

Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*
 Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2005, £18.99, paperback
 584 pp, 0 521 53854 8

DYLAN RILEY

DEMOCRACY'S GRAVEYARDS?

The murderous 'ethnic cleansing' of civilian populations remains one of the unexplained scandals of world history, although such events seem to have occurred almost as frequently as social revolutions. Over the past 150 years alone, mass killings of indigenous groups by colonial or settler states, of Armenians by Turkish forces and their allies, of Jews by the Nazis, of Tutsis by Hutus, have far exceeded any rational military or economic calculation. But historical and comparative sociology has had relatively little to say about these deeds. Debate about the causes of ethnic cleansing is instead dominated by ahistorical and individualistic models. Michael Mann's impressive *The Dark Side of Democracy* makes a giant step toward specifying the concrete social structures and circumstances that produce such results. Its scale is vast—over 500 pages of dense theorization and historical narrative, encompassing a temporal arc that stretches from ancient Assyria to the Rwandan genocide—while its unforgettable analyses of perpetrators and their actions display an almost ethno-methodological sensibility to the micro-foundations of social life, a new dimension for this master of the grand narrative. It is a major achievement.

The Dark Side of Democracy's mass of historical evidence is marshalled to test a strikingly bold central thesis: that ethnic cleansing is the dark side of democracy, in the sense that the latter is premised on the creation of an ethnic community that 'trumps' or 'displaces' class divisions. It is worth unpacking his usage of these terms a little more at the outset. First, democracy for Mann is primarily understood not as a set of institutions but as an ideology of equality, one that legitimates itself through a claim to represent the people and aims at a popular redistribution of social power. Second,

'ethnic cleansing' is defined as the attempt to create mono-ethnic populations for a given political unit; this is not necessarily murderous, and may more often involve assimilation, whether coercive or not. It is in this sense that Mann sees ethnic cleansing and democracy as having an elective affinity to one another, in two respects: first, most democracies develop on the basis of relatively mono-ethnic populations, and second, democracy carries 'the possibility that the majority might tyrannize minorities.' Ethnic cleansing is, then, 'the dark side of democracy' both in the sense of being a precondition for its emergence, and because it is generally perpetrated by democratic, or democratizing, regimes.

Mann initially presents his argument in terms of eight bold theses, following this with a chapter on ethnic cleansing prior to the nation-state that argues for the fundamental modernity of the process. A series of minutely researched case studies comprises the empirical core of the work: the New World, Armenia, Nazi Germany, Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Interleaved with these are three 'intermezzos'—on the non-German Axis countries; on 'Communist Cleansing'; and on 'Counterfactual Cases', where murderous cleansing did not occur. Broad discussion of the historical background to each case is followed by quasi-ethnographic accounts of the actual process of mass killing. Yet despite, or perhaps because of, its comparative range and density of historical detail, few reactions to the book have done justice to it. Responses have so far been of two main types: focused, respectful assessments of specific theses, and broader attacks on the notion that ethnic cleansing is the 'dark side' of democracy. The latter argument has generally been made from the perspective of a bland, right-thinking liberalism that instinctively reacts against any attempt to besmirch the good name of the procedurally regulated circulation of elites that contemporary social science terms 'democracy'. A more serious, critical engagement with the book requires a fuller reconstruction of Mann's central argument, and an examination of the theoretical cogency and empirical adequacy of his key claims—as well as a sense of how the present work should be understood within the context of Mann's wider intellectual trajectory.

The eight theses at the core of Mann's argument can be read as a set of increasingly specific preconditions for genocide as the most total and violent form of ethnic cleansing. The first two set out the overall parameters for his theory: one, that 'murderous cleansing is modern, because it is the dark side of democracy'; second, 'ethnic hostility arises where ethnicity trumps class as the main form of social stratification'. The next three refer primarily to a set of geopolitical factors: murderous cleansing occurs where two ethnic groups make a claim to the same territory; where one ethnic group feels threatened but also capable of eliminating the other; and where sovereignty breaks down 'amid an unstable geopolitical environment that usually leads to war'. The

final three theses concern the perpetrators: murderous cleansing is not generally their initial intent; there are three levels of perpetrator—party elites, militants and civilian constituencies; and, lastly, ordinary people are ‘brought by normal social structures into committing murderous ethnic cleansing’.

In sum: ethnic conflict becomes murderous when key social forces, in multi-ethnic and geopolitically unstable environments, conceive of democracy as the rule of an ‘indivisible, united, integral’ people. In contrast, where the people is conceived of as ‘diverse and stratified’, and class differences are politically institutionalized, the potential for mass ethnic killings is blocked by countervailing, non-democratic features of these societies. It is for this reason that neither pre-capitalist agrarian societies nor established liberal democracies tend to engage in ethnic cleansing. The former, according to Mann, tend to have cosmopolitan upper classes and locally oriented producing classes. In such societies ethnicity, a sense of cross-class solidarity, and *ipso facto* ethnic cleansing, are rare. Established democracies, meanwhile, are unlikely to commit ethnic cleansing not because they are democratic, but because ‘the politics of class, region and gender’ dominate and implicitly moderate the tendency of democracy to undermine such differences. Northwestern Europe, then, has been relatively immune, because here, democratic rights were gradually extended down the social structure; the fact that these polities did ‘not try to eliminate exploitation’ meant that the national community remained divided along class lines. Indeed, for Mann, the ‘institutionalization of class conflict has been the main political accomplishment of the modern West.’ Outside of the northwestern core states—particularly in Eastern Europe—democracy meant the rule of the whole people, and was associated with an attempt to ‘repress’ class conflict, rather than institutionalize or entrench it; in these cases, Mann contends, ethnic groups could emerge as social actors undivided by class.

The theoretical crux of Mann’s argument thus seems to be that class conflict, especially when institutionalized, tends to undermine ethnic conflict. The association between democracy and ethnic cleansing stems from the threat that the former poses to class stratification. The probability of ethnic cleansing for Mann thus follows a parabola as democratization increases: first rising, then declining. Ethnic cleansing is typical of democratizing states emerging from old regimes, where the class structure of agrarian bureaucracies has collapsed, but fully developed industrial class conflict has not yet emerged. In these conditions, an organic conception of the people can arise, unconstrained by class antagonism—and in some cases, permit ethnicity to ‘trump’ class. For Mann, then, class and ethnicity are not just independent, but to a large extent alternative, forms of social stratification.

How theoretically cogent and empirically adequate are these claims? Mann’s own evidence imposes an obvious objection, raised by many of the

critical responses to the book. None of the classic cases of murderous ethnic cleansing occurred under the aegis of a democratic regime: the Armenians were massacred under the Ottoman Empire; one of the most authoritarian states in history carried out the Final Solution; in Rwanda, mass killing of Tutsis took place under an authoritarian Hutu party-state. The only real support for democratization as a basis for lethal ethnic cleansing comes, firstly, from 1990s Yugoslavia, where ethnic consolidation under elected nationalist governments often became murderous—although not, as Mann correctly points out, genocidal—and, secondly, from instances in democratic colonial or settler states. Here, Mann presents some striking and iconoclastic material to support his thesis that some of the worst genocides occurred in the most democratic environments. For instance, he records that California's 1850 Constitution enshrined universal white male suffrage, 'the most advanced form of democracy of the age'; and that in little over a decade, the Californian Indian population had been reduced by 80 per cent—exceeding the rate at which the Third Reich exterminated Europe's Jews. In Mexico, by contrast, the conquistadors had faced a highly articulated society, and needed local allies in order to establish control over its resources. Although colonial rule was brutal and murderous, it did not amount to genocide: cross-elite cooperation created a '*mestizo* class/caste ruling over the *indios*', within the framework of Habsburg absolutism. Spanish rule was fundamentally less exterminist than the 'settler democracies' of Australia or the United States. Yet there are many exceptions; to name but one, the mass deportations of Circassians and Chechens from the Caucasus during the 1860s were conducted by Tsarist armies as part of the standard arsenal of expansionism. Thus it may seem initially that the book's central theoretical claims stand in a skewed relationship to the empirical work.

This line of criticism has been very common. But it is based on a fundamental misreading of Mann's argument. For Mann, as we have seen, democracy is primarily an ideology of equality, not a concretely existing set of institutions. His basic thesis concerns the effect of this egalitarian concept: put simply, democratization threatens to undermine those forms of social stratification that restrain ethnic cleansing. This distinctive claim, so central to Mann's argument, has occasioned remarkably little comment—perhaps indicative of a general inability among Mann's critics to disengage the concept of democracy from the political orders of the advanced West. But one of the chief features of Mann's work has been to distinguish democracy as egalitarian ideal from proceduralism as practice. He has always argued that democracy is about the distribution of social power, not primarily the rules of the game; indeed the institutional specificities of modern representative democracy have occupied a surprisingly marginal place in his work. The twist, however, is that he deploys a radical concept of democracy not to throw

light on the shortcomings of contemporary liberal democratic states, but rather as a way of specifying their virtues.

Mann develops his broader claim about the connection between ethnic cleansing and democracy through two specific arguments. The first is historical. Mann repeatedly emphasizes that modern democracies have grown out of processes of ethnic homogenization. Thus in North America and Australia, for instance, 'liberal nation-states could bloom above the massed graves of the natives.' But in what sense can French or British democracy, say, be understood as based on ethnic cleansing? Here Mann's argument relies on broadening the latter concept. A schematic table in the book's first chapter locates a variety of phenomena along two dimensions: the level of thoroughness of cleansing—none, partial or total—and the degree of violence employed, ranging from none through institutional coercion, policed and violent repression to premeditated mass killing. Voluntary assimilation is a form of total cleansing achieved without violence, while genocide is total cleansing through extreme violence. Both are simply different strategies for attaining the same result: an ethnically homogenous population. Ethnic cleansing, in this formulation, is thus better understood as a historical process establishing the basic homogeneity that makes democracy possible—the dark side of democratization, rather than of democracy.

Linked to this historical argument is Mann's second claim, that class stratification tends to mitigate ethnic conflict. There is a straightforward logical riposte to this: it is possible to conceive of a people as ethnically unified and at the same time stratified by class, or as ethnically diverse, but fundamentally equal in class terms. There is no compelling theoretical or empirical reason why class divisions and ethnicity should vary inversely. More importantly, precisely the former notion of an internally stratified but ethnically unified people has been a standard theme of what Mann terms variously 'organic nationalism', 'organic nation-statism', and sometimes 'organic forms of democracy'. It would be particularly hard to argue that Enrico Corradini, one of Mann's major doctrinal sources for this concept, espoused 'trumping' class by ethnicity, since Corradini's political model was the *Kaiserreich*, a political and social structure with elaborate forms of social stratification.

The problem, however, goes deeper than this. For a close reading of the case studies reveals that in every one, the ethnic conflict that escalated into murderous cleansing, far from being opposed to social or class conflict within the perpetrating state, was intimately linked to it. A few examples are worth noting. Mann hints at the complex interaction between frontier expansion, the 'racialization' of the indigenous population during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and slavery. He refers obliquely to the relationship between internal struggles in the National Socialist state and its expansionist tendencies. In the Yugoslav case, Mann emphasizes the context

of general economic downturn, the importance of the state in the economy and the relative advantages of Slovenia and Croatia as major sources of conflict. His analysis of the Rwandan genocide includes a subtle account of the three-way clash between privileged northern Hutus, excluded Hutus and Tutsis, emphasizing that lower class Hutus 'blamed Tutsis for their misfortunes rather than the Hutu state class, the real pillagers of the country—but their employers.' This is a bewildering variety of conflicts. But in every case, processes of intra-ethnic conflict seem central to explaining inter-ethnic war, and eventually genocide. In what sense can these processes be understood as instances of ethnicity 'trumping' class?

The cases of 'Communist Cleansing' and the counterfactual ones of India and Indonesia raise a further set of issues. Mann argues that mass deaths under Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot do not qualify as genocides despite the huge numbers of people who died in each: millions in the processes of revolution, terror and forced modernization in the USSR and China, not to mention the slaughter of 400,000 to 600,000 people by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Neither do the mass killings accompanying Indian partition in 1947 nor the deaths of up to a quarter of the East Timorese population, some 150,000 to 170,000 people, constitute murderous ethnic cleansing or genocide. Why do these hecatombs not count, when the comparatively smaller processes of colonial killing and displacement do? The answer, for Mann, is ideology: Communist cleansing, Subcontinental partition and Indonesian repression were not carried out against an ethnically defined enemy. In the case of the USSR, Mann writes that 'the Bolsheviks had little conception of ethnic enemies. They fought in the Civil War against Ukrainian nationalists and Cossacks, and subjected Cossacks to policed deportations. But they viewed them through a class prism, as military allies of tsarism and the old ruling classes.' But is it really legitimate to exclude these cases on such grounds? Does this not tend to insulate Mann's central claim from strong counter-evidence?

Mann's own writing suggests unease with his formulation. Thus the main contention sketched above competes with a minor one suggesting that Communist states embodied a distinctive form of organic nationalism. At times the two arguments appear linked:

Leftist cleansing was distinctive, since the people was defined by the ideology, the economics, the military forces, and the politics of class, not ethnic struggle. Yet leftist mass murders resembled those of rightist nationalists in one important respect—capturing and channelling ethnonationalism . . . they too developed a version of organic nation-statism, if distinctively based on class analysis.

While the first argument is untenable in light of Mann's repeated and explicit claim that class conflict constitutes the main barrier to ethnic cleansing, the second cannot be squared with the facts of the Communist cases: as Mann correctly points out, the Soviet regime in particular was not a nation-state.

Similar points could be made about Mann's analysis of pre-modern ethnic cleansing. He insists on the 'modernity' of such processes, arguing that in pre-industrial agrarian societies, internal divisions both facilitated elite cooperation across social boundaries, and undermined the formation of ethnic groups. But various types of cleansing did occur, especially in the border zones separating Protestants from Catholics and Christians from Muslims. These 15th, 16th and 17th century cases—the *Reconquista*, the wars of religion and England's conquest of Ireland—clearly pre-date either the ideology or the practice of modern democracy. To exclude these because the idiom of mass murder was religious seems to beg the question of why these mass killings occurred.

What is the source of these strains between theoretical argument and empirical evidence? Arguably they derive, rather paradoxically, from an extreme form of class reductionism that operates in relation to both ethnicity and democracy. To conceptualize ethnicity and class as alternatives implies that as class formation develops, ethnicity must recede. This kind of reductionism would have made the later Engels blush, let alone Lenin or Bauer. In another sense, however, such a conception makes it impossible to theorize the connection between ethnicity and class, although Mann's own evidence rather consistently points in this direction. In place of direct theorization, there is a marked instability of terminology: the formulation that 'ethnicity trumps class' competes with one in which ethnicity *displaces* class. Although it receives no formal elaboration in Mann's analysis, the concept of displacement comes from Freud, and refers to the construction of a metonym, a figure that stands for something else. The metonymic object does not, however, replace or even 'trump' the 'real' object, becoming instead a symptom of it. To take this formulation seriously, then, suggests that to the extent that ethnicity *displaces* class, it is also causally related to it. However, theoretical investigation of this relationship, though central to Mann's empirical accounts, is blocked by his allusive, and illusive, terminology.

Another form of class reductionism appears in his account of democracy. Functioning democracies, according to Mann, depend on established group rights, not on individuals; the most important of these groups are classes. But it is unclear what connects group rights to the development of a set of institutions allowing for democratic control over the structure of domination. Corporatism in both its medieval and modern guises is of course a theory and practice of group rights, but has often taken radically un-democratic and anti-democratic forms. Whatever one thinks about this, Mann's further argument

that the groups themselves must be classes and more generally must be 'stratified' does not seem to follow. Surely one can imagine serious group conflict—between genders, generations and regions, for example—without there being significant class conflict? In short, Mann's argument seems simultaneously to attribute too much importance to class as 'the mainstay of liberal democracy', and too little importance to it in explaining ethnicity.

These reservations relate above all to Mann's broader theoretical framework. But the ambition of *The Dark Side of Democracy* is, of course, not to produce a general theory of ethnic conflict, but to explain murderous ethnic cleansing. According to Mann, for the latter to occur, a set of further conditions must be in place, in addition to the general trumping or displacement of class by ethnicity posited in his second thesis. These conditions are set out in theses three through five: the 'danger zone of murderous cleansing' is reached when rival ethnic groups lay plausible claims to the same territory; the 'brink' is reached either when the weaker side decides to fight, or the stronger decides to impose its will by force; and 'going over the brink . . . occurs where the state that has sovereignty over the contested territory has been factionalized and radicalized' in unstable geopolitical conditions. What is to be made of this argument? It is an explanation of ethnic warfare, and indeed the one obvious commonality among the cases of murderous ethnic cleansing in the book is that they occurred in wartime. In discussing North America Mann mentions the Pequot War, Governor Burnett's declaration of a 'war of extermination' in California in the 1850s, and the Indian wars of the early 19th century. In Australia Mann refers to frontier skirmishes 'lasting into the 1920s'. In the case of the Turkish massacre of the Armenians, Mann recognizes Ottoman entry into World War One as a decisive turning point. With regard to the Final Solution, he emphasizes that 'Hitler wished to eliminate the Jews, but pressured emigration escalating into violent deportation remained the preferred solutions until 1941'; it was the Nazi invasion of Russia that sealed the fate of the Jews. In Yugoslavia, war 'enabled Milosevic to extend his control of the state.' The invasion of Rwanda in 1990 by the RPF prompted an escalation of violence against Tutsis that forms the backdrop to the 1994 genocide. In sum, war is empirically central to all of Mann's cases.

How does he explain ethnic warfare? Mann argues that it breaks out either when dominant ethnicities believe they can successfully eliminate minorities, or subordinate ethnicities believe they can successfully establish their own state. But this leaves unanswered a fundamental question: why do ethnic groups fight? Where Mann does confront this question, in his empirical studies, his explanations tend to slide into group psychology. Of Australian cleansing, Mann writes that colonists 'felt they had been "driven" to this by aboriginal resistance and encroachment.' In California in the 1850s,

'the Indian threat seemed to be growing'. In Turkey 'foreign support [for the Armenians] produced a real fear of political extinction among Turks.' The Final Solution was made possible by 'entangling the Jews with the broader ethno-nationalist and political enemies of Germany.' In Serbia and Croatia, the perpetrators 'felt driven to this, to a last desperate defence of the nations, in which bloody measures seemed both grim necessity and release from threat and humiliation.' With regard to Rwanda, Mann emphasizes that that the Tutsi minority constituted a plausible threat to the Hutu majority.

To the extent that Mann offers a systematic account of war, then, he does so in terms of the psychological concepts of 'threat' and 'perceived threat'. There are two striking features of this explanation. First, it seems perverse to explain wars of murderous ethnic cleansing in terms of the purported threat posed by the victim population. These arguments strain credibility in two cases in particular: the extermination of Native Americans—which Mann partially attributes to 'the effect of Indian resistance'—and of course the Final Solution. Mann's logic here seems to confuse the ideological self-justifications of perpetrators with a causal account of ethnic war.

Secondly, the reversion to a social psychological account of war is particularly surprising in Mann, since he has done more than any other scholar of his generation to develop a sociological account of it. What explains this? The problem here in part derives from the same overall scheme underpinning Mann's broader linkage of democracy and ethnicity. For if ethnicity and class are alternative forms of social stratification, then ethnic war, by definition, has little to do with class or interest-group struggles within ethnicities, and instead can be explained only by inter-ethnic relations. Thus the connection between British industrialization and Australian frontier expansion, or that between slavery and the drive to the West Coast in the US, are mentioned but not seriously examined. Similar comments could be made about the Nazi war machine and the specific internal structure of German capitalism.

But other intellectual factors are also at work: a combination of methodological, theoretical and political dispositions that press Mann's account into focusing on the nation-state as the fundamental unit of analysis. This vision is most evident in the basic design of *The Dark Side of Democracy*, in which a set of parallel cases are treated as instances of murderous ethnic cleansing. As a result, the geopolitical conditions that produce ethnic cleansing shift into the background. Yet one of the central empirical points of the book is that perpetrators generally come from threatened border regions. The analysis of Germany is particularly striking: Mann constructs a 'ratio of representation' of perpetrators by dividing a given region's share of the number of war criminals brought to trial by its percentage of the total national population. Where the ratio is greater than one, the region in question produced more than its share of war criminals. His data show a concentration in Alsace,

Upper Silesia, East Prussia and Bavaria. But what were the circumstances that produced these threatened border regions? Mann nowhere attempts to link these to the specific geopolitics of the interwar period. More generally, although he argues that the 'distinguishing feature of German nationalism in the late 19th century was less that it was ethnic than that it implied imperialism', nowhere does Mann seek to account for this.

The shadow of geopolitics looms large in a somewhat different sense in the post-Cold War chapters. Mann treats the break up of Yugoslavia as primarily an internal affair, writing:

It is sometimes argued that by promptly recognizing Slovenia as an independent state, the European powers also did their bit. But not much can be blamed on outsiders . . . Perhaps all [the Western powers] shared collective responsibility for the dominance of the nation-state ideal. But it was the Yugoslavs who tore apart their own country.

This is open to question, at the very least. For the EC's precipitous recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, under German pressure, surely accelerated the slide into war by legitimating claims to territory on the part of one ethno-nationalist constituency. In his discussion of the Rwandan genocide, Mann acknowledges that the US 'blocked any UN intervention', but holds that 'mistakes, naiveté, even indifference do not constitute criminality'. Perhaps so, but geopolitics still forms the structural context within which murderous ethnic cleansing occurs. Indeed Mann himself recognizes this at the end of the book, writing that, if dangerous cases exist today, they are 'around the fringes of bigger imperial countries—as was also the case in the 19th and 20th centuries across Greater Europe.'

This is one of the few places in *The Dark Side of Democracy* where the terms 'empire' or 'imperial' occur. In the remainder of the book it is the nation-state that is the main culprit, actor and unit of analysis. The strangely marginal character of imperial processes in this account is thus linked to a kind of methodological 'nation-statism', to borrow a term from Mann himself. This might seem paradoxical in the context of Mann's broader body of work. For one of the central contributions of his still incomplete multivolume work on *The Sources of Social Power* is to challenge the notion of societies as unitary systems bounded by states. Rejecting comparative schema in favour of analytic narrative on an enormous scale, *The Sources of Social Power* has a fundamentally different structure from most works of comparative historical sociology. In the first volume, for example, instead of a chapter on the 'rise of capitalism in England' or 'Absolutism in France', Mann writes of the 'European dynamic', the underlying principle being that only a rigorously transnational approach can grasp the ascent of the West. In the second volume, covering the period from 1760 to 1914, chapter titles

begin to feature the names of countries, but the schema is basically preserved. The narrative is centrally concerned, however, with the rise of the nation-state, a political form that for Mann was solidly established by 1914.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that in his last two principal works of historical sociology, which deal with the 20th century—*Fascists* (2004) and *The Dark Side of Democracy*—Mann has radically revised his approach, turning to a much more conventional style of comparative sociology, albeit conducted on an unusually large scale. Both fascism and ethnic cleansing are treated as phenomena that occur at the level of the nation-state, if explored across an extraordinary range of such instances. While these works are monuments of scholarship, one cannot help wondering whether Mann himself has not been partially ‘caged’ by the ‘rise’ of the nation-state that his own work has done so much to describe. For in much of his material on the 20th century, there is little systematic consideration of geopolitics. This may be a transitional phase. Indeed, at the end of *The Dark Side of Democracy*, a more geopolitically oriented account of ethnic cleansing emerges, as Mann suggests that the world must be understood in terms of zones of peace and zones of turmoil, and that it is precisely the absence of states in this second region that poses the key danger.

Mann argues that the global South may now be reproducing the trajectory of Europe from agrarian societies, through the age of organic democracy, ending finally in the perpetual peace of the liberal democratic nation-state. Thus:

The dark side of democracy is passing through modern societies. It has finished passing through the North and is now engulfing parts of the South. But it will end before long, when democracy is securely institutionalized in forms appropriate to multi-ethnic, and especially bi-ethnic populations.

The biggest danger that the South faces is thus organic nation-statism, for many states in this zone are located precisely in the transitional phase between old regimes and democracies, which produced ethnic cleansing in Europe. In other words, ‘the greatest threat is the spread into the South of the ideal of the nation-state, where this confuses the *demos* and the *ethnos*, the mass electorate and the ethnic group.’

The evident flaw in this argument is that the nation-state ideal, especially in its organic form, does not seem to be particularly thriving in the global South. As Mann himself points out, post-colonial socialism in both its African and Middle Eastern variants is in tatters. Liberalism has been reduced from a political theory of group rights to an ideology of the market. In the place of these a new ideology of religious fundamentalism, ‘theo-democracy’ has emerged. This, Mann argues, is the functional alternative to ‘organic’ democracy in the developing world.

What is to be made of this view? First, in a very broad sense religious fundamentalism seems to be less a theologized version of organic nationalism than a reaction to the failure of state-led development projects. Indeed religious fundamentalism in the global South is often associated with movements to dismantle the developmental state, most notably in India. Second, Islamic fundamentalists at least do not seem to associate any particular value to the nation-state. Their ideologies are aimed at a transnational religious community. The imposition of *shari'a* hardly counts as a statist political programme. The notion of a global South awash in nation-statism strains credibility.

These considerations are obvious enough. But a deeper, and more troubling, problem plagues Mann's evaluation of the role of the rich world, and particularly the US, in these processes. Mann warns that the North should be wary of naively encouraging the democratic nation-state in a geopolitical zone where this is likely to produce ethnic cleansing: 'We must abandon the complacency conferred by the notion that the emergence of liberal, tolerant democracy is the inevitable outcome of modernity, sidetracked only by [the] primitive or malevolent in peoples and their leaders'. The question, of course, is to what extent can US policy in particular be understood as tending to promote the ideal of the nation-state, let alone the democratic nation-state? This seems to confuse the ideology of imperialism for its substance, which in many respects operates in the opposite direction. Surely arms sales and austerity packages operate as a powerful disintegrating force on states in the global South, and are at least partially responsible for the very state failures to which fundamentalism is a response. It would be unfair to argue that Mann is unaware of these processes. But his political field of vision, polarized between the liberal and organic nation-state, marginalizes them.

The absence of a geopolitical explanatory framework is particularly problematic in the book's concluding discussion, where the world zones of peace and turmoil are seen as groups of states with contrasting levels of economic development. Such a vision transcends distinctions between liberal and organic nation-states, pointing to the connections between the policies of the North and state failure in the South. In this regard, Mann notes current US policies that seek to limit controls on capital, rather than institutionalize class compromises. But he lacks a conceptual apparatus for explaining this shift from the developmentalism of the post-war era, or elucidating its connections with outcomes beyond the advanced capitalist heartlands. The fundamental link between geo-economic and geopolitical power, imperialism, remains beyond the purview of this remarkable work. Yet if we are to ask, what is ethnic cleansing the dark side of today, imperialism might not be the worst candidate.