been justified in religious terms or on the basis of identity categories.[125] Thus, they become a matter of principle, making them harder to resolve. In the Near and Middle East, one's own failings, stagnation, repression and acts of violence are frequently justified in terms of the role of external powers, e.g. the Israeli policy of occupation, US dominance or the West altogether. Even if foreign hegemony and occupation and even outside support for distasteful dictatorships do represent a serious problem in the region, these arguments are often used as an excuse for one's own inability, passivity or repression – thus also further weakening the societies of the Near and Middle East. Trying to make functioning state systems and the removal of repression dependent on Israel and the USA first having to change their policies is not in the interests of the people in the region: it is precisely in situations of weakness that the undisputed goal should be to fully exhaust one's own possibilities for positive development. In this respect, however, the region of the Near and Middle East comprises structurally weak states that are failing to cope with their core responsibilities and wish to conceal this weakness through huge police, secret service and military machineries. It is particularly depressing in this regard that a blanket of silence has long since been cast over such problems due to a siege mentality being accompanied by state intimidation and paralysing free discussion. There does now seem to be some improvement in sight with increasing signs of independent thinking and free debate becoming evident in a number of countries. A shining example in this urgently needed process of intellectual and political liberation is the courageous, intelligent and influential *Arab Human Development Report* published for the third time by a group of Arab scientists for the UN development agency, UNDP.[126]

To summarise, we can say that the potential for violence on the part of the militarily and politically superior West, which is primarily directed outwards, and the regional potential for violence of the Near and Middle East as well as other Muslim societies are becoming interlinked in an alarming manner, sometimes strengthening each other. This link is not new. Trutz von Trotha associated this with globalisation and colonialism in explicit terms:
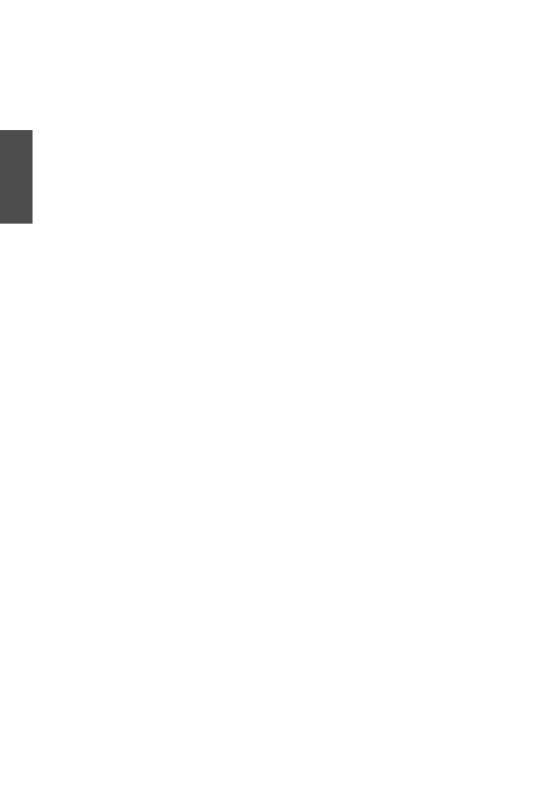
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126 United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Arab Human Development Report 2004, New York 2005

»The fact is that the history of globalisation has, for the most effective part, been the history of European expansion, colonialism and imperialism. Accordingly, the process of globalisation in the present encounters historical experience in the world outside the Occident in which globalisation was, at the same time, a claim to European power and a warlike demand for subjugation. In the light of this experience, globalisation is also a process full of violence, conflict and suffering.«[127]

Many people in the West today feel threatened by the instability, radical changes and violence present in and coming from the Near and Middle East. Even though this is greatly over-exaggerated in most cases in objective terms, it does provide the political elites with a significant approach to repeatedly assert their own power interests in the region, including the use of violence or through the support of local dictators. The terror attacks of 11 September 2001 (plus those in Madrid and against tourists on the island of Jerba) have particularly and dramatically exacerbated the sense of threat in the West. On the other hand, many people in the Near and Middle East feel threatened, restricted and controlled by Western countries for understandable reasons, with the occupation situations in Palestine and Iraq not doing very much to allay such fears. This often leads to a hardening of the internal political situations in many countries as well as very strong anti-Western feelings in the region and tacit or open sympathy for perpetrators of terrorist violence with whom people really have little in common politically. This constellation is dangerous for both sides. Breaking out of this requires more than an open eye-to-eye dialogue in which both sides do not close their eyes to the awkward issues; they must first of all focus on their own errors. What is crucial beyond the dialogues and reflection, however, is to also arrive at a change in *policy*, with the Western players finally having to take seriously their own demands for non-violence, democracy, comprehensive validity of all human rights and international law and also making these principles the

127 Trutz von Trotha, Geschichte, das »Kalaschsyndrom« und Konfliktregulierung zwischen Globalisierung und Lokalisierung, manuscript for the workshop on »Politische Gewalt im interkulturellen Vergleich: Der Westen und muslimisch geprägte Gesellschaften«, Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, Malta 19 – 20 November 2004, p. 2

basis of their foreign policy. Conversely, the time is long overdue for the countries of the Near and Middle East to lower their own level of violence by finally breaking down their internal archaic structures, extending rights of political freedom and improving the economic situation of their own people. It is only on the basis of such political reforms on both sides that the dialogue between Western and Muslim countries can then also become fruitful, mutual prejudices and clichés be overcome and a situation reached in which the two sides can work together on resolving common problems.

Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid

Brutality and civilisation – violence and terrorism?

The study by Jochen Hippler entitled »War, Repression, Terrorism« is an important publication because, in comparison to other works of this kind, it deals with the problem of »violence and terrorism« in a comprehensive, and at the same time, balanced manner. This balance is evident in several respects. We will look at the two most important aspects in this regard, i.e. the precise analysis of the mechanisms of violence and terrorism in their historical and structural dimensions, as well as the balance observed by the author in demonstrating that violence and terrorism cannot be assigned to a particular culture or religion; instead, he shows that they have manifestations in all cultures and religions when encouraged by certain factors. Furthermore, the author does not exonerate »the Modern Age« in all its theoretical, organisational and ideological forms from its role of restructuring terrorism and providing it with fresh impetus, be it through re-exporting it from the inside to the outer world or transforming it from a form of personal crime into an institution.

It is important to emphasise the author's innovative efforts at the beginning in attempting to deconstruct the terms »West«, »Islam« and »Islamic world«, although these are terms whose uncritical use has led to »division« and severe fragmentation in the discourses produced on both sides, especially in the theory of the »clash of cultures«. The deconstruction of the terms shows that »the West« is not a fixed, monolithic magnitude with an anachronistic nature situated outside of history and geography. It is likewise shown to the same extent that, rather than being fixed, unambiguous formulas understandable only in their own terms, the »Islamic world« or »Islam«, too, display a dynamic history that brings together all sorts of different and pluralistic cultures to such a degree that scholars cannot be permitted to speak of »one« Islam.

At the same time, we will discuss and criticise this distinguished work because we are convinced that this is the best way to bring about a fruitful dialogue rather than the polarising debate that characterises the usual discourses at present. Finally, we will develop our ideas of the relationship between »religion« and »violence«, which differ from the explanations given by the author. The writer of this commentary namely proceeds from the point of view that the different »interpretations« of religious writings in all religions do not construct the contents outside the writings' »sphere of meaning« but, rather »reveal« a random dimension of meaning and concentrate on this. This normally happens by way of a process which »veils« the other facets and dimensions of meaning that are undesirable in the given context. In other words, in their structure of meaning, the religious texts contain possibilities and potentials which are entirely contradictory to each other. The socio-historical interpretative context determines the perspective of the desired meaning and conceals the unwanted meaning. This can be ascribed to the fact that »the religious writings« are, in the final analysis, human-historical reports of the experience of »revelation«, reports that blend the human with the divine and embed the profane in the context of sanctity.

Mechanisms of violence and motives for terrorism from a historical viewpoint

The author begins with an analysis of wars as one of the most significant emanations of violence in the history of mankind. Primitive and prehistoric wars were just as brutal as civilised wars. War is hell, regardless of whether it is waged with wooden spears or napalm. The author outlines the religious mythologies that have glorified wars by inserting them into the Holy Writings, which gives such wars a sacred aura. This is true of the Old Testament, which devotes entire books to the glorious military deeds of great kings and meticulously records their conquests with all their gory details. However, it is also true of religious mythology in India, where the Ramayana and Mahabarata epics appear as endless tales of battles and warlike conspiracies. These epics are still a vivid part of the thinking and feelings of the peoples in what is now South Asia. Although it is correct that the New Testa-

ment does not directly continue the war cry that we find in the Old Testament, this does happen in the history of the church which follows it. It delivers us a Christian agenda of the burning of witches and the Inquisition, as well as the crusades and bloody religious wars, as the author writes. We must not forget that all these wars and violent acts were legitimised by the term »Holy«.

The colonial age with the resulting genocide of the indigenous peoples began with the discovery of America, Australia and New Zealand and the white man's attempt to settle there. These campaigns of extermination were also carried out in the name of religion. In 1622, for example, the Jamestown massacre was perpetrated against the Indians in America with the justification that they had caused harm to the settlers. The extermination of the Indians subsequently became a part of the settlers' programme in New England. The Protestant Puritans openly justified their claim to the country in ideological terms through their fundamental desire to realise their political-religious, idealistic designs of establishing the »New Jerusalem« in the »New World«. Just as they saw themselves as the »New People of Israel«, they believed that the land of the Indians was their »Canaan«, given to them by God after the Exodus from Egypt. Snatching this land away from the »Canaanites« and »Edomites«, i.e. the Indians, and exterminating them with fire and the sword corresponded to their understanding of the Old Testament as the revealed will of God and His joyful message of deliverance. The influence of the prevailing conditions of settlement colonialism gave rise to the emergence in New England of the dominant Protestant-Puritan ideology, according to which the Indians were the »descendants of Satan«, which gave the settlers the right to plunder their land and destroy them with a clear conscience.

This historical analysis gains its balance through the author turning to the situation in the Third World and establishing that it was far from being peaceful. Violence was used in the most varied forms by indigenous players and on their own responsibility. The slave trade between African and Arab countries was no less brutal than its European form. Muslim and Hindu rulers did not treat their subjects any less violently. The wars of conquest waged by Afghan, Persian or Central Asian rulers in India, for example, were associated with appalling destruction and large numbers of victims.

The Modern Age and violence

The author then turns his attention to the 20th century, which he considers to be the bloody century par excellence. He gives a detailed description of the new structures of violence produced by the age of colonialism and »Enlightenment«, the age that witnessed the deconstruction of sanctity and its negation in favour of »reason«. The author takes a detailed look at the question of »violence and the Modern Age« here. He criticises and refutes four positions that attempt to define the relationship between violence and the Modern Age. The first position sees the reverse of violence in the Modern Age. It declares violence to be barbaric and racist, a relic directed against the Modern Age. Violence is consequently alien to the Modern Age. The second position regards the Modern Age itself as a variety of barbarism. The third position sees violence as an inherent and thus unavoidable part of human nature. The author rejects all three of these positions and tends toward the standpoint of seeing the ambivalence of the Modern Age, with its possession of undeniably humanistic dimensions but also a huge potential for destruction.

The author takes the view that the Modern Age does not represent a breach with what went before, as claimed by some, but rather that religion and religiousness – and even religious fanaticism – are phenomena that also accompany modern societies, as the experience of the USA shows, which is itself not free of religious fanaticism despite all its manifestations of the Modern Age. Ethnic cleansing and the extermination of the Indians in the name of the Old Testament are the ideology on which sections of American society are founded. On the other hand, the author sees modern rationality as being a functional rationality based on the considerations of a cost-benefit analysis and which does not stand in contradiction to violence; he feels, rather, that excessive violence can only be founded on modern ways of thinking. The author cites evocative instances, such as the Holocaust, which required a precise system of registration and highly developed logistics that were not available in pre-modern societies. Modern society has released potential for violence that was previously inaccessible to any society, e.g. mass extermination through gas and biological weapons, with aircraft

crashing into skyscrapers, with napalm and atomic bombs, missiles and air attacks, torture using electric shocks, etc. No pre-modern society would have been able to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Put succinctly, **the Modern Age has produced highly efficient means of developing undreamt of perspectives for killing** (bold type: Abu Zaid).

However, the author does not tire of warning us against the naive notion that pre-modern societies were more humane or that violence is an »inherent character trait of the Modern Age«. The Modern Age has not only provided more efficient means for the practice of violence, **it has also brought about new possibilities of social organisation, bureaucracy, administration, division of labour and specialisation, without which large-scale murder and destruction cannot be successful** (bold type: Abu Zaid).

The most important achievement of the Modern Age is, perhaps, the juridification of violence, whereby a sadistic, criminal act giving rise to anger and contempt becomes a social, institutionalised action which is not dependent on the individuals involved since specialised, organised, bureaucratised personnel, who are all involved in the act but with none of them assuming responsibility, share the work between them. Here, the contributions to the overall action are distributed horizontally, with each player having to perform a particular, self-contained task, the result of which does not amount to any precisely determinable objective. This means that the violence, with its far-reaching complex dimensions, cannot be assigned to the individuals involved in it since it is performed through the interactive involvement of a large number of »normal« people. In this way, violence becomes »banal« and can be generalised. This has only been made possible through the forms or organisation produced by the Modern Age.

This therefore raises the question of whether the relationship between the Modern Age and violence is limited to the technical, administrative/ organisational aspects of the Modern Age without extending to its body of thought. This question leads the author to demonstrate the dark, ideological side of the Modern Age, though without denying its progressive or enlightening dimensions. For the author, manifestations like Stalinism and Fascism are phenomena which undoubtedly emerged from the European Modern Age and are rooted in its modern historical-theoretical legacy.

Stalinist ideology contains a classic concept of the Enlightenment – that of »social progress«. Furthermore, Stalinism purports to be a scientific method striving in essence for the creation of a »new society« and in a manner similar to the design of a new machine by an engineer. Although Stalinism lacked all the humane forms, even the central values of tolerance, which stemmed from the age of Enlightenment, the »modern« character of that totalitarian system cannot be denied, either in its ideology or the means used. The same is true for Fascism and National Socialism, whose nature can be attributed to the Modern Age. Fascism strove to reform society, even an entire continent, in the way that a scientist creates something new in the laboratory. National Socialism tried to apply the scientific and medical principals of hygiene to the state and society. It saw itself as the practical implementation of the results of Darwinist and Mendelian research on the human genus.

The author supports this analysis by demonstrating that the racial doctrine with its distinction between different genera and races formed the core of National Socialist ideology and was an integral part of the philosophy of the Modern Age. In the mid-18th century, Linné drew a distinction between four races of people. A quarter of a century later, Blumenbach proceeded from the theory of five races (Caucasians, Tatars, Ethiopians, Americans and Malays). Although this form of racist discrimination, which assumed lower and higher races, was not an authentic or theoretical constituent of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, the distinction between different races was not only to be found, as the author emphasises, among second-rate thinkers; rather it can also be found in the work of philosophers like Voltaire, Hume and Kant and was a well-known, unquestioned component of philosophical epistemology up to the middle of the 18th century.

The state and violence

Perhaps one of the greatest achievements of the political »Modern Age« is the conception of the »nation-state«, the »state governed by the rule of law« or the state of its citizens, which was able to enclose and control violence within while, at the same time, exporting it beyond the boundaries of

its society and the continent in the form of colonialism. The falling rate of violence within European societies can be interpreted as an expression of the expansion of the state's sovereignty. The political and legal functions of the state reduced violence within society by controlling and juridifying social relations. The possibilities of committing violence with impunity decreased, as did the need or usefulness of violence. This changed the attitude of broad sections of society to violence. Violence came to be seen increasingly less as a natural part of life, i.e. as a normal way of solving political and social arguments, and gradually became taboo.

These developments did not completely eradicate violence in Western Europe. The triumphant modern state produced new forms of violence of unimaginable intensity. The two world wars, the Holocaust, other forms of genocide and the chronic threat of weapons of mass destruction are, inter alia, evidence of this development. Although it was possible to preserve social peace through the advancement of the state and its monopoly on violence, the state itself transformed into an institution of violence, as shown by the Holocaust and the mass exterminations under the Stalinist system or the ethnic cleansing and massacres perpetrated in the Balkans.

In addition, we have to assume that the repression of social violence in Europe was related to the expansion of colonial conquests in Africa, Asia and Latin America, i.e. it was accompanied by the export of violence. The brutal policy of the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, British, German and French colonial rulers ensued in parallel with the reduction of violence within society, on the one hand, as well as the inward civilisation of European societies on the other hand. Was this really a coincidence or was it a case of exporting violence, as was virtually the case during the first »crusades«, when sections of the population classified as »superfluous« and dangerous were sent to the Near East, leading to a reduction in violence in Germany and France?

In comparing the development in Europe – a state monopoly on violence, a decrease in violence within society, the export of violence – with the events in the Third World, the author shows the distorted character of the Modern Age, which was followed by the endeavours of the Third World to chase after the engine of progress and the Modern Age. The process of building a working state organisation has generally faltered in the Third World,

with the state remaining alien to society in many cases and imposed from above. In this way, it has become an instrument of control and oppression which is less able, in comparison to Northern and Western Europe, to further social integration. This distorted Modern Age has led to resistance against parts of the state machinery or the state as a whole being regarded extensively as legitimate.

In the light of this balanced historical analysis of violence in human societies, which, in its critical observation, does not disregard the influence of the Modern Age on the intensification and export of violence as well as the creation of undreamt-of instruments for the use of violence, we can take the liberty of putting two questions to the author: Is the Modern Age directly responsible for this development or is it, rather, a case of political-instrumental exploitation of the Modern Age on the part of political systems which have apparently adapted to the Modern Age in order to use it for political, expansionist-colonialist or ethnic-racist objectives and purposes? This question is quite justified if we compare the author's analysis of the relationship between the Modern Age and violence with his analysis of the relationship between religion and violence.

Religion and violence

Concerning the author's analysis of the role of religion in the context of violence, it can be said that he defines only **one** type of relationship – that created by the perpetrators of violence. He denies any structural relationship between religion and violence. In this way of looking at the situation, religion becomes a sort of apologetic ideology that makes violence possible though without such violence being inherent in it. He writes: »The violent results of religion thus stem from their socio-political rather than their religious dimensions – it is not the spiritual interpretation of man's relationship with God in itself that is a source of violence (leaving aside practices of ritual sacrifice) but, rather, the inevitable adaptation and distortion of religion when this becomes a social phenomenon. The process takes place in very different ways depending on a) the theological substance of a specific religion, b) the socio-political context of the specific society, i.e. its balances

of power, inconsistencies, problems, and c) the precise function the religion is to perform in this context, e.g. an integrative, power-safeguarding, mobilising or polarising function.«

He continues: »The Christian ideals of loving one's neighbour and even one's enemy as oneself did not stop Christianity from justifying racism and wars, and a militant interpretation of the »jihad« also led to Islam being used to serve the purposes of political violence.«

Religions, at least in their theological substance, would therefore hardly be to blame for the violence since violence in the name of religion is rooted in the misuse of religion by people. Violence springs from the distortion of religious content. This does not, however, correspond to what we infer from the author's analysis of the relationship between the Modern Age and violence. Through its functional rationality and the emerging administrative instruments and systems, the Modern Age appears to be more strongly linked with violence than religion. If our assumption is correct, we then see ourselves confronted with an inconsistency that has to be resolved. This inconsistency results from the fact that violence in the pre-Modern Age was practised on the basis of religion. This religious basis is not entirely the work of those responsible for the violence; rather it is rooted in the religious writings themselves, as we have seen in the case of the Old Testament and the religious scriptures of India. I will deal with the Koran and the bases for violence contained in its texts in the concluding section.

The temptation to remain neutral and objective
when exercising self-criticism

In my view, the author has conducted a detailed analysis of the Modern Age and certainly arrived at conclusions that have to be agreed with. On the other hand, he only deals with the question of religion in passing. I see the cause of this approach in the author's fear of being associated with the assertions that reproach Islam as being the cause of terrorism in the context of the »American war against terrorism«. The temptation to remain neutral and objective has prevented the author from also applying the critical courage he summoned up when criticising the Modern Age to the criticism

of religion – not religion in the sense of a divine product in this case but, rather, as a human product in the final analysis. This will be dealt with in greater detail in the final section.

The same temptation to remain neutral and objective also prevented the author from dealing with the systematic expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland, which Zionist gangs carried out in the name of the same sanctity used by the Protestant communities against the Indians in America. The author gives a detailed account of the violent methods of expulsion and extermination employed in the Third World in the 20th century, referring to Indonesia, Turkey, Pakistan and Iraq, though without making any mention of the creation of the state of »Israel« at the expense of a people expelled through the use of violence. The Zionist settlement ideology in Palestine is not only similar to the ideology of the white settlers in America; it is also alike in all its details. There is complete correspondence in ideological terms, which might possibly explain the Americans being the political accomplice of Israel against the Palestinian people. Why does the author completely withhold this tragedy from the reader, a tragedy of expulsion and attempted extermination in the name of the Old Testament and the Promised Land that has to be purged of the Canaanites.

This temptation to remain neutral is tantamount to equating the violence of »al-Qaeda« with Palestinian violence. Between the two, the author only sees a difference in the form, i.e. that the terrorism practised by al-Qaeda is more global and embedded in a political context embracing the entire world. It is not bound to a real state or particular context. Although the Palestinian forms of violence are also normally organised and planned, they do, however, include subjective dimensions more closely linked to the land itself. Describing the acts of resistance as violence is correct but comparing them with the violence of al-Qaeda makes resistance an act of terror on the same level as the globalised terrorism perpetrated by al-Qaeda. The difference is merely quantitative rather than qualitative. It is precisely on this point and the preceding one – i.e. the failure to mention the tragedy of the expulsion of the Palestinian people and the equation of resistance with terrorism – that the author ignores his own call to desist from the apologetic tendency that he rightly notes in the discourse of both the Western

and the Islamic world, a tendency stemming from the inability to exercise self-criticism and which contents itself with criticising the other side. It has to be said in the author's favour that he shows rare courage in exercising self-criticism of the culture and civilisation to which he himself belongs. This courage demands a similarly bold self-critical reaction from the intellectuals of the Arab and Muslim world, since history is not, as the author rightly remarks, a buffet from which we can select and put together what we like and leave the things that do not appeal to us. It is our heritage, and it has both a dark and a bright side. However, the author's courage has not prevented him from imposing a number of »self-limitations« on himself in his discourse. This is evident in relation to two points, i.e. the caution exercised in the criticism of religion for fear of joining the prevailing discourse against »Islam« and the caution in dealing with the Palestinian tragedy. This actually causes the author's discourse – perhaps unintentionally – to become a part of the prevailing discourse: cautiousness, even extreme cautiousness, vis-à-vis Israel and subsuming the Palestinian resistance under the heading of terrorism by equating »Palestinian violence« with the violence of al-Qaeda.

A structural analysis of the mechanisms of violence and the motives of terrorism

This is the second viewpoint from which we want to examine the work with regard to its comprehensive and balanced way of dealing with the question of violence and terrorism. Poverty, injustice and state repression are cited by the author as being the most important factors for explaining terrorism directed against the state or citizens, especially in the modern context. However, certain conditions have to exist for these factors to lead to the use of violence. This means that while »poverty« may exist, people can live with it as long as no feeling of injustice or inequality emerges. In the author's view, the system of government is a crucial factor for the emergence of violence, especially where the gulf between the people's expectations and reality becomes ever wider and the difference between rich and poor ever greater, i.e. where it is a case of impoverishment on one side and enor-

mous wealth on the other side. This does not mean, however, that it is »the poor« themselves that are the vehicles of violence against the state and its system of order. Although the potential for political dispute feeds on social deprivation and desperation, the organisation of it is not incumbent upon the poorest of the poor. Political clashes are led by representatives of the technical intelligentsia, by doctors and lawyers. The poorest of the poor and the marginalised are fully occupied with their individual struggle for survival. The scope required for organised and continuous political activity is for them a »luxury« that they cannot afford.

On the basis of this characterisation, the author offers the following advice: those wishing to combat political violence and terrorism as one of its ugliest forms of expression must not neglect those carrying out the violence; however, if this strategy is to be successful over the long term, the organisers and supporters of violence must be isolated within society in both political and social terms. This responsibility may not be left to the police, secret services or army; instead, it lies in generating realistic hope to produce positive development, creating jobs and social security, respecting the people, as well as guaranteeing equal opportunities, a tolerable cost of living and opportunities for involvement. Those who do not solve these problems may cut off some of the heads of the Hydra of terrorism and violence but will not be able to register sustainable successes in this battle.

The war against terror

In this section, the author directs his sharp criticism against governments as well as the international world order in terms of the governments in the countries of the Third World dealing with the issues of violence and terrorism without exception as security matters that fall under the area of competence of the security authorities and, thus, the state's strongest instruments of repression. The normal result is repeated new acts terrorism. Arbitrary arrests, the imprisonment of innocent people together with terrorists in jail cells, as well as brutal and degrading treatment lead to the mobilisation of more and more new supporters of violence and turn them into time bombs full of hatred for the entire country rather than just the regime.

With his criticism of the world order, the author refers to the fact that regular wars against terrorism have failed all along the line. This concerns both the war against Afghanistan as well as that against Iraq and the subsequent occupation of that country. These fruitless wars bring about populist support for terrorism as an instrument of struggle against international hegemony and new colonialism. Al-Qaeda was not destroyed in Afghanistan; rather, the rule of the Taliban was removed and a government installed which is seen by the people as a »regime of henchmen«. In the case of Iraq, although Saddam Hussein was toppled, the cadres of the Baath Party went underground to perpetrate violence and terror against the occupation and its helpers. The term »helpers« is then defined according to ethnic, racial, religious and other characteristics. The result is that terrorism has spread throughout all areas of the world like a kraken.

This war against terror – and that is precisely what the author does not deal with because of the »self-limitations« already mentioned – has become an ideological incubator feeding Israel's state terrorism against the »Palestinian areas« – i.e. against the territory of the autonomous Palestinian government. The Jewish state conducts abduction and assassination operations, with houses destroyed, fields set on fire and an economic, political and security blockade set up, including the building of a dividing wall in an era when walls are coming down.

On the other hand, the ideology of the »war against terror« has become a mask for repressive measures in the West by requiring its citizens to forego rights in favour of the promise of being guaranteed »security and protection«. This occurs on a daily basis without it being possible to afford real security and protection (the vociferous debate surrounding the extension of the Patriot Act, which has been in force in the USA since September 2001, and the eloquent silence of the European public concerning the prisons and camps set up by the US in Europe). The author rightly remarks that »terrorism also often shows itself to be tactically superior to other forms of violence. It can be practised by smaller groups, normally at a relatively low cost, and can achieve a substantial effect measured against the effort and outlay required. It uses the tactic of surprise attacks, without any prior warning in principle, and since anyone can be the target it is difficult and often impossible to protect oneself against it.«

This ideology of the war against terror conceals interests and objectives which the author exposes with commendable clarity. If the goal really were to destroy terrorism, a very different strategy would have to be developed in order to isolate al-Qaeda within Islamic societies. This would only be possible if heed were paid to the political messages and the »ideological cloak« woven from religious concepts, which merely serves to gain the sympathy and support of the Islamic societies, not ignored. However, the entire West (with the exception of a small number of rational voices) has concentrated on the ideological »justifications«. The debate has remained entrenched in the context of the theological dispute. In other words, terrorism has been »theologised« and this has led to a growth in the numbers of sympathisers and supporters.

Violence and terrorism

In drawing a distinction between »political violence« and »terrorism«, the author states that terrorism is political violence against non-combatants, especially against civilians. It is perhaps this distinction that has permitted the author to subsume Palestinian violence – resistance – under the term terrorism, i.e. violence against civilians, without paying regard to the fact that it is a reaction to Israeli violence against civilians, i.e. to the terrorism perpetrated by the Jewish State. If severe political and economic crises are, in the main, the starting point for the emergence of political violence fed by generally prevailing hopelessness and the lack of prospects, regional conflicts and disputes frequently play a symbolic role in the exacerbation of violence. In the case of the Arab and Muslim world, this symbolic role falls to Palestine and now also to Iraq. In other words, violence is fed by violence.

The distinction between violence and terrorism is not confined to this single differentiating feature. The author acknowledges that terrorism is, in the final analysis, a political act. It is therefore difficult to conceive that it might be confined to a single culture and is only a part of one single ideology: »The term originates from the time of the French Revolution, during which the actual or supposed adversaries were to be persecuted, killed or intimidated by means of terror. The revolutionary tribunal and its counter-

parts in the provinces are presumed to have executed up to 20,000 members of the nobility, political opponents and supposed traitors.«

The author continues: »Even after this period, (terrorism occurred) in very different political and cultural contexts, e.g. in Tsarist Russia and subsequently in the Soviet Union, in Germany, Italy, France and other Western countries (especially in the 1970s and 1980s) Terrorism is, in principle, a political – and not a cultural or religious – phenomenon that has occurred or can occur in just about any society.«

In being a political phenomenon, terrorism is also a form of communication in the sense of an action with a twofold message, or to put it in more precise terms, with two messages: one directed against the »enemy« and the other towards the »family« or reference group to which the active terrorists belong. It is the political-communicative side that the perpetrators are more interested in rather than murder and the destruction caused by terrorism.

In the first case, i.e. the message directed against the enemy, it can be a matter of exerting pressure, blackmail or forcing negotiations, or even the discontinuation of negotiations. Terror can, however, also represent a general message of protest in order to exert influence on a particular area of policy. The second message to the reference group, whether this is defined as ethnic or national-religious, is aimed at convincing that group that the perpetrators' organisation defends the (Arab, Islamic, Irish or whatever) »cause« in the most determined and consistent manner.

The legitimisation of violence

People do not commit acts of political violence without a legitimising discourse to justify such violence. Violence is a categorical, existential, dreadful act which, rather than being self-evident in any way, contains a large number of emotional facets. People only commit acts of violence if they can justify it to themselves on important grounds. People do not find killing easy and do not feel any desire to kill – not taking account of pathological personalities. Two requirements have to be met for political violence in this respect, i.e. membership of a group or community and the existence of a

justification or pretext for the use of violence. Political and religious ideologies play the part of a link between the two requirements in this case. Without the presence of an ideology (in the broadest sense, also possibly interwoven with the structures of utilitarian thinking), the use of violence remains isolated from other areas of life and limited in duration, i.e. it has no content.

The importance of the ideology stems from the fact that that it represents, first, the subjective motive and own legitimacy of the perpetrator(s). Second, it forms the identity of the group and strengthens the link between the reference group (society, the nation) and the organisation to which the perpetrator(s) belong. And, third, rather than merely justifying the act, it incorporates its contents into the awareness of the overall group for whose sake the act was committed or purported to be committed (the nation, race, religious group, class, etc., etc.). Finally, the »ideology« draws the dividing line between the group and the other links and institutions in the society.

If violence needs justification, terrorism needs it all the more. Terrorism always needs legitimisation. It needs it because it is a shocking act of violence which, if it remains without legitimisation, is synonymous with crime. Without a minimum of »legitimisation«, terrorism loses a major part of its political character. For most people, acts of violence against civilians are crimes. Terrorism perceived by people as unjustified (when peaceful means of resistance exist or because it appears unreasonable or hits the wrong targets or for other reasons) could isolate the perpetrators and give rise to abhorrence among the members of the reference group.

Religion and the legitimisation of terror

The author emphasises resolutely and categorically that both the ideologically critical and the historically philosophical approach are not very helpful for understanding political violence by virtue of the different ideologies, including the secular, having been used to legitimise it and even to justify political violence up to and including genocide. In this respect, it is necessary to find the common denominator among the ideologies rather than only stressing the differing aspects. These common characteristics are not

to be found in the substance of religions and ideologies but, rather, in the openness of interpretation inherent in them depending on their social and political function. Based on this distinct assumption, ideology, both the religious and the political, becomes the pure »vehicle«, the innocent vehicle, of violence, as if Fascism, National Socialism, Zionism and Islamism – just like secularism and the Modern Age – could be »innocent« or »guilty« through interpretation according to their social or political function.

The author continues his endeavours to clear religions, in particular, of blame in order to thus shift the blame completely onto the perpetrators. It is as if ideology were an instrument that the perpetrator uses but could also ignore. As if the functional »interpretive« framework to which the author refers were merely a factor that garbs the ideology in the robe of violence or of peace and love. He writes: »It is simple, though also a simplification, to deny any link between »Islam« and terrorism since Islam is, indeed, peaceful in principle. Neither Islam nor Christianity has a positive or negative relationship with political violence per se, of course (nor with democracy). However, when a large number of perpetrators use precisely Islam to justify their deeds and commit violence in the name of God, this may be questionable in theological terms but cannot simply be ignored politically. We are reminded of the relationship of »the Modern Age« and nationalism with violence, even though the two are not violent per se ...«

Dismissing any relationship between religion and terrorism is certainly a simplification and we agree with the author on this point. However, the author also denies any positive or negative relationship between religion and political violence, stating at the same time that the link postulated by the perpetrators or terrorists themselves between religion and their actions cannot and must not be ignored in political terms.

It can be said here that the author is going around in a vicious circle of arguments: violence, as well as terrorism, needs legitimisation. This can spring from any political or religious, secular or modern ideology. The ideologies are innocent. It would be wrong to dwell on the ideas and ideologies and neglect the political dimension. Religion is innocent. The problem lies in its vulnerability to interpretation in any particular, socio-political framework. However, when terrorists justify their acts in political terms, we

should not ignore this politically, though we have to avoid a theological dispute.

In his analysis of the declaration by Osama bin Laden following the suicide attacks of 11 September, the author draws a distinction between two messages contained therein, i.e. one directed at the »enemy«– the USA and the West – and one at the reference group (the Islamic ummah). The three central points serving to justify the violence are political rather than religious in essence, even though they are concealed behind language laden with religious meanings: the presence of the Americans in Saudi Arabia, the policy of sanctions against Iraq before the war in 2003 with their disastrous effects on the civilian population, as well as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian soil and the city of Jerusalem. The starting point is therefore the political criticism, which is later placed in a religious context. The political arguments are important for the writers of such declarations and their target groups – but they are not enough. They do not want to formulate their criticism and make it an issue in their own name but, rather in the name of a higher, and even the highest, power. Although this does nothing to alter the political nature of the criticism, it does bestow a particular importance on it and makes an argument between people into an argument between man and God, finally placing it beyond human criticism.

As the author does not concern himself with the quotations from the Koran, it is the political dimension of the message that is the more important of the two in his analysis. However, this approach, in the course of which he attempts to link the political with a higher, divine power, which, in turn, places the political discourse beyond the sphere of human criticism, does not prevent him from seeing a peculiarity of the Islamic world in this respect, especially in the Near East, i.e. a peculiarity that the author traces back to the seventies and eighties of the last century when secular and national ideologies experienced a decline and Islamic ideology an upturn. He writes: »This is the reason for violence generally being justified in terms of Arab Nationalism or National Liberation in the Near and Middle East in the period between the 1950s and 1970s and increasingly in the guise of religion since the 1970/1980s: the social discourse shifted from nationalism to Islamic or Islamist forms, with the legitimisation of violence thus changing

accordingly. Only a socially accepted and dominant ideology can effectively fulfil the function of justifying violence.«

This confirms our criticism of the author seeing »ideology« merely as an instrument for justifying violence, nothing more and nothing less. This division between »violence« and the instrument of »justification« causes the author's analysis to miss the point that »ideology« can sometimes produce violence rather than only justifying it. On the other hand, however, when political violence is referred to as being in the name of nationalism or national liberation, this is only an unproven contention. The national struggle against colonialism and occupation is violence – if this description is accurate at all – that carries its justification in itself and does not require any ideology: it is a case of defending the fatherland and resisting occupation. Arab nationalism has not stated ideological grounds for violence and does not justify it as ideology. The political regimes have practised violence against their citizens. It is violence by the systems, i.e. a »despotic« violence. Violence in the name of Islam is a different story reaching back farther than the 1970s, at least in Egypt, the country in which the first Islamic organisation emerged with a military-Fascist character, both in its internal order as well as with regard to training and recruitment methods. It concerns an organisation that supports an ideology of change and which uses means derived from a particular way of reading history, a way of reading that evokes ideas such as »commanding good and forbidding bad« or »change happens with the hand or the tongue or the heart«, with the latter constituting the weakest and the first forming the highest expression of faith. It concerns the »Muslim Brothers« organisation founded by Hassan al-Bannah in 1928 and which has a history of the use of violence reaching back much further than the 1980s.

The mythological dimension of universal violence

The question not dwelt on for very long by the author and which he does not subject to any detailed discussion, thus indicating that he does not consider it worthy of examination, is that of whether violence is an original part of human nature from which people cannot escape. This is a question

worthy of discussion in my view, especially as the author has proven that violence is a phenomenon that has accompanied human existence over different periods of its long history and which the Holy Scriptures have recorded in the history of the cultures. If the »Modern Age« has not been able to end the phenomenon of violence with all its humanity, from »rationality«, »equality« and »tolerance« to the formulation of the question of human rights in documents enjoying extensive international consensus, and has instead helped to provide it with new technical and administrative methods and instruments which have taken away its character of individual crime – if this is the case, and it certainly is, as the book shows – then the question of terrorism becomes a fundamental question of human nature, an essential question that takes different forms according to the respective level of human development and is tinged differently in the fabric of each culture.

In this case, the scholar should perhaps delve into the myths concerning the foundation of human consciousness in all cultures. If we examine religious mythology, the expression of which is the Old Testament and which has found its way into the »Koran«, we then find elements of universal violence – if we wish to call it such – embedded in the story of the Creation from the outset. The Biblical and Koranic history of the Creation each contain a common element of foundation, i.e. the dwelling of the first person – Adam – in Paradise with permission to enjoy all the food and drink that Paradise has to offer with the exception of one tree which he is forbidden to approach under pain of punishment. Analysing this narrative element from the anthropological viewpoint, we can say that the existence of a prevailing, despotic power which has bestowed an ambivalent existence on man is reflected by this elemental, primitive human consciousness. Man is not a weak-willed animal driven only by its biological needs, since it is this prevailing power that has given him the strength to bring things under his control. (The element of the teaching of names means the ability to call upon them and control them). On the other hand, he is not, however, a free creature whose freedom would be appropriate to this existence as a human being. He has to bow to unfounded commands which impose on him what he has to do or not do. The prohibition is deemed to be the grounds for the punishment (the choice of a particular tree embodies the idea of the for-

bidden thing that the person is to refrain from doing in order not to be punished). The ambivalence of the conditio humana becomes even more complex. According to the logic of religious mythology, the predominant power has determined the course of events from the beginning. It has spurred on the strength of evil to tempt man into disobedience so that he can be rightly punished.

It is not the theological contents and meanings that have been imposed on this mythology in the course of religious thinking that interest us here; what we are attempting to do, rather, is gauge the dimension of the »violence« that appears to have been rooted in the depths of human consciousness from the very beginning. Can it therefore be claimed that »violence« is a characteristic trait of human existence as an ambivalent being – by ambivalence I mean the feeling of freedom and potential that distinguishes man from all other natural beings, as well as the feeling that this freedom is curtailed by a large number of incomprehensible and unfounded elements? Can we regard the history of the development of human consciousness as a constant endeavour to detect obstacles and an attempt to free oneself from them? However, the universal »violence« experienced by human consciousness remains deeply embedded.

Was evil the source of that universal violence or is »evil« itself its creation and result? Religious mythology reveals once more that »evil« was originally »good«. In the Koranic narration, »Iblis« was one of the angels given the divine command to kneel before Adam. Once again, it was an unfounded command. The angels' objection to »a representative on Earth« was not answered convincingly (with the words: »I know what you do not know«). One of these angels – he belonged to them because he was among them – could not be convinced. He refused to kneel down and the punishment therefore followed: banishment from God's presence. »Good« was thus transformed into »evil« because it had claimed the »right to differ«, had »sinned« in religious terminology.

What is remarkable is that the structure of religious mythology, in its Koranic formulation at least, reveals »a fixed plan« that gives all subjects the status of objects. We learn, for example, how the angel »al-Harith« is transformed into »Iblis«, the Devil, by virtue of a planned act since he will be

a crucial instrument in embroiling Adam in »sin« – eating the fruit of the forbidden tree – so that he is banned from Paradise and the divine plan is completed, according to which Adam and »his companion« populate the Earth. Why did the Divinity have to resort to all these »tricks« to implement its plan? It could have carried it out without entangling anyone by simply placing Adam and his companion on the Earth without any substantial pre-parations, commands and disobedience, etc.[1]

Rather than containing any critical judgement of what is holy, the question is an attempt to delve into the depths of the human consciousness that reflects this religious mythology, i.e. the consciousness of existential ambi-

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1 The text from the Koran substantiating this mythology reads as follows:

»And when thy Lord said to the angels, 'I am setting in the earth a viceroy.' They said, 'What, wilt Thou set therein one who will do corruption there, and shed blood, while we proclaim Thy praise and call Thee Holy?' He said, 'Assuredly I know that you know not.'

And He taught Adam the names, all of them; then He presented them unto the angels and said, 'Now tell Me the names of these, if you speak truly.'

They said, 'Glory be to Thee! We know not save what Thou hast taught us. Surely Thou art the All-knowing, the All-wise.'

He said, 'Adam, tell them their names.' And when he had told them their names He said, 'Did I not tell you I know the unseen things of the heavens and earth? And I know what things you reveal, and what you were hiding.'

And when We said to the angels, 'Bow yourselves to Adam'; so they bowed themselves, save Iblis; he refused, and waxed proud, and so he became one of the unbelievers.

And We said, 'Adam, dwell thou, and thy wife, in the Garden, and eat thereof easefully where you desire; but draw not nigh this tree, lest you be evildoers.' Then Satan caused them to slip therefrom and brought them out of that they were in; and We said, 'Get you all down, each of you an enemy of each; and in the earth a sojourn shall be yours, and enjoyment for a time.'«

All quotations from the Koran have been taken from the following translation: Arberry, John, The Koran Interpreted, Oxford University Press 1964, reprinted 1979, Sura II, 30 – 36 (The Cow), p. 5

The commentary fills the gaps that exist in the Koran text and uses the Jewish-Christian tradition (referred to as "The Israelite stories" in Islamic thinking) to achieve this objective. Cf. the Koran commentary by at-Tabari with the title:

جامع البيان في تفسير القرآن. تحقيق محمود محمد شاكر، دار المعارف بمصر، ١٩٦٩، المجلد الأول، ص: ٤٥٥ – ٤٥٧.

valence that stems from a compelling feeling of universal violence. It is a feeling that generates »fear«, one of the roots of the primitive religious consciousness fundamentally embodied in the attempt to »ward off« evil, even if it has to be worshiped for this. Historians of religion can say that these feelings have grown out of the violence of nature, whose laws, which have enabled man to control it at least partially, had not yet been discovered. Apart from the theological, historical and anthropological attempts at explanation, however, mythology remains the living proof of the confusion or, rather, »ambivalence« of human existence by virtue of an uncertain outward universal violence which produces a feeling of fear regardless of its origin.

The first violence in the history of man (mythology)

The story of Cain and Abel – the sons of Adam according to the Koran – provides a primary pattern of human violence that leads to »murder«. This violence also has its origin in a universal »injustice« that has befallen the murderer among the two brothers. God is directly responsible for the »violence« in this story by virtue of accepting the sacrifice of the one brother and rejecting the sacrifice of the other without any apparent reason.[2]

2 The Koranic text is as follows:

"And recite thou to them the story of the two sons of Adam truthfully, when they offered a sacrifice, and it was accepted of one of them, and not accepted of the other. 'I will surely slay thee,' said one. 'God accepts only of the godfearing,' said the other. 'Yet if thou stretchest out thy hand against me, to slay me, I will not stretch out my hand against thee, to slay thee; I fear God, the Lord of all Being. I desire that thou shouldest be laden with my sin and thy sin, and so become an inhabitant of the Fire; that is the recompense of the evildoers.' Then his soul prompted him to slay his brother, and he slew him, and became one of the losers."

Arberry, John, The Koran Interpreted, Oxford University Press 1964, reprinted 1979, Sura V, 27-30 (The Table), p. 104.

The commentators have attempted to find reasons for the rejection of the sacrifice offered by the brother and the acceptance of the sacrifice made by the brother who was killed. It is precisely this that reflects the human disquiet in attempting to understand sanctity. Cf. above-mentioned Koran commentary by at-Tabari, Vol. 10, pp. 210 – 219.

Can we claim on account of the analysis of the mythological basis for the violence deeply rooted in the consciousness of man that violence can be exercised by the despotic power (many despots have used violence in the name of sanctity) but can also arise from a feeling of injustice (the brother murders because he feels – without reason – unjustly treated on account of the rejection of his sacrifice)? I believe that the history of violence, as portrayed by the author, gives this view a certain legitimacy. People are either oppressors because they feel they are better and have a higher status (divinity) or victims of oppression who feel they are treated unjustly and resort to violence as compensation and defence.

Different historical context

The historical difference between Islam and Christianity lies in Christianity having emerged at the heart of a political system, the Byzantine Empire, which at that time controlled the entire Near East with the exception of Persia, whose imperium was constantly in military-political conflict with the Byzantine Empire. The climax of these disputes came in the 7th century A.D., the century of the proclamation of Islam in Hejaz inside the Arabian Peninsula. It is only natural that, in this context, the political face of Christianity was absent in its Holy Scriptures and did not show itself until the 4th century, when it became the official religion of the empire. Islam in Mecca, i.e. before the Prophet Muhammad and his companions left for »Yathrib« (later Medina) in the year 622 A.D. on account of the persecution they were exposed to by the leaders of the Quraish tribe, from which the Prophet himself came, was an appeal to worship the One God. It was characterised by peaceableness and gentleness. It preached the values of patience and resistance in the hope of the Paradise beyond promised to the faithful by God in contrast to the torments of the inferno of Hell with which He threatened the stubborn and arrogant who fought against the proclamation and persecuted the faithful. In this context, the stories of the Old Testament – the stories of the prophets of the people of Israel – were functionalised to illustrate the struggle between »faith« and »lack of faith« and demonstrate that faith always wins over lack of faith in the end.

The emigration as a decisive event

The emigration began with a renowned declaration called »The Treaty of Medina«, which regulated the relations between the »Community of the Faithful« and the other communities in Yathrib, the three Arab tribes of the Jewish faith resident there and the other polytheistic tribes. This first document makes it clear that »the Community of the Faithful« had attained an independent identity which permitted it to position itself in the tribalist-religious relations in social terms. This was the beginning of the gradual change from the position of gentleness, peaceableness and patience to, first of all, provocation and, subsequently, to military confrontation with the »Quraish«, for whom Yathrib set up a trading station which had to be passed through by the caravans with their goods on the way to Mecca. In the course of this dispute, the positions of the other forces acting in Yathrib altered, which eventually led to a change in the initial formula of coexistence in the document referred to above. A clash ensued with the Jewish tribes.

God – Allah – could not assume a neutral position in this dispute between His »Community of the Faithful« led by his messenger, the Prophet »Muhammad«, and the enemies, whether polytheists or Jews. It was only natural for the language of the revelation, which constituted part of this dispute, to change. The early scholars have recorded this change in very precise terms in their classification of the »Koranic sciences«. We are concerned here with sciences that have to be grasped and mastered before becoming involved in the process of interpreting and understanding the words of God. These sciences include the teaching of »Mecca and Medina studies«, signifying the difference in terms of content, form and language between the »Koran« received by Muhammad in Mecca and that received by him after his emigration to Medina.[3]

3 I have analysed the "Koranic sciences" from the historically critical viewpoint in a study that attempts to develop a contemporary idea from the character of the text of the Koran which enables us, in turn, to develop a realistic method of commentary and interpretation remote from the ideological. See:

مفهوم النص: دراسة في علوم القرآن، ط ١، القاهرة ١٩٩٠، ثم عدة طبعات متوالية عن "المركز الثقافي العربي"، بيروت والدار البيضاء.

Holy violence

The reading of Sura, known by the name of »bara'a« (= revocation – trans.) by virtue of opening with the declaration »baraatun mina-llah wa rasulihi« (»a revocation ... on the part of God and His messenger«) or also as »at-tauba« (the Repentance), which appears in the printed version of the Koran as Sura IX, reveals the concluding rules stipulated by the Koran for the Community of the Faithful in dealing with its foes, regardless of whether they were to be categorised as polytheists – idolaters – or members of other religions, particularly the Jews and Nazarenes (the People of the Book). However, this conclusion marked the climax of tensions in the relations between the »Community of the Faithful« and the other communities; in Sura »The Table« (Sura V), for example, the People of the Book (the people of Israel) are characterised as »excessive«, a description which comes after the story of the two sons of Adam, which we analysed in the previous section: »Therefore (i.e. due to this fratricide) We prescribed for the Children of Israel that whoso slays a soul not to retaliate for a soul slain, nor for corruption done in the land, shall be as if he had slain mankind altogether; and whoso gives life to a soul, shall be as if he had given life to mankind altogether. Our Messengers have already come to them with the clear signs; then many of them thereafter commit excesses in the earth.«[4]

Sura IX »Repentance«, already referred to, sets out the ultimate commandment: »Fight those who believe not in God and the Last Day and do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden — such men as practise not the religion of truth, being of those who have been given the Book — until they pay the tribute out of hand and have been humbled«:[5]

»Fight them, till there is no persecution and the religion is God's entirely; then if they give over, surely God sees the things they do.«[6]

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4 Arberry, John, The Koran Interpreted, Oxford University Press 1964, reprinted 1979, Sura V, 32 (The Table), p. 105

5 Arberry, John, The Koran Interpreted, Oxford University Press 1964, reprinted 1979, Sura IX, 29 (Repentance), p. 182

6 Arberry, John, The Koran Interpreted, Oxford University Press 1964, reprinted 1979, Sura VIII, 39 (The Spoils), p. 173

Sura XLVII »Muhammad« states: »When you meet the unbelievers, smite their necks, then, when you have made wide slaughter among them, tie fast the bonds; then set them free, either by grace or ransom, till the war lays down its loads. So it shall be; and if God had willed, He would have avenged Himself upon them; but that He may try some of you by means of others. And those who are slain in the way of God, He will not send their works astray.«[7]

These and similar texts from the Holy Book of the Muslims are quoted by terrorists to justify their actions – not only in fighting against idolaters and the People of the Book, but also against Muslims themselves in Islamic societies because, in their view, these societies no longer follow the rules of Islam and its law. The terror is directed not only at the rulers responsible for these societies deviating from the true law of God; no, the faithful also bear responsibility by virtue of remaining silent and not rebelling against such rulers. This means that they have lost their faith and have become »unbelievers« like their rulers. This corresponds to the ideas of Sayyid Qutb, who stigmatised all human societies as »Jahilliyah« for living according to laws inconsistent with what God has revealed and putting »human reason« in place of »divine reason« in matters concerning rule and power. This is the essence of »Jahilliyah«, which describes a non-divine order rather than an epoch.

The leap taken by al-Qaeda from fighting against Jahilliyah societies in the Islamic world to combating international Jahili is a small one. In its first declarations in 1998, Osama bin Laden made it clear that the rulers in Saudi Arabia were only puppets whose strings were being pulled by the international powers, especially America. In this respect, the war had to be directed against the actual puppeteers and not just the puppets. We should not forget in this context that the concepts of »international arrogance« and the »Great Satan« were articulated as synonyms for America in the discourse accompanying the Iranian revolution in the late 1970s. The role of the USA in Iran since the 1950s and its undisguised participation in the repression of the Iranian people in favour of the Shah should not be forgotten, either.

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7 Arberry, John, The Koran Interpreted, Oxford University Press 1964, reprinted 1979, Sura XLVII, 4 (Muhammad), p. 526
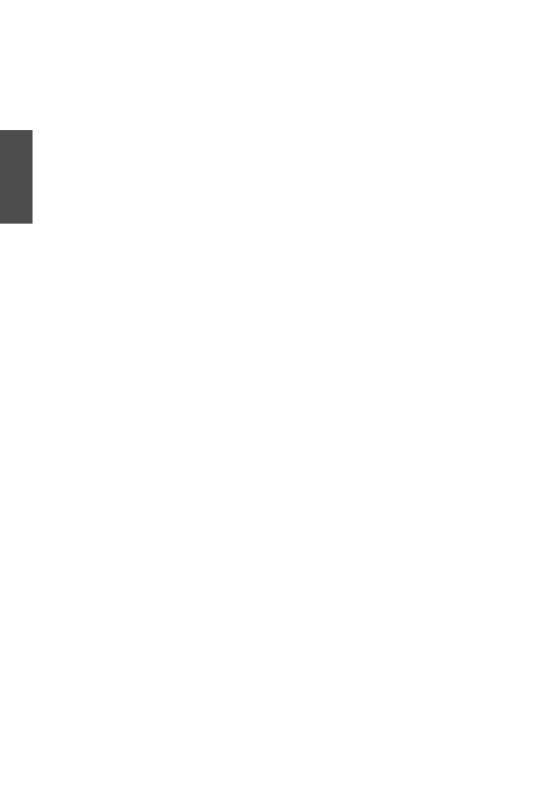
The evocation of sanctity

If we follow the rules of interpretation developed from the classical »science of Koranic interpretation«, it is not possible to condemn terrorism in religious terms. It remains completely true to the classical rules in its evocation of sanctity for its own justification. This is where the secret of its theological strength lies. These rules are those of the »nas-ch«, of abrogation. They signify that the later commandments of the revelation revoke, i.e. abrogate, the earlier commandments on the same question in their chronological order as sent down to the Prophet. Consequently, the »Medina« revelation on the issues of war, struggle and subjugation abrogates the »Mecca« revelations, which concern tolerance, patience and resistance. This led the Sudanese philosopher, Mahmud Mohammad Taha, who was executed in 1985 by the Islamist regime of Numeiri in Sudan as an apostate, to consider transforming the notion of »nas-ch«. In his view, »nas-ch« represented a suspension of the commandments concerned rather than complete revocation, with the Arabs in the 7th century not yet ready to adopt the message of Mecca. The message of Medina with everything it postulated in terms of statutory provisions, punishments, orders of death and measures of subjugation was – according to Taha – a temporary historical alternative corresponding to the consciousness of 7th century Arabs. Given that human consciousness had developed, it was time to rescind the suspension of the message of Mecca and return to it because it represented »the second message« – which is the title of his book – and to abrogate the first message, i.e. that of Medina.

Mahmud Mohammad Taha's suggestion, which he paid for with his life, represents an attempt to resolve the dilemma of the mixture or even fusion between »history« and »revelation«, a fusion which led to a divine dimension being bestowed on historically related decisions. It makes an apologetic ideology of the interpretation according to the classical rules in several respects.

Conclusion

In my view, we have to read both the messages – the political message and its religious exterior – sent out simultaneously by terrorism, but employing different methods. In the case of the political message, we have to listen very closely, take it seriously and endeavour to solve the problems it raises at both local and international level. Rather than eliminate the problem, the military and security solution will, on the contrary, make it greater, more complicated and more explosive. Violence and terrorism will increase. The suicide attacks against Israel can be condemned, but only because they are directed against the civilian population. Confining oneself to condemnation without being aware that it is an act of resistance for which no weapon is available other than the human body means, however, that we regard the Palestinians as having a yearning for death. There are other cultural factors which are reinforced by the Arab media in relation to this question when they depict the »death ceremony« as heroism which deserves to be celebrated – without reaching into the hearts of the mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters who are forced to celebrate the death by the culture of political hypocrisy.

The second message, which embodies the religious exterior of violence and terrorism, also has to be treated with critical, analytical seriousness in order to uncover the dimensions of this fusion of history and the Holy Writings – not only in Islam but, rather, in all religions. This requires an enormously creative force in criticising religious dogmas in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Amr Hamzawy

The globalisation of danger and the intricacies of religion, politics and violence

In his valuable study entitled »War, Repression, Terrorism – Political Violence and Civilisation in Western and Muslim Societies«, Jochen Hippler offers a coherent interpretative approach to the phenomenon of violence in today's societies in which he links the levels of cultural-philosophical observation and socio-political examination. Although I agree with the sum of his balanced conclusions, I would like to ask him and the esteemed readers to permit me to concentrate my commentary on two analytical contexts which I regard as complementary to what he presented. The first context approaches the phenomenon of violence in quite general terms, proceeding from the concept of the risk society. The second context concentrates on the Arab-Islamic societies and deals with the interconnection of religion and politics as well as their causal and justifying relationship with the phenomenon of violence.

The risk society: the structurality of violence and the universality of the change in value systems

The international debates on the change in the structures of contemporary societies and value systems that form the patterns of human interaction and its relation to the phenomenon of violence can be observed in two contrastive frameworks. While one framework is linked to the course of the developments of socio-economic and political reality in the different regions of the world, the second relates to people becoming aware of these developments. If we disregard the last three decades, the interest of the modern social sciences – by which I mean primarily the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and political science – has concentrated on trying to sound

out the depths of the first framework and to give scholars' explanations of the most important stages of human history an objective or, at least, seemingly objective character. This concerns the transition from the »community« to »society« with its ever more complex structures or from the epoch of slavery and feudalism to the age of industrialisation and capitalist expansion. A range of theoretical-interpretational approaches of a functional nature have taken shape within this framework, such as the concept of modernisation or the Marxist assumptions of the class struggle and the dialectics of foundation and superstructure. All have laid claim to the ability to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the facts of human life, including violence, and of even being able to predict its future course on a scientific basis. The social sciences were thus wrapped in the cloak of objectivity up to and including the 1970s. The discourses on development and change were regarded as the embodiment of existing facts or those bound to occur.[1]

The context of perception and its strongly subjective worlds were mostly ignored or merely seen in a small number of studies as being dependent upon the first context, as if the role of scientists and philosophers together with their concepts and analyses were limited to passing from one stage to the next with the real changes of the times. This view was associated, especially in Western secular thinking, with the meticulous search for moments of history on which the symbolism of major breaks with history could be bestowed after which nothing more was possible or in which the »new« was in absolute contrast to what had gone before or to the »old«. On the other hand, this view was linked to what could be described as the »development mentality«, which, believing in the linear movement of humanity towards perfection and striving forwards, fostered the prejudice that the »new« – regardless of its nature – was »better«. Concepts such as progress versus backwardness, rationality versus irrationality and security versus violence have indeed attained their central importance in the explanation of the course of history by providing the »new« with (quasi-religious) redemption content and expressing a value-laden application of the content of perfec-

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1 See: Jürgen Habermas, Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1988, pp. 279 – 312.

tion and upward development to social reality.[2] It was only natural for the structural partisanship in favour of »reality« at the expense of »perception« to lead to a hegemony of the material factors associated with the social, economic and political spheres, resulting in marginalisation of the significance of cultural value-oriented elements in explaining the development of human societies.[3]

The basic structures of this classic tableau of the Modern Age began to falter quite severely at the beginning of the last third of the last century[4] as the result of a series of decisive changes and new phenomena which could not be explained in a convincing manner by means of the traditional theoretical, functional or Marxist approaches. As Hippler writes in his remarks on the link between violence and the Modern Age, the fact that the model of Western progress (in its capitalist and socialist forms) appeared to have reached its ultimate limits, which found distinct expression in an increased tendency towards political and racist violence, in technological disasters like that in Chernobyl, in severe economic and social crises in the welfare state system of the advanced North, including the decline in growth rates and increasing unemployment in particular, as well as in the ecological threat to human existence, was a clear alarm signal which induced the cultural and political elites in the West, at least in part, to consider new strategies for steering and controlling its societies. These strategies focused primarily on

2 See: Reinhart Koselleck, Kritik und Krise. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1973, pp. 132 – 157.

3 Talcott Parsons, »The Place of Ultimate Values in Sociological Theory«, in: International Journal of Ethics 45 (1935), pp. 282 – 316.

4 The judgmental description here refers to the fact that the evolutionary understanding of history after the two World Wars, especially after the crimes of National Socialism, was subjected to strong criticism, criticism that strived to search for theoretical alternatives to reveal the inconsistencies in the development of human societies and bring out the central importance of the non-material factors in understanding their causes and effects. The manuscripts written in this context have not been able to break down the predominance of the modernist, functional and Marxist models in the social sciences despite their epistemological aura, especially in relation to the Frankfurt School and its critical theory. See: Marx Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1997, pp. 270 – 294.

dealing with the decline in social security and stability and on handling the value-oriented dimensions of human development.[5]

On the other hand, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a diminishing role of the nation-state at international level, whether on account of ethnic or confessional conflicts or because of the failure of the state modernisation process in non-Western countries. That led to the emergence of political and religious opposition forces, which perpetrated acts of violence previously unknown in their countries, representing a direct threat to the position of the nation-state and its identity. They did, however, also set an extensive process in action for reawakening traditional views of society and politics which rejects the secular Modern Age because its concepts have allegedly neutralised the cultural value-oriented element and are no longer able to present convincing formulae for dealing with the challenges of the epoch.[6] Just as Hippler emphasises the central role of state repression for the understanding of social counterviolence in the context of the different causes of violence, phenomena like the civil wars on the Balkans and the tensions in the Near East in turn cannot be understood independently of the hegemony of the states' repressive machinery and their long-lasting suppression of plurality in their societies.

The impending collapse of the Socialist bloc, partly brought about by violent mass protest movements, was a further factor for the development of an international state of existential uncertainty which went hand in hand with the end of the idea of borders separating individual societies brought about by the processes of globalisation. The fact that phenomena like the hole in the ozone layer, the HIV virus, the dangers of nuclear technology, unemployment, poverty and violence do not, all in all, remain confined to particular peoples or regions but, rather, extend across the entire globe has

5 See: Niklas Luhman, Soziale Systeme. Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1994 (5th Edition), pp. 15 – 29.

6 See: Thomas Luckmann, Die unsichtbare Religion. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1996 (6th Edition.), pp. 151 – 163.

Peter L. Berger, Zur Dialektik von Religion und Gesellschaft. Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer Verlag 1988, pp. 101 – 162.

forced the social sciences to engage in greater research activity in order to find alternative approaches capable of dealing with the changes referred to above and which are not solely confined to attempting to criticise the great concepts of the Modern Age in the form of progress, secularism and security. In other words, the question of violence became a central issue on the international agenda towards the end of the last century. Academic interest in the topic is growing considerably. This explains Hippler's confirmatory statement that international awareness of phenomena such as terrorism, ethnic cleansing and human rights violations has grown.

It is in this context that the German social scientist Ulrich Beck coined the term of the »risk society«, the theoretical background of which was formed by the radical changes towards the end of the century.

Beck completed his first book on the risk society at the beginning of the second half of the 1980s, in 1986 to be precise. The reactor disaster at Chernobyl in the same year gave his book a very real dimension. The first section of the introduction with the heading »In view of the occasion«, which was definitely equally popular among both German and Arab intellectuals, evaluates the 20th century in terms of historical destiny: »There was certainly no shortage of historical catastrophes in this century: two world wars, Auschwitz, Nagasaki, then Harrisburg und Bhopal, and now Chernobyl. This necessitates caution in choosing one's words and focuses one's view with regard to distinctive historical characteristics. All the suffering, deprivation and violence inflicted on man by man had previously only been known under the category of the »others« – Jews, blacks, women, asylum seekers, dissidents, communists, etc. There were fences, camps, urban districts and military blocs on the one hand and one's own four walls on the other hand – real and symbolic boundaries behind which those seemingly not affected could withdraw. All of this no longer exists and has not existed since Chernobyl. That is the *end of the »others«*, the end of all our intricate distancing manœuvres, something that has become perceptible with atomic contamination. *Deprivation can be isolated, but this is no longer the case for the dangers of the atomic age*. That is where its new cultural and political strength lies. Its violence is the violence of danger, which removes all the protective zones and differentiations of the Modern Age« (italics by Ulrich Beck).[7]

The term »danger« describing the changes taking place in societies towards the end of the 20th century proceeds from four basic considerations: 1. The present situation represents a fundamental break with the history of the Modern Age. 2. The term »danger« is the principal driving force of contemporary social structures. 3. The Enlightenment's postulate of the »uniform destiny of mankind«, which stands in contradiction to the development of the Modern Age since the 18th century and has been shifted by it into the sphere of a symbolic act, is now becoming reality. 4. In view of the phenomena of violence and lack of security, all these changes make it urgently necessary to review the effectiveness of the international systems of values and formulate an alternative theoretical interpretative approach in order to understand the challenges of the epoch.[8]

So what are the social structures and value systems like at the end of the 20th century, what material and symbolic content does the moment of the breaking of the Modern Age have in the final phase of the 20th century, and how is this reflected in the examination of the phenomenon of violence? For the purpose of critical representation, a distinction can be drawn between different levels of answering these questions. *On the one hand,* it is a fact that today's societies are entering a new phase of their development which in many forms, the extent of which is not yet clear, conflicts with the reality of industrialised society as experienced by all mankind in the context of capitalist expansion since the 19th century. *On the other hand,* this change is taking place on account of the successive modernisation processes in industrial society, which can be compared to a certain extent with the change from the agricultural to the industrial society in the 19th century: *»Similar to the way in which in the 19th century in which modernisation did away with the agricultural society, which had become fossilised in corporative terms, and*

7 Ulrich Beck, Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne, Frankfurt 1986, p. 7

8 In addition to the book entitled »Risikogesellschaft«, the analysis in this study is based on Beck's statements in the following works:

Ulrich Beck, Die Erfindung des Politischen. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1993.

Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens & Scott Lash, Reflexive Modernisierung. Eine Kontroverse. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1996.

carved out the structural image of the industrial society, modernisation is today dissolving the contours of the industrial society and a different social form is emerging in the continuity of the Modern Age« (italics by Ulrich Beck). [9] In other words, the study of the phenomenon of violence must not be confined to examining the background of the political phenomenon or the effects of economic crises and the results of state repression, as is the case in the approach on which Hippler's work is based; it must, rather, view the structural changes in today's societies in the West and the Orient and relate the phenomenon of violence to these.

The fact that there is a historical similarity between the social logic leading to the industrialised society and the social logic bringing about its dissolution, i.e. the process of social changes, must not, *thirdly,* disguise a further essential element that completes this picture. While change in the 19th century primarily had to struggle with traditional structures, religious value systems and a resistive nature, which it wanted to control completely, current social changes are confronted with themselves or, to put it more precisely, with the violent results of what they have produced over the past 200 years.

Fourthly, the difference between the change in traditional society and that associated with the industrialised society touches on the core of the current social conflict, which produces phenomena such as violence and revolves around the search for alternatives to the traditional function of science and technology (the conquest of nature), for different forms of working conditions, personal lifestyles and the associated ideal role models for men and women and, consequently, the search for a new or modified system of values for patterns of human behaviour both in the public and private domain.

The driving force for present changes, however, is moving towards the concept of violence in this context. What is meant by this is quite simply that the structures of the industrial society and the mechanisms of its movement, especially in the areas of technology, working conditions, business, consumption and communication, have become a constant source of

9 Ulrich Beck, Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne, Frankfurt 1986, p. 14.

unknown challenges while, at the same time being difficult to control within the framework of the usual monitoring and security mechanisms, such as the welfare system and social security (unemployment benefit, pensions, etc.).[10] The aim is thus – and here lies the heart of the conceptual and analytical contribution made by Hippler's valuable work – to show that rather than being an accident related to the orientation of a state, repression by a system or a series of individual economic and social crises, the phenomenon of violence is more an expression of structural changes and the development of a danger which determine the movement of today's human societies.

Before we start looking at the characteristics of the risk society that emerge from the apparel of the changes already referred to and analysing the functionality of the phenomenon of violence that has emerged within its framework, one important comment still needs to be made. It is clear that the preceding depiction as a whole and in its details stems from an analysis, the reference framework of which is the reality in the wealthy societies of the North, especially Western Europe and the USA. There, it is quite legitimate to pose the question concerning the universality of the concept of the risk society and the associated phenomenon of violence. Indeed, the literature on this concept makes hardly any detailed statements in this respect. The trend, especially after the events of 11 September 2001, has been to be content with emphasising that the risks differ according to the varying social framework and embody »the violence and religious terrorism« of an ideological nature, e.g. the real existence of what can be described as the »international risk society«.[11] The overstretching of the distinctive feature of the term, however, ignores two epistemological variants. First, the susceptibility of the risk society to phenomena such as violence, terrorism and the lack of security in globalisation is similar to the modernisation process over the

10 See: Anthony Giddens, Jenseits von Links und Rechts – Die Zukunft radikaler Demokratie. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1994, pp. 186 – 206.

11 Ulrich Beck, »The Terrorist Threat. World Risk Society Revisited«, in: Theory, Culture & Society 19 (2002), pp. 39 – 55.

Ulrich Beck, »The Silence of Words: On Terror and War«, in: Security Dialogue 34 (2003), pp. 255 – 267.

past two centuries, even though the instruments vary. Second, the universalisation of the dangers themselves which, as already explained, cancel out the functionality of the dividing boundaries, regardless of the specific location from which the violence concerned originates.

Now let us return to the characteristics of the risk society, its structural violence and its system of values, which take shape in two successive phases that are associated with each other in functional terms despite their relative independence. The first phase is expressed in terms of social reality beginning to leave the familiar framework and an awareness of the existence of structural violence in various areas developing among the elites (in small groups). Nonetheless, the scope of the public debate, action and political discussion remains extremely remote from recognising the new character of these crises and there is a tendency to deal with them according to the model known in today's societies – as the expression of a limited and, in the final analysis, legitimate part of the dangers of the modernisation processes which can eventually be controlled completely. This illusion of control fades with the second phase, in which the limited ability of the existing social structures – social, economic and political – to control the risks in their relationship with man and nature becomes obvious by virtue of these social structures having completely exhausted their possibilities. Here, the manifestations of danger and structural violence are transformed into a matter for the centrist majorities, dominating their private domain and the area of public debate. The political forces are gradually grasping the fact that it is important to concern oneself with the harbingers of the radical changes in structural violence and are primarily endeavouring to extend the life of the most important institutions in the economy and society by means of different strategies and protect them against the danger of dissolution. This enables them to create the general feeling or the general illusion that there is scope for action and planning that still function. This supports the continued existence of the balance of power and distribution of property in society and ensures further existence of the vital conditions needed for the continuity of the political sphere and which manifest themselves in the citizens' basic conviction that the affairs of society are being controlled effectively. However, the matter becomes reversed as soon as the limited influence of

politics and its inadequately effective power, e.g. compared with powerful economic interests, become clear, which leads to politics and its symbolic figures being the main ones blamed for failure in the eyes of the frightened and intimidated majorities.

These radical changes are giving rise to a rapid increase in individualism in today's societies which is gradually taking on previously unknown forms. This, in turn, finds expression in decreased functionality of the collective identities of the Modern Age (workers, employers, other occupational groups, classes) and the emergence of individualistic value systems. This is not merely a tendency, but comes close to the symbolism of a »tailor-made culture« through the blending of their elements. Parallel to this, the scope for individual freedom and the individual's possibilities for moving around are widening. This is becoming the final authority per se for deciding what is right and wrong, what is useful or harmful and what is a right or an obligation, without recourse to higher metaphysical or secular powers. This necessitates a greater effective power of the phenomenon of individual and collective violence. The other side of this is the limited actual exercise of individual rights in the face of the dangers to human existence at different levels, as already commented on above, as well as the cruelty of a society that no longer enables the individual to seek even temporary and partial refuge under the protection of the family, clan or occupational group. These are the structural causes of the phenomenon of violence which remove the possibilities for outmanoeuvring it socially. It is thus not a case of changing the nature of the political system or dealing with particular crises or, as Hippler suggests, eliminating the link between religion and politics; it has to do, rather, with a chain of structural changes, the full expression of which is inevitable.

The definition of the term determines the place and time where the existence of a risk society can be assumed. The risk society starts at the moment *»...when the systems of social norms concerning promised security fail in the face of dangers triggered by decisions«,*[12] (Italics by Ulrich Beck). In view of its individual concepts, this concise and, from the choice of words, extremely

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12 Ulrich Beck, Die Erfindung des Politischen, Frankfurt 1993, p.40.

functional definition requires us to dwell on the interdependences between its principal elements for a moment. The relation between risks, violence and lack of security in today's societies forms the core of disengagement from the social modernisation narratives as we know them. The modernisation processes from the 19th century on were based on the reflexive promise of creating safe and secure living conditions for man by controlling nature and exploiting its resources, thus leading man out of the servitude of pre-modern destruction scenarios (earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, etc.) into the unlimitedness of the stable secular society. The idea of the Enlightenment took on the task in this context of sowing the seeds of doubt about the credibility of the other part of the visions of the end or, in other words, of the religious discourses concerning the threat.

What happened in the last third of the 20th century was that the modernisation processes broke away from themselves, becoming the most important cause of the risks. They accordingly lost their legitimacy, which was based on the historical promise of a secure society. Rather than being confined to the symbolism of the Chernobyl disaster or the lack of ability to control the globalised dangers of modern technologies, the concept of the absence of security reaches as far as the dissolution of the structures and value systems of today's society, the spread of violence in manifold respects and the brutality of the solitariness of man at the moment of the breach, reminiscent of the terms of anomaly in Émile Durkheim and nihilism in Nietzsche.

The term »risk society« describes the reality of the current social structures and value systems in a way that makes it possible to understand the continuity of the phenomenon of violence and which helps to recognise the boundaries of the ability of political and intellectual elites to deal with it. This term thus fills a theoretical and intellectual vacuum evident since the second half of the 1970s which emerged owing to the lack of new instruments and concepts for approaching the phenomena of the last decade of the 20th century.

Despite their inner diversity and the differences that exist between them, the debates on late capitalism and the post-industrial society have not produced any convincing interpretation of the change of the age. They have

either remained caught up in the premises of the modernisation concept itself, regarded its crises and structural violence as an expression of the normal scope of entirely solvable inconsistencies or marginalised themselves through a nihilism that merely evoked the symbolism of fear of the Modern Age and rejection of change. The concept of the risk society overcomes these methodological obstacles and offers an explanation for the transformation of today's societies from the phase of classic modernisation and relative security to the phase of the risk society in the context of a continuous Modern Age despite the fact of a radical break with its history. Conventional modernisation processes have reached their most extreme boundaries and started to rebel against their industrial societies, thus destroying the networks of relative security and creating unprecedented scope for and forms of dangers and globalised violence. Familiar social structures and orders are disintegrating and losing their credibility, while the systems of values giving them their legitimacy are showing cracks, driving individuals and communities into an unknown sphere, with violence becoming one of the strategies for dealing with these developments. The concept of the risk society thus represents an interpretative framework that complements Jochen Hippler's study and even adds a number of important analytical retouches to his examination of the causes of the universalisation of the phenomenon of violence in today's societies.

Reference still needs to be made to two additional analytical spheres in this respect when we observe the correlations between the concept of the risk society and the phenomenon of violence, i.e. the notion of opportunity and the dynamics of the globalisation of violence. Mere concentration on the symbolism of violence as a fundamental concept could, indeed, give rise to an incomplete understanding of the consequences of the modernisation processes which excludes its other face – opportunity – in structural terms. Rather than representing merely an unbroken chain of challenges and violence, today's modern technologies and the models of reason and rationality also create new, unprecedented opportunities at different levels. The decisive element in this case is the way in which the probability of violence and that of opportunity are distributed among individual and macro-communities in the society concerned as well as their dialectic relationship. It is

unquestionable that there are certain groups (formed on an occupational, geographical or ethnic basis) that are beneficiaries of the present transformations and others that suffer harm through them. In the face of a political sphere incapable of neutral action and whose main distinctive feature comprises repressive practices, as well as of a nation-state in the process of dissolution, as in the Balkans in the 1990s or in Iraq at present, questions of fairness and equal opportunity are once again becoming the focus of the public debate, playing an important role in the dialogue surrounding value systems and social consensus concerning violence and destruction.[13] The effects of the lack of risk and opportunity distribution between individuals and communities or of the disregard for the interests of the majority must not be ignored and the fact that the politics of the repressive state abandons its responsibility to society cannot be justified.

Theoretically, the responsibility for fighting this agenda, which prevails in various forms, falls to the leftist forces in all their shades, i.e. the old and new left, the parliamentary and extraparliamentary left, as well as the Marxist and post-Marxist left. The bond that holds them together in their relation to social development models comprises resistance against globalised capitalism and the beneficiaries *(haves)* of its financial and monetary instruments, the regaining of humane content, especially security, equality and justice, as well as the perception of the anything but rosy facts that shape the reality of the losers of the current moment *(have-nots)* from the groups of the marginalised, unskilled workers and the citizens of poor societies.

The same applies to the question of the globalisation of danger and violence. Merely emphasising the universal character of the phenomenon does not answer the central question concerning the fundamental differences with regard to the nature of the risk and violence phenomena with which rich and poor societies see themselves confronted and what follows in terms of differences at the level of changes in the social structures and their value systems. The unity of the destiny of mankind does, in fact, form a constitu-

13 See: Gerhard Schulze, Die Erlebnisgesellschaft – Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart. Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag 1997 (7th Edition), pp. 34 – 88.

tive element of the perception of today's situation. The gap between the perception and the action striving for a change in the reality is, however, still huge, if not, indeed, an expression of fundamental contradiction. How is it otherwise to be understood that the countries of the North manage to export their atomic waste to the South and how are we to deal with the breathtaking differences between the economic levels here and there, as well as with migration policy and many other things? Is the globalisation of the risk society not in itself an expression of the constant expansion of the capitalist market with its unjustly distributed structural inconsistencies and its inherent violence? Hippler makes a series of important references in his study in this regard which might potentially provide a clear explanation for the phenomena of chauvinism, poverty, religious terrorism and economic crises outside the advanced North as sources of the dynamics of the phenomenon of violence. It also includes emphasising that the stereotyped observation of the universality of violence and its interconnection with the different social, political and cultural levels between the West and Islamic societies is not an alternative framework that would be more suitable for describing the development of our present world.

The interconnection of religion, politics and violence in Arab-Islamic societies

After dividing the causes of the phenomenon of violence into political, state repression-related and economic-social causes going hand in hand with crises of life, Jochen Hippler turns his attention in dealing with the question of violence in Arab-Islamic societies to the role of religion or, rather, of instrumentalised religious discourses for the justification of violence and develops a range of valuable analytical observations in this regard. Nevertheless, dealing with the theoretical and cultural backgrounds of the interconnection of religion, politics and violence in contemporary Arab societies – the following analysis is concerned with this – is not sufficient. A rational and circumspect approach to this topic should be based on three central questions, all of which are absent in Hippler's analysis and without which phenomena such as Islamist terrorism cannot be understood. The

three questions concern the position of religion on the social map in the context of the dualism of the public and private spheres, the role of value systems and religious perceptions in the political domain and their relative weight compared with other perceptions (where present) and, finally, the way state and non-state political and social players deal with religion at the present moment.

In order not to initiate any inappropriate or misplaced debate on secularization, it is necessary to decide quickly and establish that deliberations on the questions referred to are by no means only of significance for traditional, religious or non-secularised societies (to use a term whose sphere of meaning can cover various experiences) but can, rather, extend to all forms of relationship between religion, society and politics. Religion as a social phenomenon, a constitutive element of culture and source or morals constantly blends and crosses with the courses of development in the human society concerned, even where it is banished in some of its emanations from the public domain as a whole or only from the political sphere. The debate on the status of religious symbols in the official domain now being conducted in European countries which had achieved a functional division between religious and political institutions in earlier phases of history and the associated conflict between the logic of the ban or complete banishment (as in France) and the attempt to find conciliatory solutions (as in Germany) appears to be a clear indicator of the continuity of concern with the religious phenomenon. In some cases, it can even be said in quite general terms, despite the civil nature of the political sphere, that there is some sort of interconnection between politics and religion. This is made evident by the political party constellations with a Christian character (influential Christian-democrat or Christian-social parties throughout the Continent of Europe) as well as the growing public role and relative weight of the religious institutions and their social discourse, as in the Italian context, for example.

The difference between France, Germany, Italy and other Western societies on the one hand and the Arab-Islamic states on the other hand is perhaps related to the existence or non-existence of socially recognised institutional negotiating mechanisms helpful for developing new formulae for

consensus with regard to the relationship between religion, society and politics which respond to the change in the times and, in this context, involve the main players in a framework that takes account of the balance of power between them as well as the social importance of their world of thought and of their discourses devoted to the human community. The diversity of historical experiences in both blocs – i.e. Western and Arab-Islamic societies – should be borne in mind in this respect. Holland as a first case, for example, and Lebanon as a second each have such extensive specific experience that it is difficult for them to be compared with other countries. I am convinced that it is only possible to leave behind the language of opposites and dichotomies, which calls for an exclusive division between the religious and secular and the religious and civil domains, if we apply the historical facts for understanding social phenomena and regard the scope of continuity and change in relation to the latter in a manner that leads us away from the naïve developmental understanding of the emergence of human societies.

The secularisation of European societies took place in the framework of extensive, long-term transformation processes and meant – bearing in mind the sequence of the course of history in taking away the property of the religious institutions – changing its position on the social map in order to subsequently formulate a system of values on the basis of freedom of faith, the principle of citoyenneté and civil liberties, which became a determining factor for the dynamics of the public domain with its political, economic, intellectual and cultural fields. This did not happen (with the exception of brief, flashing moments, as during the initial phase of the French Revolution) on the basis of an extensive rejection or marginalisation of religion as a phenomenon. On the contrary, religion as a constitutive element remained an authentic part of the Enlightenment discourse of the Modern Age and humanist European thinking in the 19th and 20th centuries. It competed with a range of secular trends and ideologies for the hearts and minds of the people. The institution of religion interacted with the social transformations and its structures, perceptions and functions changed in part as a response to the requirements of a new age.[14] (In the literature of religious sociology, this dimension is subsumed under the term of »internal secularisation«.

What is meant by this is the secularisation of the religious phenomenon itself). The central position of the freedom of faith, notions of citoyenneté and civil liberties did not represent a banishment of the religious; what it did, rather, was, in the experience of the West, to take away from the religious institution the possibility of laying claim to being in possession of the absolute truth in the social domain (reflected in the term »disenchantment of the sacred«). It privatised its discourse in the sense that it became one source among others of value systems and perceptions fought over in the public sphere.[15] In this case, we see ourselves confronted with a historical experience that can only be explained if we emphasise the continuity of the religious phenomenon and the dynamics of its emanations and functions in the society concerned.

Modern and contemporary Arab thinking has, however, transported the idea of secularity rather than the concept of secularisation. All the philosophers of the 20th century dealt with this in an ideological way which ignored all the questions referred to above and compromised the examination of the interconnection between religion, society and politics in the concepts of »religion outside society« and »religion over society«. This approach opened the door to an unfruitful debate which merely led to covering up the totality of historical and social facts, which only recognise the formula of »religion in society«. The new concepts, like citoyenneté, civil liberties and rationalism, were classified in Arab thinking under the heading of the contents of the first statement, with the result that it became impossible to think about reconciliation between them and the continued existence of the religious phenomenon.[16] This segregating perception appears to dominate the discourses of the majority of the political and intellectual forces in our Arab world up to the present day. It constantly leads to religion being saddled with the responsibility for several destructive phenomena in our societies, such as violence and terrorism, regardless of particular social players or

14 Daniel Bell, »Zur Auflösung der Widersprüche von Modernität und Modernismus: Das Beispiel Amerikas«, in: Heinrich Meier (ed.), Zur Diagnose der Moderne. Munich: Piper Verlag 1990, pp. 21 – 68.

15 Niklas Luhman, Funktion der Religion. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1982, pp. 9 – 20.

16 برهان غليون، نقد السياسة. الدين والدولة. بيروت: المؤسسة العربية للدراسات والنشر، 1991.

through the reproach of irrationality being brought against such players from the outset, if they are indeed named.

The examination of the position of religion on the social map and the type of role played by religious value systems and perceptions in the public domain and their relationship to violence in terms of the way in which the political and social forces deal with it thus form a primary methodological context for critical consideration of the religious phenomenon. The latter two factors are associated with a further approach which is also absent in the entire Arab literature on religion: the attempt to determine the levels and content of the continuity and change of religious perceptions and the discourses oriented towards this. The term »continuity« can be defined in formulistic terms as the actual predominance of structures, conceptional approaches and complex indicators of social reality as well as interpretative statements and a symbolic language dominating the ways of thinking on the central issues to such an extent that they are not affected by the influence of space and time. On the contrary, this predominance makes newly developing debates in the said context a reproduction of the old, perhaps using new terms or expressions at the most. The term »change« signifies the gradual turning away from these prefabricated notions, concepts and clichés and towards alternative formulas taking in the general social development and contemporary challenges in thinking. Continuity has two levels: continuity through the past-related view for explaining the present, which refers uncritically to the result of dealing with previous experiences and crises, as well as continuity in the sense of partial renewal which carries out limited transformations in the familiar ideas through a number of central, constitutive elements of the prevailing order being redefined and their internal sequence and the balance of power existing between them being redistributed. The same applies to the concept of change where we can distinguish between a partial change either through the importing of concepts and terms formulated in different intellectual frameworks or through the rediscovery of the marginalised in one's own culture so as to counteract the prevailing order and effect the change through the radical renewal of the thought components by means of fundamental criticism of what has been handed down. Perhaps this methodical effort will facilitate an ap-

proach to the dynamics of the religious phenomenon as well as the different mobility levels of views and discourses developing in this context and help to get away from a static understanding of this phenomenon, which results, of course, in a superficial perception of the interdependences of religion, politics and violence.

In the light of this, we can place Hippler's valuable comments on the instrumentalisation of religion by certain social players for the purpose of justifying violence – despite the fundamental differences between an organisation like al-Qaeda and movements such as Hamas and Hizbollah – and his correct analysis of the double standards in the Arab view on the phenomenon of terrorism, especially when we observe the details of the Israeli-Palestinian situation, in a more general context that brings out the essential difficulties of Arab thinking which, in my view, relate to the marginality of the pluralistic culture, the predominance of the narrative of the exceptional moment and the discourse of the anomaly.

On the one hand, the critical handling of discourses on violence with a religious foundation requires the hegemony of a political culture that accepts plurality. By this, I do not mean the mere recognition or acceptance of the existence of another opinion under the dictate of the »factual« but, rather, the conviction that a diversity of views, concepts and programmes is important for the public good. The true culture of plurality is based, on the one hand, on the rejection of the claim that someone taking part in the social game could possess the power to have an absolute and constant monopoly with regard to having the better answer to the current challenges – utterly regardless of the standards for this better answer. On the other hand, a true culture of plurality results from the conviction that the nature of the public good itself can only be determined by continuous dialogue between all the social forces with their different positions, a dialogue in which the scope for the »reprehensible«, the »forbidden« and the »taboo« is constantly restrained. In contrast, it is opposing tendencies that prevail in contemporary Arab situations, for which the description of »qualified pluralism« might perhaps not be too far amiss. Although there is undoubted diversity among the influential forces in Arab societies, most of them reproduce the elements of exclusion, be it through the use of religion or of other

elements of uniqueness and superiority vis-à-vis the other, with the result that serious endeavours to reach a social consensus on the content of public interest are thwarted. The perception and ideology of al-Qaeda and other religious, jihadistic groups are merely a special form of the core of this exclusion in the context of using violence and are void of any moral rules. Apart from the political dimensions and the background of the relationship with the West, bin Laden, al-Zawahiri and al-Zarqaoui remain a very real product of today's Arab societies and their structures rejecting plurality.

Secondly, the debates conducted by Arab intellectuals on the problems of the present moment in the life of our contemporary Arab societies appear to be caught up in a narrative of danger with diverse content. In the discourses of change and democracy that are common nowadays, expressions such as »We are in danger«, »The Arab world finds itself at a critical turning point« or »We are going through a decisive phase«, »We are steering the ship through rough waters«, »Our culture is under threat«, »The situation does not allow any delay« and many more are repeated again and again. This conveys the general impression that our societies find themselves in an exceptional situation in their current history. Even though such phraseology was not alien to Arab political speech or to instrumentalisation by the ruling elites or different shades of opposition in former times, the generalising use of the symbolism of danger and its justifying link with the inevitable need for reform is, nonetheless, remarkable.

In my estimation, this topic raises an essential question concerning the correspondence of this narrative of danger to the conditions of change and the creative, critical handling of the phenomena presently sweeping over our societies, such as violence and terrorism. The »exceptional moments« in the history of the peoples actually fashion an introduction to the formulation (or re-formulation) of the relationship between the state – the elite in the society – and the citizen in such a totalitarian, forced manner that the scope for functional violence is widening and even being legitimised. In other words, the exceptional moment is the moment of the »saving hero«, with its theoretical foundation provided by Fascism and social engineering from above, with or without a project of modernisation. Most Arab publications on this matter vary between two opposing versions, which are organi-

cally linked to the determination of the sequence of the various conceptual levels of danger and violence and the models of their mutual relations. The nationalist version sees both of them, in principle, as being at a foreign level based on the notion that Western power politics, especially on the part of the USA since 11 September 2001, is the expression of a new colonial phase for which sovereignty and independence of the state in the Arab-Islamic world are only of limited importance and an internal level where the weakness and susceptibility of the state and society are the cause among us for dependence or submission in the face of attack by the West. The second version is a liberal one, which sees the priority as being internal in the sense of a failure by the Arabs to attain real progress, with this resulting in violence and terrorism according to this version. In this case, the foreign element is attributed the function of the power that exposes the nature of this failure, thus constituting the necessary momentum for facing up to it. The two versions result in the question of reform merely becoming a provisional, momentary strategy to guide the Arab peoples out of the current situation of danger and violence, the significance of which ends on reaching the safety of the shore. In the public awareness, reform is not justified as being the only rational way of controlling the affairs of human societies based on self-criticism and correction of the courses of historical activity.

What is more important, however, is that observation of the experiences of a range of contemporary societies in Eastern and Central Europe, Latin America and on the continent of Africa clearly shows that actual change processes and democratic change go hand in hand with a positive optimistic view of the present and future in the public domain, emphasising the possibilities of change towards a better life – not only in order to avert dangers and violence but, rather, to keep pace with the spirit of the times and in the hope of a better future. The moment at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s in former socialist Europe, for example, was, in overall terms, not an expression of surprising rebellions by people who feared for their existence because of external factors (dispute with the West) or internal issues (extensive social stagnation); it was, rather, an expression of the dynamics of social forces and organisations striving for greater prosperity through reforming the course of their political development (civil liberties)

and their economic development (central role of the private sector). On the other hand, statements concerning danger and the exceptional moment have only produced violent, Fascist beginnings or reversions historically. Here I would like to recall the ideas of the German philosopher and jurist, Carl Schmitt (1888 – 1985), whose writings, especially »Die politische Theologie« (1922), formulated an epistemological apology for the seizing of power by the National Socialists in Germany and their coup against the democratic system of government of the Weimar Republic (1919 – 1933) in the 1930s. For Carl Schmitt, the exceptional moment is the instant of the threat to the state's existence and social order due to the disruption of the religious and value systems (determination of the meaning of the dichotomies: friend – foe, good – evil, moral – immoral, etc.). The theoretical basis of the exceptional moment is the right of the redeeming hero (»the holder of sovereignty« in Carl Schmitt's usage) to the totalitarian control of society and the dictatorial, violent re-establishment of the content of law and public good. We need to remind ourselves of the correlations at the level of discourse as well as that of political action which existed between the war in Palestine, the fire in Cairo and the coup by the Free Officers in Egypt, as well as between the accusations of treason, mass liquidations and the putsch of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, etc., etc. The mythology of danger is the mythology of totalitarian, violent beginnings or reversions, of National Fronts that force their peoples into line with the power of repression and state terror. Its formulations of the delusion of approaching destruction or a distorted perception of redemption are not the functional harbingers of reform. In this case, replacement of the constituents of democracy, pluralism and modernisation through ardent Fascism, which also lays claim to a reforming orientation, is made a very simple matter. It is thus not just a matter of invalidating and refuting the religious apology for violence, as called for by Hippler in the section of his study dealing with the relationship between violence and religion; it goes far deeper in our present Arab thinking and can therefore on no account be restricted to the jihadistic currents.

Finally, the third problem is associated with one of the most discussed issues in contemporary Arab societies – the discourse of the anomaly with its historical, religious and cultural content. The observer of the current Arab

debates quickly discovers the central impetus that emphasises the unique nature of our societies in numerous contexts. On the one hand, the Arab anomaly – or the anomaly of every Arab society, come to that – represents the Trojan horse with which the power elites pit themselves against the projects for change pouring in from outside and which are accused of Western centrism and a lack of understanding for our reality, thus reducing this reality to quite general formulations which have been of no use and could even cause harm. The argument of the anomaly is functionalised by the same ruling elites in their attempt to determine, alone, the pace of change in the face of the demands by a number of social and political forces in the Arab world for general reforms, such as democratic changeover of power and constitutional modifications. The pretext is put forward in this regard that every Arab case is different, according to the logic »What is good for Morocco does not necessarily also have to be good for Syria«. In the end, there are a range of social forces organised outside the context of government that use the labels of anomaly and authenticity to provide their subjective views of the state and society with a halo, lay claim to the monopoly of absolute truth and exclude other ideas based on the assertion that they are alien and inappropriate. This is undoubtedly the practice in which the religious movements with their reductive symbolism and repeated reference to the »invariable sources« and »pure sciences« shine. The gap between this apologetic core in all these varieties and the justification of Islamic violence is, in fact, not very great at all. In other words, the phenomenon of violence of the jihadistic currents has grown, been formed and won over increasing numbers of supporters and sympathisers in the shadow of a cultural environment that has emphasised chosenness and uniqueness and justified the separation of Arab societies from the narrative of the democratic age on the basis of imagined anomalies. What Hippler has done, namely to deal with the phenomenon of violence detached from this extensive milieu and only to examine its political and socio-economic causes, is therefore impermissible and violates the precept of accuracy.

The incorrectness of this apologetic perception is not related to the lack of precision of some of its individual aspects. It lies in the disregard for the common international denominator of diverse historical experiences and

the objective evaluation criteria of the latter. On top of this, these perceptions act as though they have forgotten the conditions of globalisation. Mankind's persistent striving for more freedom, equality and justice as well as the repulsion of violence can only be understood if it is perceived as a general value that we all recognise and which we have agreed on after bitter experiences in all parts of the world. Although the descriptions, models, methods and actions certainly differ in terms of space and time, thus constituting different spheres for anthropological action with their anomalies characterised by ethnic, religions and other environmental conditions, the assessment of their usefulness remains closely associated with the proximity to or distance from common, unequivocal values centred purely and simply on human rights, as established in the corresponding declarations of mankind.

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Selected publications:

• Ed.: Nation-Building – a key concept for peaceful conflict management? Dietz Verlag (Bonn), One World Series from the Development and Peace Foundation, 2004

• Thomas Fues/Jochen Hippler (ed.): Globale Politik – Entwicklung und Frieden in der Weltgesellschaft, Festschrift für Franz Nuscheler, Dietz, Bonn 2003

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Selected Publications:

• Politik und Islam: Kritik des Religiösen Diskurses, translated by Chérifa Magdi, Dipa-Verlag, Frankfurt, 1996

• Ein Leben mit dem Islam (Life with Islam), Autobiography edited by Navid Kermani, translated by Chérifa Magdi, Herder 1999

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Selected Publications:

• The Saudi Labyrinth: Evaluating the Current Political Opening, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006

• Zeitgenössisches Arabisches Denken: Kontinuität und Wandel, Orient-Institut, 2005

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