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Does Democracy Have a Violent Heart?

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This conference is aiming to mount an interdisciplinary investigation of the possible symbiotic relationship between war and democracy, concentrating especially on the early case of democracy in ancient Athens. The choice of subject, war and democracy, is of course not 'innocent': like all questions directed at the dead by the living, it is inevitably posed and given prescience by those of us who find ourselves living in the present and perforce wrestling with its concerns, its conundrums, its political conflicts. It is obvious that war and democracy is back as a topic of great public concern in many countries, and for strong reasons. All actually existing democracies are now caught up in the sticky threads of what could turn out to be a permanent war against 'terror', and things are happening that some find alarming. In the name of 'democracy promotion', armies are gathered, institutional procedures are manipulated and whopping lies are told by elected leaders in support of their decision to rain down awful violence on enemies and innocents. In the name of democracy protection, a growing number of democratic institutions are themselves militarised, as if the permanent war for democracy necessitates the trimming and mutation of their power-sharing, representative mechanisms. The spectre of the garrison state (Harold Lasswell) has begun to cast a shadow over actually existing democracies. Public

demonstrations are prohibited, or their scope is subject to new restrictions. Civilians are put through dummy exercises and subjected to many new forms of surveillance and routine 'security' checks. No Joking signs placed at airport checkpoints or in the lobbies of public buildings remind citizens that the authorities are not joking. Institutional procedures are tightening slowly, steadily. Police powers are expanded. The dark arts of surveillance flourish. Intelligence organisations (like the US National Security Agency, so secretive that it is popularly known as the No Such Agency) assemble large data bases, using network analysis in search of cluster patterns of telephone calls that might betray enemies. Magnetometers, BioWatch air-sniffers, razor wire, CCTV cameras and concrete fortifications have become an everyday feature of city life. Torture is meanwhile justified publicly, and in some circles *habeas corpus* is transformed into two ancient words of foreign origin; the old division between the torturable and non-torturable classes (Graham Greene) makes a comeback. All citizens are meanwhile warned to be on guard, at all times, to conduct themselves as if their daily lives were a permanent battlefield. Electorates begin to hear calls by some policy makers and intellectuals to enable governments, at home and abroad, to take 'preemptive military actions against grave threats to their survival or to their civilian population'.[1]

The Democratisation of Violence

Given these various trends - I say nothing here of the counter-trends - it is little wonder that some observers have been tempted to draw the conclusion that democracies have a built-in tendency to produce violence and to dump it on both themselves and others. In his *Violent Democracy*, the young Australian scholar Daniel Ross has tried to make the case that democracy is a form of rule that is necessarily violent. With a splash of Carl Schmitt, and a few lines taken from figures as different as Primo Levi, Jacques Derrida and Giorgio Agamben, he draws the colourful conclusion that 'the origin and heart of democracy is essentially violent'. Violence, defined as 'action forceful enough to produce an effect', is not just the result of contingent policies of particular democratically elected governments. It is inherent in every effort to establish or maintain democracy, if by that is meant 'any political system grounded in the idea that sovereignty lies with the people'. The principle of

the sovereignty of the people can never establish itself democratically. Democracy is a strange impossibility. It always and everywhere rests upon acts of originary violence: ‘the massacre of indigenous populations, or the crushing of those who oppose a new foundation of the people’s sovereignty’ as well as ‘the ongoing history of forgetting this original violence, not out of spite or indifference, but because the violence at the origin of democracy threatens democracy itself’.[2]

Let us set aside various objections to poorly defined concepts used in this book and the way that it mobilises words to produce silences and insinuations to note only that the conjecture that democracy and bellicosity are terrible twins is a healthy corrective to evolutionist views of democracy (like those of Francis Fukuyama[3]) that see only its benign freedom-loving qualities, or prefer to emphasise its ‘world-historical’ tendency to spread secular, science-induced economic growth across the whole earth. To insist that democracy has a violent heart is correctly to draw attention to the deepening implication of democratic institutions and ideals in the facts and fantasies of war, but the protest it launches against democracy as an engine of war - paradoxically - feeds upon a deep-seated tendency for latter-day democracies to ‘denature’ war and other forms of violence. Like the rebellious teenager whose hot-tempered behaviour owes much to careful parental nurturing in the arts of resisting deference, so the thesis that democracy has a violent heart is symptomatic of the great and unusual sensitivity of actually existing democracies to war, and to other forms of violence. Contemporary democracies enable the ‘democratisation of violence’. By this I do not mean that they encourage the arming of all citizens and their engagement in acts of violence of their choice - something like a macabre reversal of the historic ‘ballots, not bullets’ principle. To speak of the democratisation of violence rather means that democracies as we have come to know them unleash a process of the denaturing of violence in policy fields as different as the treatment of children and women in domestic settings through to efforts to rein in political leaders and military personnel who show no respect for others’ dignity and instead practise cruelty as a way of life. The historical roots of this denaturing of violence run deep and are complicated and include such developments as the invention of political mechanisms of compromise (parliaments, for instance), the birth of civil societies, the development of weapons systems that promise ‘overkill’, and bad experiences with the cruelty of both anti-democratic and democratic regimes doing things in the name of ‘the people’. There is no space here to

examine these trends in all their complexity. I have tried to begin such an analysis in *Violence and Democracy* [2004]), which points to some of their clear symptoms. Institutions and acts of violence are no longer seen exclusively as willed by gods or a God, or determined by historical fate, or by 'human nature'. Non-violent methods of publicly checking and regulating institutions of violence take root; they have the aim of ensuring that these institutions - police forces, armies, secret intelligence bodies, private security companies – neither perpetrate surplus violence nor become permanently 'owned' by any particular power group, including the government of the day. The democratisation of violence and war is a process that has the effect of rendering institutions and acts of violence *publicly accountable* and as therefore *contingent*: as alterable through human will and effort. This process of 'democratisation' even affects the terms war and violence. The scope of application of these descriptors broadens; their meaning comes to be seen as heavily context-dependent and, hence, as variable in time and space; in consequence of which the terms 'war' and 'violence' and their legitimacy come to be contested in such fields as criminal law, journalism, civil society, government policy – and even within the ranks of whole armies.

Why do democracies tend to 'democratise' or de-nature war and other forms of violence? For a start, they enable public criticism of its necessity by means of clusters of institutions that facilitate citizens' efforts to organise themselves and to speak about power and its abuse. (The force of open criticism is usually felt during transitions to democracy, when public suspicion of men and institutions of violence is expressed with a sudden vengeance, like a geological upheaval: the *ancien regime* is accused of rape and murder; searches begin for those who have been disappeared; clandestine mass graves are exhumed; citizens are urged to tell their stories of cruelty and suffering.) Furthermore, the markets on which democracies typically depend are threatened with destruction by war; many businesses and other civil society organisations consequently don't much like war, or fear its destructive effects. Moreover, literature and art produced and/or circulated under democratic conditions or with democratic aspirations have played a vital role in de-naturing war and violence and its pity. Various forms of democratic art aim to sensitise their audiences to the contingency or non-necessity of violence: think of the work of Käthe Kollwitz; the movement *De Profundis* by Dmitri Shostakovich, music set to the poetic words of

lament written by Federico García Lorca for loved ones murdered by Franco's troops; the satires of war and warmongers that flowed from the typewriter of Edward Thompson; or the novels and short stories of writers otherwise as different as Nabokov, Céline and Kafka.

Democracies also have a normative problem with the cruelty and death that war brings. If democracy, to put it simply, is a set of institutions and a whole way of life structured by non-violent means of equally apportioning and publicly monitoring power within and among overlapping communities of people who live according to a wide variety of morals, then war and violence - the unwanted interference with the bodies and personality of subjects - are anathema to its substance and spirit. But there is something about democracy that runs deeper than ethics: a feature of democracy that is usually given insufficient attention by observers but captured powerfully in one of the greatest odes to the democratisation of 'spirit' that democracies encourage and require, Ludwig Wittgenstein's unfinished aphorisms known as *Über Gewissheit* (1949-1951). It is this: the institutions and everyday culture of democratic institutions require for their operation shared perceptions of the complexity and contingency of the world, of the non-necessity of things, an understanding that reality is not 'real', that claims to veracity launched by any actor can be doubted because they inevitably depend upon the acknowledgement of others, that in principle the extant power relations in any context can be named, re-described, challenged and altered in the name of greater equality and openness and humility.

Athens

The democratisation of war and violence is merely a trend, with no historical guarantees of success, yet it implies and demands greater sensitivity to time-space variations of the vexed relationship between violence and democracy. Essentialist propositions such as 'democracy is inherently bellicose' or 'violence is at the heart of democracy' should be doubted and set aside in favour of efforts to think more deeply about their historically contingent relationship, beginning with the case of ancient Athens and its *dēmokratia*.

There is no doubt that democracy in that city state got off to a bad start, if only because the innovative power-monitoring and power-controlling institutions that were part of its birth and stormy survival were thoroughly entangled in contingent circumstances of empire-building, war and rumours of war. As an unintended consequence of the reforms of Cleisthenes that were triggered by a bungled assassination attempt, the Athenian experiment with *dēmokratia* took place in a geopolitical laboratory of constant rivalry tinged with violence. Just two years after the constitutional reforms instituted by Cleisthenes had further eroded the power of the old aristocracy and set Athens on a course towards democratic rule, trouble began. The states of Boeotia and Chalkis, the traditional enemies of Athens, launched a simultaneous attack. Both suffered defeat in a single day. Many observers were impressed. Athens was to win yet more admiration for its support for Ionian Greeks in their ill-fated revolt against Persia – whose army commanded by Darius was roundly defeated in 490 BCE, on the plain of Marathon, by nine thousand Athenian troops, helped by a small contingent from Plataia.

Democracy's victory against the great empire of the East fuelled many Athenians' mistrust of barbarians (*barbaroi*: a word that to them meant simply 'foreigners', non-Greeks who spoke languages that were incomprehensible). The triumph of the Athenian David over the Persian Goliath was consolidated (in 480/479 BCE) by further successes, notably in the sea battle of Salamis. Such military gains served to tip the balance of power throughout the whole region. Throughout the sixth century BCE, years before the age of democracy, Athens had been involved in less than a dozen military campaigns, all of them for limited goals. It had resembled a frog sitting quietly on a rock overlooking its pond. It had been just one among many of the region's mountainous, island micro-polities. But as the military victories of the proto-democracy piled up, it was slowly but surely drawn into an extended struggle, mainly against Sparta, for hegemony over the Greek world. In the wake of the triumph over the Persians, there began, during the 480s, thanks to a windfall of silver, a vigorous expansion of the navy. Two hundred warships were constructed and resources were poured into building vast fortifications to protect the city and the port of Piraeus. Then came the first efforts to assume leadership of a confederacy of Greek states, called the Delian League, whose several hundred members vowed 'to have the same friends and enemies' and whose military aim was the liberation from Persian control of the Greek

island states and cities of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Step by step, state by state, Athens turned herself into an imperial power – a geographically extended form of dominating power that the Athenians called an *arkhē*.

The growth of empire during the years of democracy was new for Athens. It was nurtured by the geographical fact that Attica found itself positioned almost exactly at the heart of a vast region stretching from the southern Balkan peninsula across the entire Aegean. The feeling that they were at the centre of the universe of Greek-speaking peoples engendered immense pride among the Athenians. Many regarded themselves a cut above the world, as they knew it. Strong traces of pride in their achievements are much in evidence, for instance in Thucydides' famous account of the funeral oration delivered by Pericles at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. 'We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy', Pericles reportedly said. 'Wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle against it. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we can not originate, and instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all…In short,' concluded Pericles, 'I say that as a city we are the School of Hellas.'[4]

Talk of Athens as teacher and master of the whole Greek world burned like dung in the fires of empire. It did so by fostering belief in the citizenly virtue of military prowess – and by twinning *dēmokratia* and military success. It was a straightforward combination. Imperial power necessitated the mobilization of troops, who in return expected a share of government. At the beginning, the backbone of the Athenian army had been self-funded. The wealthier citizens served in the cavalry, mounted on their own saddles, on their own horses. The subsequent reliance on the hoplite battle as a principal method of waging war kick-started a new dynamic. Backed up by horsemen and archers, usually on a flat field, infantry marched against infantry; the winner on the field took all and, as a rule, the entire war came to an end. This new form of tournament fighting had democratic consequences, for the growth of a lightly-armed

infantry made up of poorer hoplites made their case for inclusion in the polity irrefutable. But democracy's logic of inclusion meant as well that as the Athenian navy grew in power and influence, so the poorest men, the *thetes* who formed the bulk of navy crews, pressed for full equality with their fellow citizens. The sea and democracy seemed to be twins. 'The steersman, the boatswain, the lieutenant, the look-out man at the prow, the shipwright – these are the people who confer power on the city far rather than her heavy infantry and men of birth and quality', noted one observer.[5]

Among the ironies of the political reforms initiated by Cleisthenes is that they required the free males of the whole of Attica to register as citizens in their demes and tribes. Effectively this meant putting in place the city's first-ever, standardised system of mass mobilization.[6] Given the size and population of Attica – fifty times larger than the average Greek polity – organised call-up, initially of hoplites, gave democratic Athens a huge military edge on its potential rivals. The lethal connection between democratisation and empire ran even deeper. Despite mounting death tolls, military prowess and battle success undoubtedly helped provide cheer for some Athenians by protecting them against the chronic uncertainty for which democracy itself was responsible. During the two centuries in which democracy managed to survive in Athens, its citizens strengthened their resolve and generally succoured their lives using many means: poetry and singing, theatre and sports, cult feasts and symposia with plenty of drink and penetration of guests. But compared with all these life-giving customs and rituals, the near-permanent mobilisation for war had a special potency. War and rumours of war put a spring into the steps of the demos, as Aristophanes pointed out forcefully when joking that his fellow citizens would launch a fleet of 300 warships if their Spartan enemies dared to steal even a puppy.[7] War made everyone equal in the struggle to escape the clutches of death. It encouraged painful toil that produced honour. It confirmed men's sense of manly excellence (*aretē*), and it therefore helped drive away the cruel 'melancholy' mentioned by Pericles in his famous funeral oration. War blessed life with unshakeable meaning. It temporarily set aside the pessimistic thought that men were like leaves in the wind, the mere shadows of shadows, meant only for the moment, like a passing day.

Fighting against enemies not only made men feel that they were worthwhile citizens (the Athenians spoke of *khrēstos politēs*). It also brought wealth to their pockets. The consolidation of imperial power tempted the Athenians to centralise their control over key legal cases, in effect to bring capital cases from the periphery to Athens. That move created more work for the citizens of Athens, more opportunities for them to earn income and to participate in its legal machinery, which consequently grew in size and importance within the overall structures of the polity. The physical size of the principal civil court of Athens (it was located in the south-west corner of the agora and is now known as the *heliaia*) reflected this; a large square structure whose roof was partly open to the sky, it was certainly big enough to serve as a meeting place for between one or two thousand jurors.[8] Empire also brought wealth and revenues to the democracy, partly to pay for its machinery of government and to employ vast numbers of ordinary Athenian males as soldiers. Save for a small number of states that chose to keep their nominal independence by providing ships that sailed in the Athenian fleets, all cities of the empire were required (by the early 440s) to pay an annual tribute; they were required as well to fork out duties on exports and imports that passed through the hub port of Piraeus.

The extent to which the wealth generated by empire was vital for the survival of democracy remains disputed, but without doubt among the most potent effects of empire was to expand the power and influence of the military in the day-to-day functioning of the polity. More money from the public budget was spent on war and preparations for war than on any other activity. The revenues generated by empire were used to revolutionise the standard methods of war. The Athenians experimented with siege warfare and tactical retreat. They trained their hoplites and naval crews for weeks and sometimes months, and developed the art of using their ships as high-speed, offensive weapons. Huge numbers of ships and fighters were moved around the whole of the eastern Mediterranean for campaigns that sometimes lasted months or, when sieges were used, up to a year; even during peace time, up to a hundred ships on practice and guard missions spent several months a year cruising the seas.

The democracy, already enjoying among its friends and enemies a reputation for being a busybody, for its eternal restlessness (*polypragmon*), hatched and executed new plans for fighting simultaneously on several fronts. During the fifth century,

Athens found itself at war on average two out of every three years; never once did it enjoy more than a decade of peace.[9] Especially with the introduction of pay for military service in the 450s, war came to dominate the everyday lives of Athenians, their visual arts, the proceedings of their assembly. Citizenship and military service grew to be indistinguishable: the spirit and institutions of democracy felt deeply ‘martial’. At the outbreak of the Peleponnesian War, for instance, nearly a third of Athenian citizens (around 60,000 adult men in all) were hoplites. When young men turned eighteen, they had to register as a citizen within their *deme*. Following the approval of their registration by the Council, they were conscripted into military service, along with other conscripts from their tribe. These young conscripts learned how to fight in full armour; they became skilled at the bow, the javelin and catapult. They were taught such arts by older men (usually over forty) who had been elected by their tribe to act as trainers, or mentors, of the young recruits. ‘These take the *epheboi* and after first making a circuit of the temples then go to Piraeus and some of them garrison Munichia, others Akte’, Aristotle tells us. [10] The young conscripts were in service for two years; after which they were entitled to have their names inscribed on stone columns that were prominently displayed within the agora. That rite of passage prepared them for a lifetime of vigilance. They remained on call for the next forty years; in a trice, in a military emergency, they could be instructed to report for active service with several days’ provisions in hand.

The dalliance of democracy and armed force was to prove fatal. It soon led to restrictions upon political freedoms at home; democratic inventions like short terms of incumbency, the public obligation to speak courageously (*parrhēsia*) and the political exclusion of potential demagogues began to be overwhelmed by democracy understood as imperial expansion and greatness. The whole episode showed that the institutions of *dēmokratia* could be used to overwhelm dēmokratia. The growth of empire gave undue prominence to elected military leaders like Cimon and Pericles, who (unusually) were entitled to hold office for multiple successive terms. They were also entitled by custom to interrupt assembly proceedings to introduce their own business. That meant that their considerable power to determine the city’s fate, unchecked by parties or laws or customs, depended mainly on their skilful rhetorical massaging of the assembly. Surrounded by advisers, Pericles carefully cultivated his charisma by modelling himself on Athens’ courier ship, the *Salaminia*: enjoying

office for nearly a quarter of a century (from 454 to 429 BCE), he appeared before the assembly only when pressing public matters required urgent treatment. Thucydides and others understandably complained that when he did appear in public, before the assembly for instance, he spoke and acted like an arrogant monarch. 'Hatred and unpopularity have become the lot of all who have aspired to rule others', Pericles said to mourners gathered to honour dead soldiers. He added, defiantly : 'Remember, too, that if your country has the greatest name in all the world, it is because she has never bent before disaster; because she has expended more life and effort in war than any other city, and has won for herself a power greater than any hitherto known…it will be remembered that we held rule over more Hellenes than any other Hellenic state, that we carried out the greatest wars against their united or separate powers, and inhabited a city unrivalled by any other in its resources or magnitude.'

The great leader's words dripped with the poison of hubris. They spelled out not just the death of soldiers, but the beginning of the end of the Athenian experiment with democracy. There is no doubt that the growing militarization of political life in support of empire began to turn Athens into its own worst enemy. At home, it unleashed a malignant force that the Athenians called delusion (*ate* was their word for it). It bred misguidedness, manifested for instance in their declining interest in compromise and their habit of seeing glory in the fall of cities and the subjugation of other peoples. Appeals to a fictive common ancestry also grew ever louder; they took their cue from a more restrictive law of citizenship (passed in 451 BCE) that aimed to make it impossible for metics and foreigners to become Athenian citizens. This was not yet nationalism as we know it, but rather a drive towards homogenisation fuelled by fear. On several occasions, every available citizen was compulsorily drafted into the navy or army to fight against a neighbouring city; and laws were passed by the assembly to enable citizenship to be stripped from those found guilty of desertion or draft-dodging.[11] Militarization was exempted from frank speech; it became non-negotiable.

The dalliance of democracy and armed force had wider, geopolitical implications as well. The democracy obviously carried within it the seeds of expansion by anti-democratic means. 'Wherever you go, there will you be a polis' was the old watchword of Greek colonisation from the time of the westwards expansion, during

the eight century BCE, towards Sicily and southern Italy. At first the impulse of Athens to expand was restrained. During the years of democracy, the watchword gave new heart to the continuous emigration and interaction of Athenian settlers, from far distant Marseilles and down the Spanish coast in the west, to the Crimea and the eastern end of the Black Sea in the north-east. The watchword expressed the conviction that the ideals of democracy could take root wherever Athenians settled and practised the novel customs that they themselves had invented. So the spread of Athenian power during the era of democracy usually went hand in hand with the creation and nurturing of democratic ways of life: new architectural forms; public space; a form of government run by citizens for citizens; a legal system that followed the rule that nobody was to be above the laws, and that laws must apply equally to everybody.

These inventions undoubtedly proved attractive to others; in various parts of the burgeoning empire, there were times when citizens downtrodden by their local nobility or suffering from *stasis* openly welcomed Athenian intervention and influence in their local affairs. A model example was the rebuilding in 444/443 BCE of the ancient city of Sybaris, which received an influx of settlers, a new layout and a brand new democratic constitution.[12] The trouble was that democracy did not spring naturally from the depths of the Aegean, or the region's soil, or from the souls of its peoples. The democratic lawgivers might find that their subjects were far from law-abiding. Democratic laws might therefore have to be imposed, perhaps by cunning or, if necessary, by means of violence. But if that were to happen, Athenian democracy would find it increasingly hard to 'place things in the middle', as their citizens liked to put it. Athens would come face to face with an ugly possibility: in the name of democracy, and for the sake of holding or expanding its own position, it might be forced to set up garrison colonies, to plunder whole cities, even to heap cruelty on those who tried to stand in its way.

Exactly this happened, in 416/415 BCE, during the expedition launched by Athens against the Aegean island of Melos. A prosperous Spartan colony, Melos had so far remained militarily neutral in the region's conflicts. A decade earlier, Melos had successfully repelled an invasion by the Athenians, whose generals this time round tried diplomacy, rather than force. Their envoys were received within the city, but

their request to address the full body of assembled citizens was refused. So negotiations with the Melian authorities were held in private. Trained in the rough and tumble of the assembly, the Athenians were tough bargainers. They insisted from the outset that there could be no discussion of the rights and wrongs of the situation. They said that the only matter to be analysed was the imbalance of power between the two states. Melos was urged to submit; it was told that it would otherwise suffer disaster. The Melians stood their ground, mainly by trying to persuade the Athenians that it would serve their interests better if they allowed Melos to remain neutral. The Athenian negotiators firmly rejected that argument, then burst into laughter. A quarrel about the importance of honour followed. The Athenians then withdrew.

Returning home, the Athenian negotiators learned that the position of the Melians remained unaltered: no surrender. So the Athenian generals declared war. For several months, Melos was cordoned off from the outside world. The siege had terrible effects. Starvation followed by discord and treachery resulted in the unconditional surrender of the Melians to the Athenians, who wasted no time in pulling apart the local polity, putting to death all men of military age and selling the women and children into slavery, leaving infants and the elderly to the local wolves. Five hundred citizen-settlers were soon shipped to Melos. The island became a colony of Athens. The rule of democracy was sealed in blood.

The military campaign against Melos showed not only that democracy could inflict violence upon its neighbours. It implied as well that violence could prove to be a double-edged sword for the Athenian democracy itself. It could become subject to the charge of double standards – and to acts of military reprisal. The heroic survival of the Athenian democracy against its Spartan and Persian enemies had a flip side: by arming to protect itself, by acting as if it had been born into the world to give no rest to either itself or to others, it encouraged its rivals – Philip II of Macedon, for instance - to seek and to win the ultimate prize of drowning Athens in its own blood.

dēmokratia

We know that during the last quarter of the fourth century BCE, exactly that came to pass. The proud claimant of government by an open assembly of equals caved in.

Pressured by hubris at home and military defeats abroad, it was forced to give way to well-armed, large states that pushed and shoved it aside. What lessons (if any) may be learned from the relatively brief Athenian dalliance with war and democracy? From the brief summary attempted above, it is clear that Athenian democracy was for a time good at launching and winning wars, and that there were few signs of the democratisation of violence. If anything, the opposite proved to be the case: imperial democracy in Athenian form developed a reputation at home and abroad for its *prophasis*, its growing power to strike fear into the hearts of others and, thus, to precipitate violent reactions.

Among the most shocking things about Athens, it could be said, is that belligerence ran so deeply through the veins of the classical world's best-known and best-studied democracy that the most famous oration in its defence (as Nicole Loraux and others have pointed out) was a strangely aristocratic discourse that revealed much about the fascination of Pericles with imperial power and the 'normality' of democratic violence. Kurt Raaflaub and others have shown that by the middle of the fifth century BCE, 'power' and the striving for its accumulation stood at the centre of the lives, the experiences and the expectations of the Athenians. The very ideal of democracy became saturated with imperial sentiments. Power politics and imperialism were seen as typically Athenian and as typically democratic. Among the active friends of *dēmokratia*, the reputation of Athens as a busybody (*polypragmōn*) constantly striving to acquire (*ktasthai*) became synonymous with democracy itself.[13]

Even more shocking - this point has hardly been explored in scholarship on Athens - is that the very word *dēmokratia* was infected by the spirit of war. The term *dēmokratia* became common currency in Athens during the early decades of transition sparked by the reforms of Cleisthenes. That was a time when politics was still dominated by aristocrats locked in competition with themselves and with their opponents. What this self-styled class of *aristoi* had in common was their mostly hostile regard for a sectional group that was seen to be wolfish because it was poor, property-less and hungry for political power. Such references provide a clue as to why *dēmokratia* (from *dēmos* and *kratos,* rule) had so few intellectual defenders, and why its many critics pointed to the demos as a potentially destructive force within the life of the political community. Historians like to say that the word *dēmokratia* carried

several connotations, including for instance descriptive references to the *deme* and more positive links with the assembly of citizens, the *dēmos*.[14] That is a fair but limited observation, for it fails to spot how the deeply negative connotations of the word *dēmokratia* – a form of polity defined by the exercise by some of self-interested or sectional power over others – are buried within the very word democracy itself. The verb *kratein (κρατείν*) is usually translated as 'to rule' or 'to govern', but in fact its original connotations are harsher, tougher, even brutal. To use the verb *kratein* is to speak the language of military manoeuvring and military conquest: *kratein* means to be master of, to conquer, to lord over, to possess (in modern Greek the same verb means to keep, or to hold), to be the stronger, to prevail or get the upper hand over somebody or something. The story of the origins of the world and the birth of the deities told by the Greek poet Hesiod in his *Theogony* uses *kratein* in this way: the personified figure of Kratos is seen as the no-nonsense, loyal agent of the much-feared Zeus. Homer's *Odyssey* and Sappho's *Supplements* use *kratein* in the same sense. The noun *kratos* (*κράτος*), from which the compound *dēmokratia* was formed, similarly refers to might, strength, imperial majesty, toughness, triumphant power, and victory over others, especially through the application of force. The now obsolete verb *dēmokrateo* (δημο*κρατέω*) brims with all of these connotations: it means to grasp power, or to exercise control over others.[15]

Seen from a twenty-first century vantage point, these are strange connotations, exactly because the word *dēmokratia* had the *opposite* meaning of what most democrats today mean when they speak of democracy, in much more positive and complex ways, as non-violent inclusiveness, as power-sharing based on compromise and fairness, as equality based upon the legally guaranteed respect for others' dignity. For its Athenian critics, by contrast, *dēmokratia* was a bastard. They agreed that it was a unique form of rule - note the accurate Latin translation of *kratein* with *regulare* : to control, to exercise sway over somebody or something - in which the *dēmos* acts as a selfish body in pursuit of its own particular interests. That is why they feared or hated it. Note that here, in the hands of its enemies, the word *dēmokratia* had one thing in common with other contemporary words used to describe the rule of sectional interests – words like *aristokratia* (*αριστοκρατία* : aristocracy), *ploutokratia* (*πλουτοκρατία*: the rule of the rich) and *monokratoria* (*μονοκρατορία* monocracy, or the rule of a single person). When the critics spoke of *dēmokratia* they pointed to a

particular group whose particular interests were not identical with everyone's interests. In a *dēmokratia* the *dēmos* holds *kratos*,[16] which was another way of saying that it is prone to act forcefully, to get its own particular way by using violence, either against itself but especially against others.

These critics of democracy had long memories for incidents of the kind that had shocked sixth-century Miletus, where a disaffected underclass hounded the local wealthy families from power, seized their cattle and used them to trample their children to death; some of the ruling class managed to fight their way back into the city, rounded up the ringleaders, including their children, smothered them with tar, then set them on fire. Violent shenanigans caused by power struggling was very much on the mind of Plato when he remarked that democracy is a two-faced form of government, 'according to whether the masses rule over the owners of property by force or by consent'[17]. He considered democracy to be a gimcrack invention. He disliked the way its egalitarian acids corroded good government by pandering to the ignorant poor. He likened democracy to a ship manned by sapheaded sailors who refuse to believe that there is any such craft as navigation – sailors who treat helmsmen as useless stargazers. Switching metaphors, Plato even called it *theatrocracy*: its presumption that the common people are qualified to talk about anything and everything, in defiance of immutable laws, leads to the reign of posturing, the rhetorical seduction of the powerless, and lawlessness among the powerful.[18] The unknown Old Oligarch had much the same thing in mind when dressing down *dēmokratia* as the rule of the lowest and most misguided section of the population, the *dēmos,* who sometimes strive to exercise power by making common cause with sections of the *aristoi.*[19] When this happens, he said, the people are ruled in their own name. Used in this way, *dēmokratia* still referred to a form of sectional rule based on force. But its emphasis underwent a subtle shift, towards something like empowerment *through* the people. In other words, *dēmokratia* is a form of polity in which the people are ruled while seeming to rule.

Other democracies?

These brief reflections on war and Athenian democracy appear to be grist to the mills of those who have drawn the conclusion that democracy is a violent form of polity.

But before handing down this verdict and any strategic or normative conclusions that might flow from it we need to pause, to ask whether the variable forms of ancient, assembly-based democracy might make any difference to our understanding of violence and war.

The growing evidence of scores of *dēmokratiai* in the Hellenic world, some of them much older than that of Athens, should make us think twice about drawing easy conclusions, simply because we do not know a great deal about what the democrats of these democracies actually thought about war, and how they practised or resisted it.

The art of self-government by assemblies of people - democracy it would later be called - was not an invention of the Athenians. The family of linguistic terms from which the word itself was formed was much older than the Athenian democracy. And there is mounting evidence that among the Greek city states scattered throughout the Mediterranean, democratic assemblies flourished quite separately from Athens, and sometimes well before that city could claim to be democratic. The usual caveats about sources apply with a vengeance to these old political communities: time has ravaged the evidence and few of the jumbled fragments that remain have been blessed with the kind of intensive efforts at archaeological resuscitation that their Athenian equivalents have enjoyed. Yet traces of evidence still remain – usually in a badly neglected condition.[20]

There were altogether some two hundred Greek city states; up to a half of these had a taste of democracy at one time or another. Most of the evidence remains undigested. It is strongest for certain city states, including Ambracia (in north-western Greece), Chios (in the Aegean Sea), Cyrene (on the Libyan coast), and as far eastwards as Heraclea Pontica, on the southern coast of the Black Sea.

The details of these early *dēmokratiai* may initially seem tedious, but their cumulative effect on our understanding of the subject of war and democracy is potentially strong, and important to absorb. The evidence is not always good news for democrats. Sometimes it describes in painful detail the destruction of democratic institutions, either by military conquest, or by conspiracies of the rich, or by single-minded tyrants, or by all three in some sequence. In each case, there is an important reminder

of the utter contingency of democracy – of the ease with which it can be blown away by violence, like a leaf in the autumn winds. Some of the oldest remaining evidence of this fragility of democracy comes from the far-eastern Greek colony of Heraclea Pontica, situated well inside the Black Sea. It suggests that a form of democracy was established there with the founding of the colony (around 560 BCE). There was probably full male citizen participation in the assembly and on the jury courts; annually elected magistrates or *boule* of the kind who later appeared in Athens, and whose job it was to draft proposals for acceptance or rejection by the assembly; and a college or board of officials called *damiourgoi*, who were in effect an executive authority that was helped in its work of promoting the welfare of the city by officers known as *aisumnetai*. Within Heraclea Pontica there was a custom that stipulated that all laws had to be decisions of *ha boula kai ho damos*. How deep the roots of that custom ran is uncertain, if only because, shortly after the city was founded, the local *demos* seems to have been seduced by demagogues, who pressed hard for the expropriation of the property of the rich upper class *gnorimoi*. Members of that dispossessed class scampered for their lives, into exile, only to return, heavily armed, to overthrow the democracy by force.[21]

Elsewhere in the world of Greek city states, there were more than a few success stories, some of them predating Athens by more than a generation. These democracies are important because they teach us to begin thinking about the wide variety of ways in which democracy can be built; they also alert us to the amazing diversity of species of democracy. Ultimately, they raise questions about their political compatibility with democracy in imperial form.

Consider the prosperous maritime state of Chios where, around 575-550 BCE, a freestanding stone displayed in a public place commanded officials, such as the *demarchos* (a magistrate) to observe the *rhetras* (laws? decrees? agreements?) of 'the *demos*' (*δήμο ρήτραξ φυλασσω[υ]*), or otherwise face fines.[22] Or consider the case of Cyrene, which shows that a transition to democracy can be prompted by war. There, a political crisis caused by a disastrous military defeat at the hands of the Libyans in 555-550 BCE resulted in the overthrow of its monarchy. The Cyrenian monarch, King Arcesilaus II, was murdered. His stammering son Battus found it impossible to govern. So the Cyreneans sent a delegation to the Delphic oracle, to ask for advice. It

delivered sad news for monarchy. The oracle told Battus that the best way to cure his stammer was to seek a kingship in Libya (wise advice, many thought); the rest of Cyrenea was counselled to bring in a mediator (*katartister*), who appeared in the figure of Demonax, a well-known and respected citizen from nearby Mantinea. He set about stripping the monarchy of most of its powers – certain lands and priesthoods were exempted – and reorganising its old administrative districts. The poorest inhabitants who lived on the fringes of the state's territory (and possibly Hellenised Libyan settlers as well) were granted citizenship; and the bulk of governmental powers were turned over to a *demos* made up of people previously excluded from government.[23]

Among the oldest and most fascinating case of Greek democracy is the Corinthian-founded city state of Ambracia. There, self-government by popular assemblies dates to around 580 BCE. It was born of plots and an uprising against the harsh rule of Periander (the nephew of the Corinthian tyrant of the same name). He apparently aroused widespread indignation after rumours circulated, during a drinking session, that he had rudely asked his young male lover whether he had yet fallen pregnant. The indignation caused by that remark in an engendering society tolerant of male homosexuality is barely understandable to us. So serious was the insult that it seems to have hatched a plot by Periander's jilted lover to overthrow the ruler using violence. It was a trial run for the Harmodius and Aristogeiton affair a generation later in Athens. The violent plot against Periander gave courage to others. It galvanised a coalition of the local *demos* and his enemies (presumably the upper class *gnorimoi*) : 'the *demos* joined with the tyrant Periander's enemies to throw him out and then took over the constitution itself'.[24] The property qualification for public office (*timema*) had never been very high in Ambracia. It was now effectively abolished. The poorest ranks of men entered government, to act as its principal source of authority.

The Ambracian model was to be widely replicated throughout the Greek world. Within a few years of the beginnings of *dēmokratia* in Athens, similar experiments were launched not only in Chios, Cyrene and Heraklea, but also in wealthy and important states, such as Argos, in the Peleponnesus, and Syracuse (in Sicily), where democracy began in c. 491 with an uprising against the ruling landowners (*hoi gamoroi*). Triggered by the surprise military defeat of Syracusean forces at the river

Helorus – note how military defeat so often so easily destroyed the authority of oligarchs and paved the way for democratic experiments - the uprising seems to have enjoyed the unswerving support of the local trading class (who complained that too much wealth from trade remained in the hands of the landowners) backed by the local *dēmos* and (unusually) their slaves, who were known as the *kyllyrioi* and whose ancestry may have belonged to those who were natives of the island.[25]

Most of the Greek cities in Sicily later followed suit; tyrannical and oligarchical and monarchical rule (the three main alternatives of the period) suffered widespread defeat. By the 460s, popular self-government had also come to a number of cities in southern Italy, to the Ionian city of Corcyra, and to the Peleponnesian mainland. From one of its states, Elis, comes an important inscription, the conclusion of a lengthy law dating probably from the early years of the fifth century BCE. It shows that in Elis written laws could be superseded not by a court judgement (*dika*), but only by means of a public enactment (*wrhatra damosia*) that had the consent of a body called the *damos plethyon*.[26] According to some observers, neighbouring Mantinea had for some time been a vibrant farming democracy governed by a small-propertied *demos ho georgikos* – the best and oldest kind of democracy, in the opinion of Aristotle.[27] Meanwhile, in a third Peloponnesian state named Argos, *dēmokratia* came in fits and starts - as it did in many other city states - commencing with the end of the Temenid monarchy in the mid-sixth century; if one account is to be believed, its *demos* grew angry after military defeat at the hands of the Spartans prompted the giving away of large tracts of land by the king, who saved his skin by going into exile. A constitutionally elected council of *damiorgoi* then ran the state – until its devastating military defeat at the hands of the Spartan armies, at the battle of Sepea (c. 494 BCE). Losses were estimated at 6,000 men. So great were they that the shortage of adult men on the island enabled the takeover of government by a newly self-created *demos* made up of freed slaves (*douloi/oiketai*) and a large number of previously un-enfranchised inhabitants from the surrounding countryside, including many *gymnetes*.[28]

These cases of democracy operating at a distance from Athens are of great interest, and not only because they highlight the sobering point that ancient democracies were rarely established democratically, and that even when they were born of *resistance* to military interventions and violent power grabbing they often came into being through

the exercise of arbitrary power, backed by (threats of) violence. These ancient democracies are of interest because they suggest as well that the *imperial democracy* of Athens was only one form of democracy, and that the whole trend towards the democratisation of smaller states was paradoxically deepened by the outbreak of war in the Peleponnesus between Athens and Sparta (431-404 BCE). On the coasts and islands of the Aegean, many members of the vast military coalition under the command of Athens were already, or soon became governed by democratic rules. That was the deliberate policy of the Athenians, who for the sake of empire building lent a hand to democratic factions wherever they could, in contrast to the Spartan taste for well-ordered oligarchies. The military victory of Sparta resulted in a brief period of autocracy in Athens. Early in 411 BCE there was an oligarchic coup after the assembly - its composition distorted by the absence of many poor citizens absent on naval duty, and by organized conspirators wielding the swords of fear and propaganda - voted itself out of existence. The military victory of Sparta meanwhile led to the overthrow of democracy among many of its allies. The return of tyranny in Syracuse around the same time threatened an end to the experiment in self-government throughout the whole region. War was bad for democracy. But thanks to the growing unpopularity of the ruling Council of 400 and a brief flurry of street fighting, Athens itself soon managed to shake off oligarchy and renew its democratic institutions. The Athenian resistance proved not to be exceptional. Threatened with *stasis,* many states in the Aegean also clung on to their own democracies. On the mainland, the Argives followed the pattern; so did Sicyon, Phleious, and Thebes. The Arcadian confederation did so as well, at least for some years. During the 360s, it even tried something never before attempted: to form a confederacy structured by the rules of democratic negotiation and compromise. Among the key institutions that the Arcadians invented was a confederal assembly called the *myrioi*.[29] Open to all citizens of the region, it was the first-ever experiment in cross-border or regional democracy.

The attempt by the Arcadian League to set up brand new mechanisms for protecting democracy on a regional basis rested on a working principle that remains as rock-solid today as it did then: *in order to survive and flourish, democracies must tame the military and political pressures on their borders.* We might even speak of an Arcadian Law: *the viability of any democracy is inversely proportional to the quantity of outside ('geopolitical') threats to its existence.* That Arcadian Law contained a

gloomy corollary: a warning that democracy could be misused to kill off democracy. The Arcadian initiative in cross-border democracy showed not merely that things took place in the Greek world of city states that were not covered by, or were directly at odds with, the Athenian model of democracy. The case of Arcadia suggests that that model had worrying implications for the plurality of democracies of the region – that the Athenian empire was capable of gobbling up democracies in the name of democracy, and that therefore democracies had a strong self-interest in banding together, peacefully, to ensure their survival through politics, so as to avoid their massacre through rivalry, expansion and armed conflict. Many within these democracies seem to have grasped just how easily their polities could succumb to events triggered by plots, violent disturbances and military catastrophes. They knew that democracies were permanently vulnerable to what contemporaries called *stasis*, a very broad term used to describe the factional squabbling, outright sedition, open civil war, bloodshed and mass exile that was endemic in a geopolitical system of independent city states that lacked any co-ordinating centre and, hence, constantly violated their geographical isolation and political autonomy by sucking them into a vortex of permanent rivalries.[30]

Representative Democracy

There are more lessons to be learned from these early Greek experiments with democracy – more reasons why, in matters of war, the tight grip of Athens on our democratic imagination needs to broken, and why the logic of induction alone forbids any simple-minded conclusions about democracy and bellicosity. The ancient Greek world knew no single type of assembly-based democracy. The historical records suggest that outside of Athens there flourished a whole range of different democracies. Often standing in tension with Athens, these democracies showed that the formula (famously defined by Aristotle) that democracy is a unique type of polity in which the *dēmos* is *kyrios* could be applied differently, and in different contexts, with different sets of institutions and – most probably – different understandings of what democracy was all about. In the Greek world, assembly-based democracy was not a single or fixed form: it was more like an odyssey in which different theoretical imaginings and various practical experiments were the norm.

The appeal here for greater open-mindedness and sensitivity to context when analysing the relationship between democracy and war is reinforced by the invention of a form of democracy that was not based on the assembly. From around the tenth century CE, democracy entered a second historical phase whose centre of gravity was Europe. Shaped by forces as varied as the rebirth of towns, the rise (in northern Spain) of the first parliaments, and the conflicts unleashed by self-governing councils and religious dissent within the Christian Church, democracy came to be understood as *representative democracy*. This at least was the term that began to be used in France and England and the new American republic during the eighteenth century, for instance by constitution makers and influential political writers when referring to a new type of government with its roots in popular consent. As with the word *dēmokratia*, nobody knows who first spoke of 'representative democracy', though one political writer and thinker who broke new ground was the French nobleman who had been foreign minister under Louis XV, the Marquis d'Argenson (1694-1757). He was perhaps the first to tease out the new meaning of democracy as representation. 'False democracy', he noted in his *Considérations sur le government ancien et present de la France* (first published in Amsterdam in 1765), 'soon collapses into anarchy. It is government of the multitude; such is a people in revolt, insolently scorning law and reason. Its tyrannical despotism is obvious from the violence of its movements and the uncertainty of its deliberations. In *true democracy*, one acts through deputies, who are authorised by election; the mission of those elected by the people and the authority that such officials carry constitute the public power.'

This was a brand new way of thinking about democracy, by which was meant a type of government in which people, understood as voters faced with a genuine choice between at least two alternatives, are free to elect others who then act in defence of their interests, that is, *represent* them by deciding matters on their behalf. Much ink and blood was to be spilled in defining what exactly representation meant, who was entitled to represent whom and what had to be done when representatives disregarded those whom they were supposed to represent. But common to the second historical phase of democracy was the belief that good government was non-violent government by representatives. Often contrasted with monarchy, representative democracy was praised as a way of governing better by openly and non-violently airing differences of

opinion – not only among the represented themselves, but also between representatives and those whom they are supposed to represent. Representative government was also hailed for encouraging the rotation of leadership guided by merit. It was said to introduce competition for power that in turn enabled elected representatives to test out their political competence before others. The earliest champions of representative democracy also offered a more pragmatic justification of representation. It was seen as the practical expression of a simple reality: that it wasn't feasible for all of the people to be involved all of the time, even if they were so inclined, in the business of government. Given that reality, the people must delegate the task of government to representatives who are chosen at regular elections. The job of these representatives is to monitor the spending of public money. Representatives make representations on behalf of their constituents to the government and its bureaucracy. Representatives debate issues and make laws. They decide who will govern and how – on behalf and in the name of the people.

As a way of imagining and handling power, representative democracy was an unusual type of political system. Compared with the previous, assembly-based form, it greatly extended the geographic scale of institutions of self-government. As time passed, and despite its localised origins in towns, rural districts and large-scale imperial settings, representative democracy came to be housed mainly within territorial states protected by standing armies and equipped with powers to make and enforce laws and to extract taxes from their subject populations. In modern Europe, representative democracy resembled a plant that grew in the hot house of these territorial states. They were typically much bigger and more populous than the political units of ancient democracy. Most states of the Greek world of assembly democracy, Mantinea and Argos for instance, were no bigger than a few score square kilometres. Many modern representative democracies - including Canada (9.98 million square kilometres), the United States (9.63 million square kilometres), and the largest electoral constituency in the world, the vast rural division of Kalgoorlie in the federal state of Western Australia that comprises 82,000 voters scattered across an area of 2.3 million square kilometres - were incomparably larger. Representative democracy was equally unusual in that it rested upon written constitutions, independent judiciaries and laws that guaranteed procedures that still play vital roles in the democracies of today: inventions like *habeas corpus* (prohibitions upon torture and imprisonment), periodic

election of candidates to legislatures, limited-term holding of political offices, voting by secret ballot, referendum and recall, electoral colleges, competitive political parties, ombudsmen, civil society and civil liberties such as the right to assemble in public, and liberty of the press. All of these inventions were designed to ensure that in matters of politics the subjects of government would have their heads counted – instead of being chopped off by those who governed.

The formation of territorial states structured by representative democracy was neither inevitable (as the small stateless nations of Europe soon discovered) nor politically uncontested. In spite of all their power-sharing and violence-taming effects, they whipped up powerful controversies. Representative democracy was in fact born of many and different power conflicts, many of them bitterly fought in opposition to ruling groups, whether they were church hierarchies, landowners or imperial monarchies, often in the name of 'the people'. Exactly who were 'the people' proved to be a source of deep dispute throughout the era of representative democracy. The second age of democracy witnessed the birth of neologisms, like 'aristocratic democracy' (that first happened in the Low Countries at the end of the sixteenth century) and new references (beginning in the United States) to 'republican democracy'. Later came 'social democracy' and 'liberal democracy' and 'Christian democracy', even 'bourgeois democracy', 'workers' democracy' and 'socialist democracy'. These new terms corresponded to the many kinds of struggles by groups for equal access to governmental power that resulted, sometimes by design and sometimes by simple accident or unintended consequence, in institutions and ideals and ways of life that had no precedent. Written constitutions based on a formal separation of powers, periodic elections and parties and different electoral systems were new. So too was the invention of 'civil societies' founded on new social habits and customs – experiences as varied as playing sport, dining in a public restaurant, or controlling one's temper by using polite language - and new associations that citizens used to keep an arm's length from government by using non-violent weapons like liberty of the printing press, publicly circulated petitions, and covenants and constitutional conventions called to draw up new constitutions.

The Right of National Self-Determination?

This period unleashed what the French writer and politician Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) famously called a ‘great democratic revolution’ in favour of political and social equality. Spreading from the Atlantic region, this revolution witnessed franchise victories for new groups, like slaves, women and workers. At least on paper, representation was eventually democratised, stretched to include all of the population. But such stretching happened with great difficulty and against great odds. Even then it was permanently on trial; in more than a few cases, the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included, the definition of representation was actually narrowed by withdrawing the right to vote from certain groups, particularly black and poor people. Not until the very end of this second phase - during the early decades of the twentieth century - did the right to vote for representatives come to be seen as a *universal* entitlement. That happened first for adult men and later – usually much later – for all adult women. But even then, as the experiences of totalitarianism and military dictatorship show, the opponents of democratic representation fought hard and with considerable success against its perceived inefficiencies, its fatal flaws and supposed evils. They demonstrated that democracy in any form was not inevitable – that it had no built-in historical guarantees.

The history of struggles for inclusion also shows that representative democracy in territorial state was permanently vulnerable to violent conflict and war fuelled by struggles for national self-determination. The invention and deployment, during the eighteenth century, of the doctrine of the sovereignty of nations was something new, but it proved to be a curse for democracy. The formula seemed to be simple enough and thoroughly consonant with the ideal of representative democracy: each nation living within a given territory was to be entitled to govern itself through its own governmental institutions. As we now see much more clearly in retrospect, the troubles with this doctrine were manifold. Not all people defined themselves primarily or exclusively as members of a ‘nation’; the doctrine implied that they should be forced to do so. Nations in any case did not release their passions or procreate or live separately from others, in discrete territorial frameworks. The call for ‘national self-determination’ thus implied the ‘cleansing’ of nations from lands where they were said not to belong. This implied, as a last resort, murder and violence. And since self-determining nations living in territorial states resembled atoms without a gravitational force to hold them together, jostling and elbowing and outright fisticuffs were by

implication permanent probabilities. The ‘democratic’ doctrine of national self-determination implied not just bickering, diplomacy and negotiation. It not only made possible the rule that mature democracies have an unblemished record in not waging war upon each other.[31] Something worse was implied: the struggle for national self-determination nurtured sabre-rattling, demagoguery and brinkmanship that often led to declarations of war.

It is well known that the territorial state system was an invention of early modern Europe. Its first appearance, in such Renaissance city republics as Venice and Florence, and its subsequent spread throughout the European region, then to the whole world, led to the concentration of political resources into a few hands. The architecture of politics changed. Territorially defined governments fed by their control of resources like taxation, law, administration and the means of violence began to wield enormous power over their subjects. These Mortall Gods, as Thomas Hobbes called them, began to shape and re-shape the lives of their subjects. It turned them into taxpayers; objects of law and civil administration; and soldiers and victims of war among states. It has been customary in political thinking (as the work of scholars such as Max Weber shows) to emphasise these and other *duties* of subjects to these new-fangled states. But that is to tell only half the story, for the remarkable thing about the whole centralizing thrust of modern state building is the way in which it both prompted resistance to its claims and helped centralize, concentrate and redefine those power-sharing claims as *democratic*.

1789…

The democratic formula of national self-determination was revolutionary. It had incendiary effects in disturbances not only in the Low Countries, as well as in other spots of Europe, for instance in Switzerland and Ireland. The formula undoubtedly had its greatest triumph in the French Revolution. An earthquake that sent shock waves throughout Europe, and far beyond, for instance throughout Spanish America[32], the spectacular events of 1789 introduced Europeans and the rest of the world to the idea that government could be ‘for the people’ and ‘by the nation’. Four years into the Revolution, Robespierre’s five-minute speech on Virtue and Terror in the Convention on February 5, 1794 registered the pulse of events. ‘Democracy’, he thundered, ‘is a

state in which the people, as sovereign guided by laws of its own making, does for itself all that it can do well, and by its delegates what it cannot…Democracy is the only form of state which all the individuals composing it can truly call their country.' Robespierre went on to make a prediction – one that proved as inaccurate as its arrogant tone. 'The French are the first people in the world to establish a true democracy, by calling all men to enjoy equality and the fullness of civil rights; and that, in my opinion is the real reason why all the tyrants allied against the Republic will be defeated.'[33]

Robespierre's boast played to the high drama of the moment. It was to be spoiled and in some circles discredited by its association with the practice of terror. The Revolution nevertheless made 'Democracy' central to the elaboration of an appealing vision of a good society that contained many (eclectic) voices from the European past: the direct *dēmokratia* of the Greek city states; the struggle for representative parliaments; the ideals of the Levellers; an American declaration of independence from colonial domination; commoners' protests against the powerful; revolutionary democracy in the Low Countries. The Revolution combined these voices into something new, to produce a chorus of angry voices denouncing 'aristocrats', 'monarchy' and unelected privilege. It was not (as is often claimed) the first-ever moment in modern European history to talk seriously about democracy, or to transform the word from a literary device into a political weapon.[34] The burghers of the Low Countries were in fact the first to breathe political life into a classic ideal. It was rather that the French events after 1789 injected unprecedented energy into the language of democracy by altering its meaning, from a type of *government*, in which citizens, consider as political equals, govern themselves, to a type of *social order* in which hereditary power over others is abolished and egalitarian virtues flourish. The revolution was to be total. The people of the French nation were to break *all* of their chains.

The prime movers of the Revolution were dissatisfied with textbook views (expressed for instance by the Chevalier de Jaucourt in the *Encyclopédie*) that democracy was 'one of the basic forms of government, in which the people as a body enjoys sovereignty', a form of government that flourished in the small city states of an ancient world that could never again be restored.[35] The French revolutionaries tried to

prove that democracy could work in a large state like France, a state defined by a vast territory, large numbers of citizens, and highly complex social relations. The revolutionaries, as if acting in defiance of gravity with the help of pressure from the streets, moved through the forum known as the Convention to abolish monarchy, in full view of the public, using the new invention called the guillotine to slice off the head of Louis Capet. They envisaged a new democratic man – it should be noted that women were quickly pushed out of the revolutionary nest – a figure that obeyed only laws that he himself made by acclamation. The revolutionaries were from the beginning split over the issue of whether or not the whole people could participate directly in matters of government – and what that would mean. The majority of deputies to the Constituent Assembly favoured the security of persons and property and accepted representative government because for them liberty meant the autonomy of individuals from government, rather than participation. Sieyès (in a speech of October 2, 1789) put it like this: representative government and democracy were both legitimate political forms, but modern societies, with their division of labour and commerce and exchange, required the representative system. The famous Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen captured the spirit of this new modern compromise between democracy and representation. 'The law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to participate personally, or through their representatives, in its formation.'

The bitter conflict within the Convention between those who stood behind representative government (the Girondins) and those (following the Montagnards) who instead favoured something like direct democracy – directly voiced expressions of the sovereign 'people' – was never resolved. The proposal by Saint-Just that the people's will should be concentrated in the central government at the expense of the primary assemblies, and that all deputies be elected by all the people, was rejected only for technical reasons. Both sides began to draw the conclusion that the survival of democracy in France required the regeneration of 'the people'. Enter Robespierre: a new type of political leader brought to power by the anti-parliamentary riots of May 31-June 2, 1793.

Robespierre was an unusual figure, a proud little man filled with murderous instincts, something of an eighteenth-century Massaniello. With one leg in the Convention and

the other firmly planted in the revolutionary clubs and cells of Paris, Robespierre clambered to the summit of power by presenting himself as the great reconciler of direct and representative democracy. He was 'the people'.[36] Robespierre turned out to be the first democratic dictator of modern times. Partly through luck, but partly through his own calculations and tactical prowess, he positioned himself to play the role of master within a political void. The symbol and stage director of the Jacobin rule that culminated (from June 2, 1793) in the expulsion of the Girondins from the Convention, a purge soon magnified into the Terror, Robespierre saw himself as the great champion of democratic progress. He sealed an alliance between the popular *sans culotte* movement and the most radical segments of the middle class, and moved quickly to root out all dissent. He was obsessed with unanimity, which he considered a prime revolutionary virtue. He thought and acted like a fanatic, an obsessive who believed that the leading role of 'the people' and the 'general will' necessitated not only the provision of radically new policies like public education, poor relief and the universal suffrage, but also the rooting out of 'faction' and 'particular interest' – through force of arms, whenever necessary.

The great excitement aroused by the Revolution in favour of democracy quickly spread through parts of Europe. The extent of foreign support for its ideals has often been exaggerated; great care needs to be taken when trying to assess the impact of the Revolution on democratic ideals and institutions. Contemporaries sympathetic to the Revolution, especially intellectuals, typically thought of it as an epochal moment, as a clean break with the corrupted past, as a giant leap upwards, into the air, onto a higher historical plane. That reaction was especially strong within the German lands, where philosophers like Immanuel Kant thought, in rather cosmopolitan but ethereal terms, of the Revolution as something like a metaphysical fact of relevance for the whole world. The revolutionaries' own denunciations of despotism added to the headiness. 'The National Convention', read the decree issued by La Révellière-Lépeaux on November 19, 1792, 'declares in the name of the French nation that it will grant fraternity and aid to any people that may wish to recover its liberty.' People living under oppressive regimes, anywhere in Europe or in the rest of the world, were in effect invited to take matters into their own hands. Kings and clerics were warned. Insurrection for the sake of democratic liberty was no longer a crime: the right of all peoples to act to regenerate themselves was a universal right.

In retrospect, it is unclear exactly who were supposed to be, or in fact were, the addressees of such heady principles. In 1789, illiterate peasants still comprised the big majority of Europe's population. In the central-eastern half of the continent, there were few cities, limited trade and commerce and a weakly developed, educated middle class. Besides, those who ruled Europe's populations through states and empires – including so-called 'enlightened despots' - had little interest in allowing the spirit of democratic liberty to flourish, as it had done in France and Britain and the Low Countries through the subterranean development of printing presses, reading circles, clubs and *salles de lecture*. Crackdowns flourished, as in Russia, where Catherine the Great (1729-1796) revealed her true reactionary instincts by spying on, arresting and imprisoning her democratic opponents.

The combined effect of these barriers to the spread of revolutionary ideals was to increase the temptations of the French authorities to resort to military force, in the name of democracy. So history repeated itself - Athens versus Melos - this time on a continental scale.[37] Democratic liberty was not negotiable. Its lofty ideals quickly gave way to talk of *pays ennemis* and *pays conquis*. Democracy went on the march, in uniform, to get caught up the practical imperatives of conquest and occupation. Annexation in the name of democratic ideals was either carried out through the signing of a treaty (as happened in the Rhineland) or territory was simply annexed and sub-divided into arbitrarily defined, French-style departments, without consultation, as took place in Belgium in 1795 and Piedmont in 1802. It is true that there were places, like the Batavian Republic and the Helvetic Republic, where the Napoleonic armies claimed that the birth of a sister republic was the work of its most 'advanced' patriots. But in every case, French control over territory, resources and people was the primary imperative. National self-determination by citizens was arranged on French terms. Republican constitutions designed to bring order and guarantee certain basic freedoms – subject to strong executive authority and a limited property franchise, *a la française* - were imposed. Administrative systems based on departments and districts, cantons and communes were put in place. A local press sympathetic to French orthodoxy was cultivated. Property systems based on seigneurialism were broken up; every effort was made to dissolve the power of the Catholic faith.

Whatever locals thought of these reforms was largely irrelevant, for the fundamental point was that all the reforms were imposed by conquest, not accepted through consent. Especially after 1793, when the French expanded its military campaign and found itself at war with most of monarchical Europe, the logic of brute conquest prevailed. In practice, the revolutionary slogan *'Guerre aux châteaux, paix aux chaumières'* ('War on castles, peace to cottages') meant what the Committee of Public Safety meant when (on September 18th 1793) it instructed the commanders of French armies to live off the land and its people, to 'procure, as far as possible from enemy territory, the supplies necessary to provision the army, as well as arms, clothing, equipment, and transport.' *Commissaires militaires* were charged with extracting taxes and supplies on the spot. Huge sums were expected, and without delay. In 1798, in the Helvetic Republic, the cantons of Fribourg, Soleure, Zurich and Berne were collectively assessed and ordered to pay sixteen million livres, one fifth of which had to be handed over within five days, under threat of punishments that included the taking of hostages and the compulsory billeting of soldiers. The first annexations by the French army, in Avignon and the Comtat, were timid, halting adventures. It was not long before the search for military resources became the prime purpose of occupation, as when the revolutionaries marched in to northern Italy for the purpose of providing a new granary for the French armies and new funding to help pay off the costs of war. Civilians were seen as fair game and officers, knowing the unreliability of food convoys, turned a blind eye to the bad behaviour of their troops, despite the grave risks of military indiscipline. The people's army bit into the flesh of the peoples they occupied. In the name of ballots, they billeted themselves using bullets. Horses and cattle were rounded up and fields were stripped to feed starving battalions. Troops smashed their way into homes, where they helped themselves to money, bedding, clothing, wine, food, and kitchen utensils. There was drunken abuse, wanton vandalism and beating and rape of anybody who stood in their way.

Few troops were ever brought to justice and little gratitude ever flowed from the conquered. Countless Italians, Belgians, Spanish and Rhinelanders understandably saw the conquest with the eyes of conquered people: they saw equality bathed in misery, fear and poverty, but no liberty or fraternity. The sheer size of the French armies, plus their youth and hunger and military inexperience, spread fear and stirred up national resentments among the local communities through which they passed.

The French effort to sow the seeds of democratic revolution by military force and influence faltered. It certainly altered boundaries and changed institutions. But it largely failed to win minds, let alone hearts. It bred resentment and resistance and the consequence, not surprisingly, was that the whole trend towards democracy stalled. In some contexts, the Russian lands for instance, the language and institutions of democracy were permanently weakened. It was as if history had taken a strong dislike to democracy. War in the name of democracy promoted petty tyranny or authoritarianism as well as clampdowns on press freedom, public assembly and other civil freedoms. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, not one government in the whole of Europe could be described as democratic – if by that we mean, as was meant at the time, a civilian government of representatives subject to openly contested elections and voting by adult males.

Overkill

The French events showed that the tendency of representative democracy to degenerate into violently 'democratic' despotisms proved menacing to more than just their subjects at home. The mechanisms of representative government had both 'inside' and 'outside' dimensions, which implied that political manipulation at home could be enhanced by dalliances and skulduggery abroad. So the neighbouring citizens of states were potential victims of outside manipulation, fear and violence as well. From the time of the French Revolution, all representative governments found themselves in the devil's company of geopolitics. The question confronting these democracies was whether elected government that paid lip service to 'the people' could be combined with a system of armed territorial states that acted as if they were 'sovereign' powers, and whose leaders knew well that just as nature abhors a vacuum so state politics moves to fill gaps and to take advantage of opportunities. During the course of the nineteenth century, the combination produced unhappy results that eventually resulted in the first-ever global war. European experience confirmed that a rivalrous system of nominally sovereign states bristling with arms was prone constantly to war, and to rumours of war. It proved as well that war was the crucible within which unaccountable rulers could mobilise 'the people' – in order better to pulverise them. Tom Paine's complaint that eighteenth-century European despotisms were in a real sense the product of an unregulated, competitive states system that

encouraged rulers to screw their subjects correctly put its finger on a problem that representative governments everywhere had to deal with: the problem of how to build peaceful forms of government based on power-sharing at home within a threatening geopolitical environment that was prone constantly to military adventures and, hence, subject to the intrigues and machinations of leaders striving for power over the many.

The geopolitical instability in which representative democracies were born coincided with major transformations of the mode and means of warfare. For reasons of space and the complexity of the subject, nothing much can be said here about these transformations. It is perhaps enough to note that each major historical phase of democracy appears to coincide with a radical transformation of the means and mode of war fighting. The imperial democracy of Athens coincided with the hoplite revolution on land and the massive expansion of trireme power at sea. The struggle for representative democracy - symbolised by Cromwell's Ironsides and the people's armies of the Napoleonic era – coincided with the organisation of machine-like armies equipped with swords and muskets and great killing power, together with canon-firing warships capable of all-devouring confrontations on the high seas, in which the aim was skilfully to destroy one's opponents and their equipment completely. The widespread implosion of representative democracies in the first decades of the twentieth century coincided with the 'perfection' of these trends, their mutation into something that had never before happened: the invention of 'overkill' weapons systems capable of exterminating the whole human species.

The frightening development of techniques of *overkill* - the military capacity to overwhelm *all* institutions of government and civil society and to reduce to zero their power of securing their subjects' lives against the ravages of violence – has not only become a fishbone in the throat of democracy. Overkill is today an *ultimate* problem for the whole of the planet because it has the potential to annihilate many millions of people, perhaps even to exterminate *homo sapiens* itself. We have been catapulted, say, from the early nineteenth-century world of Colonel Shrapnel testing his deadly new fragmenting shell on the wildlife of Foulness Island, into a world in which weapons of war potentially render (certain forms of) war obsolete, simply because human beings could no longer survive their devastating effects. All weapons of violence tend towards overkill, of course. From the beginning, the weapons invented

and used by humans – the rock, spear, javelin, dart, arrow - bestowed a form of power to produce effects out of all proportion to the means employed. That power transformed hominids into humans by enabling them to become the first sizeable creatures on earth to effect change by committing acts of violence at a distance – and so surviving and exploiting even the largest land animals. Humans became what they threw. The arts of manipulating fire and the later means of killing at a distance - the crossbow, the trebuchet, Greek fire – greatly added to the stock of human powers of violence. The invention of gunpowder, by the Chinese, at the end of the first millennium BCE, proved to be especially important. It facilitated the rise of the so-called gunpowder empires, such as those of the Ottomans, Russians and Mughals.[38] European state builders embraced gunpowder as if it were a new love; they wielded its charms and cruelties against various enemies, especially in the New World, where (as Montaigne put it) 'the lightning flashes of our cannons, the thundering of our harquebuses'[39] had both propaganda purposes and killing effects.

The harnessing of gunpowder for more destructive ends – for the development of weapons with a potentially global reach – brought human beings into contact, for the first time, with the possibility of *total war*, in which the whole of life at any point on the planet can be turned into a battle front, and so confronted with the possibility of death. Mechanized total war was an invention of the late eighteenth century, but it only reached perfection - and the height of self-contradiction - during the long twentieth century of violence, in exactly the same period that the species of representative democracy tottered on the edge of extinction in all four corners of the earth.

The invention and deployment of such means of war as chemical weapons, motorised tanks, land mines and concentration camps are now well-known ugly facts of contemporary life, but less well understood are four key military developments unique to the last half-century that arguably have changed everything in matters of democracy: American B-29s in 1945 unloading comprehensive destruction from the unprecedented height of 20,000 feet; the counter-detonation by the Russians of their first atomic bomb in 1949; the Americans' deployment in 1956 of B-52 intercontinental bombers capable of flying round trips to Moscow; and the development, by the early 1960s, of intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of

reaching their far-flung targets within half-an-hour.[40] The net effect of all these and other military inventions and their barbarous practical effects has been to draw the populations of actually existing democracies into a global 'triangle of violence' - a point explained at length in my *Violence and Democracy* – in which the military security of democracies has come to depend upon two trends: not only upon a 'bad conscience' about past wars of total destruction by weapons that continue to have an overkill capacity but also on a dominant imperial power, the United States, which is itself a democracy that perforce has committed itself during the past century to securing 'global order' in the name of promoting democracy as a way of life suited to all peoples of the earth.

Complex Democracy

It is against the backdrop of such contradictory developments that representative democracy as we have known it is today undergoing potentially profound changes. We have seen that while mature representative democracies do not wage war against each other, all democracies are capable of inflicting organised violence upon others and that – for a time – they may even be good at fighting wars against their anti-democratic opponents, exactly because their forms of government and war fighting rest on some measure of publicly negotiated popular acceptance and public monitoring of power.[41]It is also clear that democratic institutions are sometimes born out of the experience of war, including both military victory and crushing defeat. That is true (as I try to show in my forthcoming *Life and Death of Democracy*) of the origins of such basic institutions as parliament and the extension of the civil and political freedoms to emancipated slaves and to women. In matters of democracy, the twentieth-century experience of forms of violence and total war also proved to be the catalyst of many new inventions, including the growth of peace movements rooted in civil society, disarmament initiatives, war crimes tribunals, truth and reconciliation commissions, and efforts to define and to defend human rights. Contrary to conventional talk of a 'third wave of democratisation' (Samuel Huntington) or the triumph of 'liberal democracy', these and other inventions have begun to alter the logic of territorially-defined representative democracy. They have taken root and have spread, to the point where it can be said that democratic ideals and institutions have entered a third historical era.

What are the symptoms of this change that has only just begun? In the emerging age of 'post-representative' or 'complex democracy', which dates roughly from the mid-twentieth century, democracy has for the first time become a global force. The case of India, where in 1950 the world's first-ever large-scale democracy was created among materially impoverished peoples of multiple faiths, many different languages and low rates of literacy, is a key symbol of this change. Data shows that in the year 1900, when monarchies and empires predominated, there were no states that could be judged as representative democracies by the standard of universal suffrage for competitive multi-party elections. By 1950, with the military defeat of Nazism and the beginnings of de-colonization and the post-war reconstruction of Europe and Japan, there were 22 democracies accounting for 31 per cent of the world's population. By the end of the twentieth century, waves of democracy had lapped the shores of Latin America, post-communist Europe and parts of Africa and Asia. At least on paper, out of 192 countries, 119 resembled representative democracies (58.2% of the globe's population), with 85 of these countries (38% of the world's inhabitants) enjoying forms of political democracy respectful of basic human rights, freedom of the press and the rule of law.

In the era of complex democracy, not only are the language and ideals and institutions of democracy, for the first time in history, becoming familiar to people living within most regions of the earth, regardless of their nationality, religion or civilisation. Not only is there new talk of 'global democracy' and democracy as a 'universal value' (Amartya Sen). For the first time, racial and ethno-national prejudice has also begun to be extracted from the ideals of democracy, such that many democrats now find themselves embarrassed or angered by talk of 'superior nations' or 'backward' or 'uncivilised' or 'naturally inferior' peoples. Of particular relevance to the subject of war is the fact that there are signs as well that the theory and practice of democracy are mutating, that its significance is changing because its institutions are being stretched into areas of life in which democracy in any form was previously excluded, or played little or no role. Once seen as given by the grace of a deity, democracy is valued for 'post-philosophical' reasons. No longer justified with un-ironic reference to some unassailable and universal First Principle – God, Utility, the Doctrine of National Self-determination, the Sovereign People – democracy is viewed much more

pragmatically, as a handy weapon for use against concentrations of unaccountable power and the follies and dangers they beget. In the era of complex democracy, the word democracy comes to have a new meaning: the non-violent public accountability and public control of decision makers, whether they operate in the field of state or interstate institutions or within so-called non-governmental or civil society organisations, such as businesses, trade unions, sports associations and charities.

In the age of complex democracy, paradoxically, appeals to 'the demos' begin noticeably to decline; the exceptions prove that talk of 'the people' is sublimated into non-governmental aesthetic forms, such as music; or it is kept alive by those determined to hang onto their power over others (the recent White Paper issued by the Communist Party of China is a case in point), or championed by demagogues and others who are generally in love with concentrated power in territorial state form. In the era of complex democracy, the political geography of power-monitoring institutions changes, and becomes more complex. Assembly-based and representative mechanisms are mixed and combined with new ways of publicly monitoring and controlling the exercise of power, often underneath and beyond governmental power. True, representative forms of government do not simply wither, or disappear. Representative democracy within the framework of territorial states often survives, and in some countries it even thrives, sometimes (as in Mongolia, Slovenia, Taiwan and South Africa) for the first time ever. In certain contexts, representative government is also reinvigorated, as in the civic involvement and clean-up schemes (*machizukuri*) in Japanese cities such as Yokohama and Kawasaki during the past two decades. Experiments with extending democracy within the institutions of civil society, into areas of life 'beneath' the institutions of territorial states, are also much in evidence. The German system of *Mitbestimmung*, nudged along by the post-'45 British occupation of Germany, is one example of the attempt to introduce the practice of monitoring of power into the non-governmental domain. So too is an otherwise self-selecting membership organisation like the International Olympic Committee, which is governed by an executive body that is subject to election by secret ballot, by a majority of votes cast, for limited terms of office. With the help of new communication media, including satellite television and the internet ('e-democracy'), the public monitoring of international organisations of government is also growing. Bodies such as the World Trade Organisation, the United Nations, and

the European Commission find themselves under permanent or intermittent scrutiny by outside bodies, their own legal procedures, and by various public watchdogs and protesters.

For a variety of reasons related to public pressure and the need to reduce corruption and the abuse of power, representative democracy is coming to be supplemented (and hence complicated) by a variety of power-scrutinising procedures and rules that begin to spread underneath and beyond territorial states. The marriage of human rights norms and democratic institutions is one symptom of this wider trend, which includes other inventions: anti-corruption initiatives, social forums, public summits, regional parliaments, cross-border judicial review, citizens' juries and media scrutiny conducted on a global basis.

The Awkward Empire

These trends towards complex democracy confirm the rule that war can sometimes be the catalyst of new and transformed institutions. Currently developed most strongly in the European region, these trends feed the democratisation of violence and war that I mentioned at the outset; they show that democracy can be used to democratise democracy. Yet the trends are everywhere subject, to a varying degree, to some obvious counter-trends, some of them deeply threatening, such as growing social inequality, the defection from electoral politics, and the issue – felt strongly in countries as different as India and Taiwan and Canada – of whether and how democracies can come to terms peacefully with their 'multi-cultural' or 'multi-national' societies by protecting the right of citizens to national identity without lapsing into nationalism. But there are also deep-seated trends for which in the history of democracy there is no precedent, and no easy solutions - like the planetary outbreak of uncivil wars, nuclear anarchy and terrorist attacks that I have elsewhere referred to as the triangle of violence.

War and the potentially or actually devastating consequences of triangulated violence – 'overkill' - are among the deep-seated trends that potentially rob democracy of a future. Much can be learned from previous eras of democracy and from the wars they perpetrated or suffered, but arguably the promise and potential of the present-day

trends towards complex democracy are being defined and challenged by another (not unrelated) problem, one that certainly has no precedent in the history of democracy: the emergence of the United States as the world's first-ever democracy that doubles as a dominant power in global form.

If we accept that some empires, beginning with Athens, can function as either catalysts or destroyers of democratisation, then how does the United States measure up? By any reckoning, there is little doubt that we are indeed dealing with an empire, or dominant power. It has two unusual characteristics. It is the first-ever *global* dominant power, in a way that *Pax Britannica* never was. In hard power terms, the United States has over one million troops, men and women stationed on five continents in over 100 countries. It is the world's biggest, most dynamic, most innovative and aggressive weapons manufacturer; it had been expected that by 2007, military spending of the United States would equal the rest of the world combined, but that line has already been crossed. The US Department of Defense currently maintains 725 official military bases outside the country and 969 at home (how many secret bases there are is anybody's guess). American hard power is re-shaping global institutions, turning some of them into *de facto* colonial bodies: think of the recent cases in which the US drops the bombs and the United Nations becomes the Kleenex in 'humanitarian operations'. In softer power terms, the United States is a driving force of the emergent global civil society. It is the heartland of the telecommunications industry; the global champion of consumer ways of life that triumphed over the conservative asceticism of old Europe (noted in Victoria de Grazia's *Irresistible Empire*); and the monetary and fiscal policies of governments everywhere are heavily shaped, and sometimes dictated, by Washington. In short, the United States is a dominant power that has the proven ability to act as a vigilante or rogue power. It acts tough in matters as varied as decisions to launch 'pre-emptive' war, block steel imports, stifle environmental regulations and to make meagre contributions to the World Bank, in which it is the largest shareholder, but contributes only 0.1% of its GDP, the lowest among the richest countries.

The United States is also a dominant power whose leading political figures typically think of themselves in universalist terms. All dominant powers are always at some moment engaged in self-aggrandizement, but they also always appeal to some vision

of international unity and solidarity. Henry V dreamed of a reunited Christendom in a glorious final crusade against the Turk; Gustavus Adolphus thought of himself as the defender of Protestantism; Hitler imagined a new order in Europe and a world reconstituted on bio-supremacist principles. The United States stands on the same continuum, except that it is a more awkward empire – awkward because it champions the first-ever version of the need to spread democracy to all four corners of the earth, in a manner and with a fervour that British imperialists would have found strange. In this way, the United States has put the norms and institutions of democracy on trial, globally.

It is difficult not to miss the enthusiasm for speaking the language of democracy in the Oval Office of the President of the United States. Despite concern about the present-day ‘pushback of democracy’ (Thomas Carothers[42]), the enthusiasm seems to have plenty of life still left in it. It should be remembered that the language of President Bush’s 2005 inauguration speech, which emphasised America’s commitment to ‘the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny’, is not new. Tony Smith’s *America’s Mission : The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (1994), the first and only study of its kind, shows just how long-standing and deep-seated is the American rhetorical commitment to democracy. Since September 11th 2001, President G.W. Bush has nevertheless developed his own highly virulent version of the global importance of democracy and how to achieve it, by force of arms if necessary. The first hints of his interest in the subject appeared in a speech given (appropriately enough) at the Lima Army Tank Plant, in Lima Ohio on April 24, 2003. ‘The path to freedom may not always be neat and orderly’, he told his audience, ‘but it is the right of every person and every nation’. He then made a promise: ‘Iraq must be democratic…One thing is certain: We will not impose a government on Iraq. We will help that nation build a government of, by, and for the Iraqi people [Applause].’ Six months later, in the widely-quoted address to the 20th Anniversary meeting of the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington (November 6th 2003), this type of impromptu reasoning had matured into something like a full-blown ideology of the transition to democracy. President Bush said that democracy ‘is both the plan of Heaven for humanity, and the best hope for progress here on Earth’. He spoke of ‘the world democratic movement’ and spent some time working his way

through a democracy assessment check list, awarding pass or fail scores to Afghanistan (+), China (-), Cuba (-), Saudi Arabia (+), Morocco (+), Palestine (-), Qatar (+). He went on to concentrate on the Middle East, where ‘the global wave of democracy has...hardly reached the Arab states’. Then came another promise: ‘The establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East will be a watershed event in the global democratic revolution [Applause]’..Iraqi democracy will succeed – and that success will send forth the news, from Damascus to Tehran – that freedom can be the future of every nation [More Applause]’.

The speeches by President Bush provide an important clue not only to a rhetorical turn in recent Middle East policy of the United States. They reveal as well a fundamental structural feature of our times: that during the transition towards the age of ‘post-representative’ democracy our world has fallen politically under the shadow of the first genuinely global dominant power capable of operating in all four corners of the earth – a power that prides itself on its own democracy and wields the language of democracy as an ideology to justify to the world what it is doing to others, including the launching of war against its enemies.

What are we to make of this language? The United States clearly has a proven track record in the defence and creation of democratic institutions – the rescue of parliamentary democracy in Britain during World War Two and the post-’45 hot-housing of forms of democracy in the Philippines, Japan and Germany are the most commonly-cited examples. They suggest that military intervention can succeed in kick-starting democracy, so long as certain requirements, such as the continued support of the fledgling governments, are fulfilled.[43] So why, in terms of our subject of war and democracy, should there be a concern about the role of the United States? Why shouldn’t the world just make itself comfortable in the seat of presumption that American imperial power will do for democracy what some previous empires did – that in our times it is on balance good for democracy, its guarantor, its best hope, its saviour in the face of ‘pushback’?

There seem to be several intertwined reasons for reflecting carefully upon America’s stated commitment to democracy at home and abroad. To begin with, it should be born in mind that most militarily enforced transitions to democracy end in tears. There

is a wide discrepancy between the democracy-promotion claims of American foreign policy and its actual outcomes: a 2003 study commissioned by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace showed that out of 16 forced regime changes to which US ground troops have been committed over the last century – Haiti, Afghanistan and Iraq are not included in the study – only four resulted in democratic self-government that survived for at least a decade after most American troops had left the country. Of this minority, the cases of Germany and Japan after 1945 seem clear-cut, but there is considerable doubt about the cases of Grenada after 1983 and Panama after 1989.

Scepticism about democracy promotion using fighter planes and tanks and ground troops is further fuelled by the way in which the American talk of the global transition to democracy often involves a sleight of hand, in the form of a devilishly reductionist definition of democracy. The core criterion of Washington-backed democracy presently seems to be whether or not a new constitution has been drawn up and whether elections for governmental office are held or not. This criterion is often harnessed to the preferred 'quick fix' strategy of appointing an interim governing council of indigenous leaders and then trying to build democratic institutions from this core – outward with the appointment of ministers and interim legislators favoured by the interim council and then downward, through the creation of subordinate provincial and local administrations under the interim council that is subject sooner or later to election. Both the shrunken definition of democracy and the preferred 'quick fix' central government-centred strategy of attaining it are heavily flawed, and often don't work in practice.[44] There is besides the objection that elections are held periodically in such countries as Iran, Russia, China and Singapore, but it is to say the least rather doubtful that these polities measure up to textbook definitions of the spirit and institutions of democracy in any sense. And there is yet another reason for being sceptical about American democracy promotion through force of arms: simply put, it is that the chronic failure of democratic transitions backed by military force, plus the terrible shrinkage of the norm of democracy, together arouse the suspicion that the political language of democracy is being used *ideologically* – as a grand narrative that tells us which way is up, which way is down, and how to walk a straight line to an optimal destination. Just as happened in Athens and in post-revolutionary France, the American talk of democracy might well prove to be *maquillage*: a mask for (violent)

power manoeuvres that have little or nothing to do with democracy and much or everything to do with the perceived material interests of the dominant power, such as oil or weapons contracts or market investment opportunities. If that proved to be so on a significant scale, then the outright contradiction between American-backed democratic norms and the anti-democratic realities could lead easily to the 'muddying' or wholesale de-legitimation of democracy's name. It is unclear what the future holds for American democracy promotion, but one possibility should not be ruled out: that at home and abroad, the smell of hypocrisy coming from the house of democracy may well incite (as it is presently doing in various contexts around the world) the active rejection of democracy, even efforts to blow up the house of democracy in places where it has been built, or where difficult efforts are underway to dig its foundations.

These several worries about the problematic relationship between democracy and the American empire bring us to a final consideration – one that flows from the 'empire perspective' that has long been neglected in the study of democracy. Put in a few words: all empires tend to become too big for their boots, to degenerate into hubris. This certainly happened to the Athenian democracy, as it did to the Napoleonic experiment with exporting representative democracy, so prompting an obvious question: is there a possibility that the American empire will weaken or destroy its own or others' ideals and institutions of democracy in an orgy of hubris?

Much can be learned about this problem from J.A. Hobson's classic work, *Imperialism: A Study* (1902). According to Hobson, after 1870, of the 39 separate areas annexed by Great Britain as colonies or protectorates, only the Transvaal was earmarked as a candidate for self-government. The new British imperialism – in contrast to the old (Canada, Australia and New Zealand) - established no single colony with responsible self-government. 'With the exception of a couple of experiments in India,' noted Hobson, 'the tendency everywhere has been towards a closer and more drastic imperial control over the territories that have been annexed…The "occupation" of these new territories was comprised in the presence of a small minority of white men, officials, traders, and industrial organisers, exercising political and economic sway over great hordes of population regarded as inferior and as incapable of exercising any considerable rights of self-government, in politics or

industry'. According to Hobson, the new imperialism was driven by 'selfish interests of certain industrial, financial, and professional classes, seeking private advantages out of a policy of imperial expansion'; these selfish interests were greased by lots of Christian and post-Christian arrogance, by biologist claims about racial superiority and by racist presumptions about 'lower races'. Hence the Archbishop of Canterbury's doctrine of 'imperial Christianity', Lord Rosebery's declaration that the British Empire is 'the greatest secular agency for good known to the world', and Lord Salisbury's conclusion: 'the course of events, which I should prefer to call the acts of Providence, have called this country to exercise an influence over the character and progress of the world such as has never been exercised in any Empire before'.

The details of how and why British imperialism functioned in this way do not much matter in this context because the point that Hobson wanted to emphasise is that the new imperialism generated forces within and on the margins of the British empire that propelled the 'expansion of autocracy'. 'The new Imperialism', he noted with great prescience, 'antagonizes colonial self-government, tends to make imperial federation impracticable [Hobson favoured the vision of a 'voluntary federation of free British States, working peacefully for the common safety and prosperity'], and furnishes a disruptive force in the relations of Great Britain with the self-governing colonies.'

Could it be that the moment of hubris of the American empire is arriving? Has this empire reached the point at which it serves as a disruptive force in world affairs and generally interferes with and endangers democratic processes and institutions? It is hard to say. The current trends should nevertheless worry the head of any thinking person. The trends suggest the possible development of a garrison democracy in which structural changes in the US military and the militarisation of both strategic thinking and the institutions of state and civil society tend to encourage the worshipping of military prowess: an empire in which, when push comes to shove, armed power is reckoned the measure of greatness and war, or preparing for war, is the exemplary common project supported even by a cowed Congress and opposition party that barely deserves the name. President Bush has often defended the necessity of Americans seeing the world in this way - in a news conference on April 13 2004 he emphasised that 'This country must go on the offence and stay on the offence' - and so many Americans have begun to follow him down the same road. Judges have

routinely adjudicated in favour of the administration's treatment of detainees held in the so-called 'war on terror'. The monopoly of the most advanced military weaponry enjoyed by the US seems to be enjoying ever-greater aesthetic respectability. Targeted suspects are 'rendered' (kidnapped and handed over) to third-party governments for interrogation and torture beyond the reach of American law, and the American press. There are secret imports of qualified interrogators (in September 2002 a Chinese 'delegation' visited Guantanamo to 'interrogate' ethnic Uighur detainees). There are now an estimated 70,000 detainees held outside the United States: according to Amnesty's *Guantanamo and Beyond,* the methods that have become routine include simulated drowning, electric shocks to body parts, sexual taunting, suspension from shackles. Even the public language of the American democracy is being squeezed into uniform. Intellectuals like the inimitable Norman Podhoretz declare that America has an international mission and must therefore never 'come home'. Bernard Lewis and others liken the present confrontation with Iran to the appeasement of the Nazis. There is talk of 'pre-emptive war', 'prophylactic war', 'preventive war', 'surgical war' and 'permanent war'; it all amounts to a narcissistic obsession with war and rumours of war – an acceptance of the need for a war that is without end. Quite a lot of journalism has reacted poorly – slowly, sycophantically – and some of it has even encouraged the unthinking atmosphere of permanent war. The scope of acceptable opinion shows signs of shrinking. In some circles, open criticism of the 'commander in chief' amounts to *lèse-majesté*, as injured sovereignty and betrayal of the Nation. Millions of Americans do their trips to and from shopping malls in large and expensive vehicles that look just like those from the First Armored Division. Among democracies, only in America do soldiers and officers in uniform regularly now appear at press conferences, in political rallies, at government functions and in political photo ops and popular movies. The militarization of daily life, the transformation of the home base of American empire into a garrison democracy under the thumb of an imperial 'commander in chief', resembles a flourishing anti-body that feeds upon the cells of American democracy. The presidential inauguration ceremony in January 2005 stands as an apt simile of the trend. It is as if war, as Andrew Bacevich has put it, is America's only comparative advantage in the world.

There are of course dissenters and hints of local dissent (including from the ex-pat lips of Sir Michael Jagger: 'Its liberty for all 'cause democracy's our style/Unless you are

against us/Then it's prison without trial/But one thing that is certain/Life is good at Haliburton/If you really are astute/You should invest in Brown and Root'). Yet so absorbent of public criticism is the American democracy that there are even official attempts to turn this sarcasm into 'realism'. The unashamed voices can be heard: there is a realist case for America being on full alert. 'Terrorism' must be brought under control; and it is said that there is a need to struggle desperately to control the fuel supplies, no matter who or what stands in the way. Politicians explain that the United States consumes 25% of all the oil produced in the world every year, that it has proven reserves that amount to less than 2% of the global total, and that it therefore needs to maintain its supremacy in strategic, energy-rich regions like the Middle East and Central Asia.

Such talk is at odds with the stated commitment of past and present American governments to the global goal of nurturing and defending democracy, understood minimally as the self-government of equals - their freedom from bossing, violence, and injustice. The wide gap between ideals and reality makes it mandatory to raise questions about the meaning and justification of democracy and – a brand new question in the history of democracy – whether it makes sense to call for the democratisation of the American empire.

The first-ever dominant power, itself a power-sharing democracy, is committed to the language of universal democracy. The story it wants to tell is summed up in President Bush's National Endowment for Democracy speech: 'We've witnessed, in little over a generation, the swiftest advance of freedom in the 2,500 year story of democracy. Historians in the future will offer their own explanations for why this happened. Yet we already know some of the reasons they will cite. It is no accident that the rise of so many democracies took place in a time when the world's most influential nation was itself a democracy.' Future historians may (not) agree, but they will no doubt ask: if democracy means at a minimum keeping watch on exercises of power and keeping hubris in check, then who kept watch over the leading democracy, that 'most influential nation' in the world?

The question is vital, for the world of democracy is now faced with a brand new global challenge: to recognise that a democratic empire or dominant power is a

contradiction in terms, and in fact. 'Every young democracy needs the help of friends', said President Bush in an address to the UN General Assembly (23 September 2003). True, but the inverse also holds: lending others a helping hand requires practising the art of letting go. Democracy requires the democratisation of the democratiser and its war-making powers. Democracy cannot be expected to thrive in the world when the dominant power consistently exerts its dominance, behaves arrogantly, or crashes around like a frightened bull in a many-sided, fragile china shop.

In a study of the global settlements of 1815, 1919 and 1945, G. John Ikenberry has helpfully pointed to a striking paradox in the rise of American power during the past two centuries: that when American power holders bridle at the restraints and commitments that international institutions often entail, they should be reminded that these humbling features of institutions are precisely what helped make American power into a durable global force. Careful reconsideration of the delicate relationship between the growth of American power and the growth of democratic institutions suggests – especially after 1989, when for the first time America became *the* dominant power – that its polity now needs to engage in strategic restraint, that it should understand that 'low returns to power' are a vital condition of democracy, that self-limiting power, the democratic power to bind and restrain oneself, in a word, humility, can be a highly effective form of power. Since democracy cannot be built either by force of arms or within one country alone the dominant power that is championing democracy must learn that a repeat version of the Woodrow Wilson strategy of avoiding both direct involvement and active management of a global system of governing institutions – preaching (as Wilson did) for a worldwide democratic revolution and leaving the rest to the ill-fated League of Nations – is in our times bound to fail, and should therefore be rejected. There is no going back to the era when the doctrine of national self-determination flourished. Also to be rejected is the President Bush package of aggressive military power, shadowy bilateral negotiations, a la carte multilateralism, coalitions of the willing – and the scrapping of joined-up government arrangements (a process that began during the first eight months of 2002, when the United States government publicly repudiated the ABM Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court, a convention covering the sale and transfer of small arms, and a protocol to the

Biological Weapons Convention). The Bush package – to repeat Joseph Conrad's reaction to Rudyard Kipling's 'The White Man's Burden', a justification for armed British intervention in South Africa - is enough to make one die laughing. Making much more publicly accountable the existing multi-layered global system of governing and civil society institutions is a vital priority of democratisation everywhere. So too is cutting out or reforming the most destructive dynamics within this global order – for instance, by restructuring the ailing United Nations, breathing life into the new International Criminal Court, declaring a moratorium on the global production and use of nuclear and bio-chemical weapons. Arguably none of this can be done without the co-operation of the United States. Hence a fundamental political question of our time: can the most powerful democracy in the world itself be democratised? Can its citizens and political leaders come to recognize – to repeat the words of Harry Truman in 1945 – that no matter how great its strength the United States must deny itself the license to do always as it pleases?[45] Can the United States be made to see that it has a material interest in behaving itself in relation to its neighbours? Is something like a *global* transition to democracy possible – one that ensures that American war-making power is made less threatening, more restrained, and more accessible to the opinions and sanctions of others?

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[1] Alan Dershowitz, *Preemption. A Knife That Cuts Both Ways* (New York and London 2006), p. 239.
[2] Daniel Ross, *Violent Democracy* (Melbourne 2005), especially the introduction, from which all citations are drawn.
[3] See the new postscript of Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and The Last Man* (New York 2006).
[4] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.37.1 [check]
[5] Pseudo-Xenophon [?], *The Polity of the Athenians* (London and New York, 1892), volume 2, 1.2. The connection between expansionist naval power and democracy puts paid to any simple 'law' that supposes a positive affinity between the sea and democracy. It is commonly observed, for instance, that whereas the Roman state, as a land-based power, later developed forms of imperial government that matched their strong sense of territory and territorial domination, the Athenians as democrats thought primarily in terms of a wide sea that they respected because they knew they could never master it. Simple formulae of this kind – despite their revival during the nineteenth century by MacKinnon and others – are too simple to be believed.
[6] On the general relationship between Athenian democracy and military expansion see the excellent work by David Pritchard, 'War, Popular Culture and Democracy in Classical Athens', in this volume; V.D. Hanson, 'Hoplites into Democrats : The Changing Ideology of the Athenian Infantry', in J. Ober and C. Hedrick (eds.), *Dēmokratia : A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern* (Princeton 1996), pp. 289-312; Kurt a. Raaflaub, 'Democracy, Power, Imperialism', in J. Peter Euben et. al. (eds.), *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy* (Ithaca and London 1994), pp. 103-146; and G. Anderson, *The Athenian Experiment : Building an Imagined Political Community in Ancient Attica, 508-490 B.C.* (Ann Arbor 2003).
[7] Aristophanes, *Akharnians* 540-54.
[8] See the remarks of John M. Camp, *The Athenian Agora. Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens* (London 1986), pp. 46-47.

[9] See the evidence provided in Y. Garlan, 'War and Peace', in J.-P. Vernant (ed.), *The Greeks* (Chicago and London 1995), pp. 53-85; and K.A. Raaflaub, 'Archaic and Classical Greece', in K. Raaflaub and N. Rosenstein (eds.), *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds : Asia, The Mediterranean, Europe, and Mesoamerica* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 1999), pp. 129-162 and 'Father of All, Destroyer of All : War in Late Fifth-Century Athenian Discourse and Ideology', in D.R. McCann and B.S. Strauss (eds.), *War and Democracy : A Comparative Study of the Korean War and the Peloponnesian War* (Armonk and London 2001), pp. 307-356.

[10] Aristotle *The Athenian Citizen* 42.2-3. On the considerable importance of talk of *hybris* in the development of Greek institutions and ideals see the classic study of Louis Gernet, *Recherches sur la développement de la pensée juridique et morale en Grèce* ( ) and N.R.E. Fisher, *Hybris. A Study of the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster 1992).

[11] Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian Wars* 2.31.1-3; 3.16.1; 4.90.1; 17.1-3; 94.1-2; Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1117-21 and *Knights* 443; and K.A. Raaflaub, 'Democracy, Power and Imperialism in Fifth-Century Athens', in J.P. Euben et. al. (eds.), *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy* (Ithaca 1994), pp. 103-146.

[12] G.E.M. de Sainte Croix, 'The Character of the Athenian Empire', *Historia* 3 (1954), pp. 1-41 and *Athenian Democratic Origins and Other Essays*, edited by D. Harvey and R. Parker (Oxford 2004); see also the comments by Russell Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford and New York 1999), chapter 23.

[13] Kurt A. Raaflaub, 'Democracy, Power, Imperialism', in J. Peter Euben et. al. (eds.), *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy* (Ithaca and London 1994), pp. 103-146.

[14] See for example Christopher W. Blackwell, 'The Development of Athenian Democracy', in Christopher Blackwell (ed.), *Dēmos : Classical Athenian Democracy* (www.stoa.org), p. 3.

[15] Homer, *Odyssey*, II 485, 13.275, 15.298; Sappho, *Supplements*, 9.5. See also Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford 1819), p..; and G.W.H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961), p….In contemporary English, the suffix *-crat* is a carrier of these old connotations of force and bossing, as in sarcastic usages of words like 'bureaucrat', 'aristocrat' or 'egocrat'.

[16] Debrunner, *Geschichte der griechischen Sprache.1.Bis zum Ausgang der klassischen Zeit* (1953), p. 13 : '*demokratia* ist aber die Staatsform, in der das Volk die Macht besitzt'. See also K.H. Kinzl, *Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in Ancient History and Prehistory : Studies Presented to Fritz Schachermey* (Berlin 1977/1978), especially pp. 319-320…

[17] *Statesman* 291 D 1-29 A 4.

[18] *Laws* 700c-1b.

[19] See the Old Oligarch, or Pseudo-Xenophon, *The Polity of the Athenians*, 2.19-20. (Until the 1930s, Xenophon had been thought to be the author of this text. Serious doubt about the authenticity of the author has since prompted scholars instead to attribute the authorship to an unknown Pseudo-Xenophon, or The Old Oligarch.) On the connotations of *demokratia* as the rule of a person or group whose power derives from the support – and hence mastery - of the people, see Walter Eder, in Ian Morris and Kurt A. Raaflaub (eds.), *Democracy 2500 – Questions and Challenges* (….) and Walter Eder, 'Aristocrats and the Coming of Athenian Democracy', available at http://www.tu-berlin.de/fb1/AgiW/Hospitium/Eder.htm

[20] The archaeological evidence of these non-Athenian experiments in government by assembly has been available for some time, but typically it has been neglected, partly because it seems at first sight to be so thin and random, which adds to the sense of its unimportance. That conclusion is unwarranted, as suggested by the brief inscriptions on bronze or stone from Dreros, Chios and Locris. See Russell Meiggs and David Lewis (eds.), *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford 1969), texts numbered 2 (a block of grey schist from the temple of Apollo Delphinius at Dreros, dated 650-600 BCE); 8 (a stele of reddish trachyte found in southern Chios, dated 575-550 BCE, and mentioning 'the *demos*'); and 13 (a bronze plaque from Psoriani in Aetolia or the neighbourhood of Naupaktos, dated 525-500 BCE). The first-mentioned inscription, now (lost) in the Dreros Museum and reproduced in L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* [Oxford 1961], plate 59. 1*a*, may be the earliest surviving Greek law on stone. It reads : 'May God be kind (?). The city has thus decided; when a man has been a *kosmos*, the same man shall not be a *kosmos* again for ten years. If he does act as a *kosmos*, whatever judgements he gives, he shall owe double, and he shall lose his rights to office, as long as he lives, and whatever he does as *kosmos* shall be nothing. The swearers shall be the *kosmos* (i.e., the body of the *kosmoi*) and the *damioi* and the twenty of the city.'

[21] Aristotle, *Politics* 1304 b31-34, 1305 b2-10 and 33-39, 1306 a31-b2; Stanley Mayer Burstein, *Outpost of Hellenism : The Emergence of Heraclea on the Black Sea* (Berkeley 1976), pp. 19-20; and

Hans-Joachim Gehrke, *Stasis. Untersuchungen zu den inneren Kriegen in den griechischen Staaten des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Munich 1985), pp. 70-72.

[22] Russell Meiggs and David Lewis (eds.), *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford 1969), text 8; Eric W. Robinson, *The First Democracies* (Stuttgart 1997), pp. 90-101; and Hans-Joachim Gehrke, *Jenseits von Athen und Sparta* (Munich 1986), pp. 121-122. It is possible that the word *rhetras* means 'saying', in which case the textual reference to *demo rhetras* can be translated as 'the words of the people'; see Carl Darling Buck, *Greek Dialects* (Chicago 1955), p. 370 where *rhetras* is said to derive from 'saying' and to have connotations that include 'formal agreement' and 'compact'.

[23] Herodotus, 4.159-162; and K.-J. Hölkeskamp, 'Demonax und die Neuordnung der Bürgerschaft von Kyrene', *Hermes* 121 (1993), pp. 404-421.

[24] Aristotle 1304a 31-3; *ibid*. 1303 a22-4 and 1311 a39-b1; W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle* volume 4 (Oxford 1902), pp. 329-330; and Hans-Joachim Gehrke, *Stasis. Untersuchungen zu den inneren Kriegen in den griechischen Staaten des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Munich 1985), p. 19.

[25] Eric W. Robinson, 'Democracy in Syracuse, 466-412 BC', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 100 (2000), pp. 189-205; and Dunbabin, pp. 410-415, 432-434.

[26] Eduardus Schwyzer, *Dialectorum Graecarum Exemplaepigraphica potiora* (Leipzig 1923), p.412; and Wilhelm Dittenberger and Karl Purgold, *Die Inschriften von Olympia* (Berlin 1896), p. 7.

[27] Aristotle, *Politics* 1318 b6-27; Hans-Joachim Gehrke, *Jenseits von Athen und Sparta* (Munich 1986), p. 110; and Gustave Fougères, *Mantinée et l'Arcadie orientale* (Paris 1898), pp. 331-336, 351, 363, who also provides details of a leading sixth-century citizen from Mantinea, appropriately named Demonax.

[28] Eric W. Robinson, *The First Democracies*, pp. 82-88; the inscriptions (c. 575-550 BCE) recording the names of the *damiorgoi* and using the noun *damosion* ('the state') are found in *Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum* 11.336 and 11.314 and *Inscriptiones Graecae* 4.56.

[29] Hans Schaefer, 'ΠΟΛΙΣ ΜΥΡΙΑΝΔΡΟΣ', *Historia* (1961), pp. 292-317; James Roy, 'Problems of Democracy in the Arcadian Confederacy 370-362 BC', in Roger Brock and Stephen Hodkinson (eds.), *Alternatives to Athens. Varieties of Political Organization and Community in Ancient Greece* (Oxford 2000), pp. 308-326.

[30] The meaning of stasis is discussed in J.C. Octen, *Stasis in the Greek World…from the End of the Peloponnesian War to the Death of Alexander the Great*, unpublished dissertation (Cambridge University, Cambridge, 1967); Kathryn A. Morgan (ed.), *Sovereignty and its Discontents in Ancient Greece* (Austin 2003); and Hans-Joachim Gehrke, *Stasis. Untersuchungen zu den inneren Kriegen in den griechischen Staaten des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Munich 1985), especially part one.

[31] See the seminal contribution of Michael Doyle, 'Kant, liberal legacies and foreign affairs', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12, 3-4 (1983), pp. 205-35, 323-53.

[32] Consider, for instance, the world's first ever caudillo dictatorship: the despotic regime in Argentina fashioned by Juan Manuel de Rosas (1793-1877). The despotism that he and his supporters put in place between the years 1829 and 1852 did not spring from some grand political philosophy. Rosas was not a timeless political genius. He was very much a man of his times - a figure who resembled an explorer pragmatically cutting a new path towards the future using the maps and compasses of the new age of democratic representation. Rosas proved that 'democratic caesarism' was possible – that the tools of periodic elections and voting and talk of 'the people' could be used to recruit them into an army of supporters of a strong caudillo who then rode all over them on horseback, armed with muskets and cannon and swords, all the while continuously appealing to them for their votes.[32] Despotic rule in the name of democracy had of course already been attempted by the Jacobins in France, but what Rosas put in place proved to be much more durable and - in the history of representative democracy - more significant in highlighting the potential for the dangerous mutation of government based on appeals to 'the people'…. into a democratic despotism. The new army formed by Rosas was also mobilised. At the end of the 1830s, prompted by a rebellion in the south of the province sparked by a slump in the export business of the estancias, Rosas used his troops to crush his opponents outright. Thereafter he was referred to as the Restorer of Laws (*Restaurador de las Leyes*) and praised for his many achievements: increasing the lands available for settlement, promoting the export of salted beef and hides, stopping the cycle of civil wars among the provinces, forging a loosely defined confederation of Argentina dominated by Buenos Aires, dealing with foreign debts, launching war (in 1838) and (from 1843) a nine-year blockade on neighbouring Uruguay, protecting the country against foreign enemies, like the French navy, which imposed its own blockade on Buenos Aires in 1840.

[33] Robespierre..

[34] E. Weekley, *Words Ancient and Modern*, p. 34. A similar interpretation is defended by Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth 1976), p. 14.
[35] Chevalier de Jaucourt, *Encyclopédie;* cf. the remark of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (in the *Contrat social*..) : 'If there were a nation of gods, it would govern itself democratically.'
[36] François Furet, *Marx et la Révolution française*, (Paris 1986), p. 86
[37] The following section draws upon Suzanne Tassier, *Histoire de la Belgique sous l'occupation française en 1792 et 1793* (Brussels 1934); Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators : Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813* (New York 1977); Alfred Rufer, *La Suisse et la Révolution française* (Paris 1974); T.C.W. Blanning, *The French Revolution in Germany : Occupation and Resistance in the Rhineland, 1792-1802* (Oxford 1983); Stuart Woolf, *A History of Italy, 1700-1860 : The Social Constraints of Political Change* (London 1979); and *Occupants-occupés, 1792-1815 : Colloque de Bruxelles, 29 et 30 Janvier 1968* (Brussels 1968); and Jacques Droz, *L'Allemagne et la Révolution française* (Paris 1949).
[38] An excellent short survey of the history of weaponry is to be found in Alfred W. Crosby, *Throwing Fire : Projectile Technology Through History* (Cambridge and New York 2002).
[39] Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays* (London 1987), p. 1030.
[40] See my *Violence and Democracy* (Cambridge and New York 2004), p. 182.
[41] 'We shall win this war', wrote the distinguished journalist and future leader of the Labour Party, Michael Foot, as the British faced the grim prospect of fascist occupation, 'because we are still a democracy, because the eye of criticism is still kept imperious over those who might slink into slothful, unoriginal methods' (quoted in the interview with Michael Foot, 'Old Labour', *The Independent on Sunday*, London, 20 July 2003, p. 10 [the original dates from 1940]).
[42] Thomas Carothers, 'The Backlash Against Democracy Promotion', *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2006).
[43] Wolfgang Merkel, 'Demokratie durch Krieg?. Intervention kann legitim sein – unter bestimmten Umständen', *WZB-Mitteilungen* 111 (March 2006), pp. 8-11.
[44] See Donald Rothchild and Philip G. Roeder, 'Dilemmas of State-Building in Divided Societies', in *Sustainable Peace. Power and Democracy after Civil Wars* (Ithaca and London, 2005), pp. 1-25.
[45] *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States : Harry S. Truman, 1945* (US Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 141.