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What Have We Learned From The Wars of the Twentieth Century?

Winston Langley

Relative deprivation (RD) and its associated twin, the "othering" of human groupings, together became the root cause of the wars of the twentieth century. By examining the thirty-years of war between 1914 and 1945 and the Cold War that prevailed for the rest of the half-century, the author explores the way in which relative deprivation may be seen to have expressed itself through nationalism, liberalism, and Marxism — the three great ideologies of the twentieth century that have competed against each other and have contributed to the perception of groups and individuals that they are relatively deprived. He investigates the institutions of the UN that attempt to move human beings away from RD. The human rights regime, inaugurated in 1948, rejects the exclusivity of nationalism, the inequality of liberal capitalism, and the class preference of Marxism. It holds promise for a lessening of the conditions that marginalize people and cause war.

With the dawn of a new millennium, few areas of human enquiry and reflection can rival, in moral and social importance, the lessons we have learned from the social scourge we call war. Many of my colleagues, in this issue of the journal, have admirably focused on a number of themes, some of which have been dealt with elsewhere over the years but are newly illuminated here. My focus, too, has a central theme (with sub-themes) that has been examined before, but that theme has frequently been largely confined in its application to intra-national conflicts and has even more often been burdened with a limiting definition.

The theme or concept is that of relative deprivation, soon to be defined and discussed. My thesis is that the wars of the twentieth century, both the civil and the international kind, have been caused by relative deprivation and its associated twin, the "othering" of human groupings. We will seek to advance proof for this claim by defining relative deprivation and the context within which that definition is being used; by examining the relationship between the concept and the idea of "extinction" — an idea that has not generally been explored; by discussing what we mean by "othering"; and by reviewing a few wars that the writer thinks have defined the twentieth century. Following all these discussions, we will touch on another lesson that, though not brought to us by the wars we will have discussed, has been partly informed by them in shaping the prominent place that lesson has begun to occupy in our lives.

Relative deprivation I understand to mean the actual or presumed existence of a discrepancy between one's "life conditions," including the goods and other values

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that define one, and the value expectations one has, including that to which one feels entitled, by virtue of one's self-assessed or other-ascribed capabilities. In other words, there is a felt contradiction or incongruity between what one believes one is entitled to and what one actually has.[1] Two elements, the first expressed, the other implied, must be immediately dealt with, if we are to progress in an orderly manner with our definition.

The term "one," as used above, refers to all self-conscious human groupings — ethnic, national, racial, social, and religious, among others. But in our discussions, we will be emphasizing the nation-state, giving due weight to its ethnic, religious, racial, social, and other components. The implied element encompasses the phenomenon of change — a sociological phenomenon not frequently discussed in this context. Were it not for this notion of change (and to an extent the idea of "progress" that modernism has associated with it), the meaning and significance of relative deprivation might not have become so clear in its operation.

Change, among other things, means that one's position and condition in life need not last forever; that one's status, cause, or direction can be altered; and that such alteration might even include a radical transformation of or substitution for that which pre-existed. Since a change in status, direction, or cause can affect the self that interacts with the change, it means that even the self (or one's sense of self) might be transformed. In some societies (be they familial, tribal, national, or international), changes take place with a minimum of politically organized violence; in other societies, violence is pervasive. For us here the focus is primarily on international society.

Any discussion of international society, however, must properly begin with the ideological outlook (nationalism) out of which the nation-state has arisen. That ideology, perhaps the most powerful humans have ever experienced, originated in the West and has expanded throughout the world. In its description of and justification for the nation-state, it has claimed that humanity is *naturally* divided into psychocultural entities called nations; that people constituting a nation should enjoy the right to national self-determination; that this right is best expressed through the attainment of sovereign status (becoming a nation-state); and that the nation-state, in inter-state relations, is the ideal, when compared to other models of the state such as the city-state and the empire-state. The latter claim is usually made in light of the "fact" that the nation is said to offer security not only in the military sense but also in the social and psychological sense that people gain a sense of wider belonging among people who, by reason of their shared character and affiliation, will help if one needs help.[2] Also, by virtue of its sovereign status as a nation-state, its members — whether called nationals or citizens — collectively gain equality with all like peoples or nations; and members, the ideology holds, owe their highest loyalty to their respective nations.

While the existence of the nation helps its people, who had traditionally had their identities based on clans, towns, or cities, to gain a sense of new identity as well as wider belonging, that existence has also carried on a tradition of claimed distinctiveness (by virtue of certain actual or supposed shared markers) between and among people constituting "different" human groupings. In doing so, the nation as well as the *idea* of the nation came to be associated with very important expressions of exclusiveness. But what do we mean by the term nation and how does this meaning bear on relative deprivation?

I understand nation to be a group of people with an actual or attributed common past, and, based on that common past, they aspire to have a common future together.

This common past is generally linked to certain shared markers (often with accompanying symbols) that help to define the group and, concomitantly, differentiate it from other groups. These markers include race and ethnicity (two areas further differentiated into physical characteristics such as skin color, bone structure, height, and build, among others), religion, language, traditions, and history. This history, which may be based on common suffering or triumphs, might, for instance, be further encoded in institutions such as a basic law, constitution, or ritual celebrations, above and beyond the more general or collective memory it might shape. And this memory, in turn, produces a psychological capacity in each member of the group to participate in the ideas, fears, hopes, or general feeling of other members. We call this capacity "empathy."

Nationalism and the idea of nation (following as it did the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 that ended a century of religious wars by setting the principle that each ruler determined the religion of his region and subjects). This concept of sovereignity developed and gained widespread support alongside the growth and expansion of multi-national and empire-states, during the eighteenth century. But the socio-political and psychological dynamics, which both the idea and reality of the nation threw into the system of inter-state relations, did not become fully evident until the nineteenth century, and did not gain full, affirming international recognition until the beginning of the twentieth century.[3] Among the dynamics has been the view that the "best" state is one whose physical borders are co-extensive with the cultural and psychological group we call the nation — a view that clashed with multi-national states, whose borders extend over at least two nations. It also clashed with the notion of the empire-state, which has always operated on the principle of the political domination of several nations by a state, while the *idea* of the nation speaks of a largely voluntary association or community. Third, the principle of national self-determination threatened both the multi-national state and the empire-state, because, apart from introducing ideas of the equality of citizens/nationals, of loyalty, and of cultural differences, neither of these other two types of states could be certain what the granting of sovereign independence to a national group within its border would mean. Would doing so, for example, invite clamors for independence from other like groups? And would the granting of such independence reduce its power in relationship to other states?

All of what has just been said should be understood in the context of the international system itself, and the manner in which nationalism, in practice — as distinct from its theoretical definition — operates. It should also be understood in the context of the fact that few countries, despite the power of nationalism, are actually nation-states. Let us review them, in reverse order.

Because nationalism became such a powerful idea — even an ideal — most states sought to designate themselves as nations or as nation-states; and, in doing so, sought to elevate what is called the "national interest" to the level of the highest moral good to which anyone — leader or led — could aspire. This patriotism (love of one's nation and its supposed interest) came to be equated with collective support of that interest and individual or "sub-national" subordination to that interest. Far from having their physical borders correspond to a single cultural grouping, most sovereign countries have been either multi-national states or empire-states, with certain ethnic or social collectivities dominating the rest of citizens within the borders of the country.

Nationalism, as practiced, reflected the intra-state ethnic, racial, social, religious, linguistic, and other cultural dynamics just mentioned in relationship to the

empire-state and the multi-national state, as well as to the nature of the "international system itself.[4] In the case of that system, it has no central authority, so each state is left to ensure its security and socio-economic well-being. And since the interest of a state is said, under nationalism, to be protectable only if that state has power (not the good will of other states, including allies) to offer such protection, the international system is not only anarchic but competitive, with each state competing to marshal most of the sources of power.

Among the resources of power — apart from money, status, industrial might, and the capacity to engage in exchange, especially trade — is national unity. So states have not only emphasized unity and treated internal criticism as evidence of disloyalty, but each (without exception) has bought internal unity by emphasizing not so much its claimed common experience, but the supposed extent to which that experience and its preached distinctiveness made the state and its people different from others. In other words, unity and identity were purchased at the price of depicting other people as "*unlike*" and as untrustworthy. One can only trust one's own. Further, while states, for purposes of international relations, have preached national unity, internally, they have had differences based on social classes, race, and ethnicity, and even nationality, in the case of multi-national states. And while these differences invited — and often resulted in — the prohibited interference in the internal affairs of countries (usually for the sought advantage of the interfering party or parties), the privileged social elites within the borders of states would often employ the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, the supposed differences between people inside and people outside the state's borders, and the need for national unity to justify the preservation of their own privileged positions (and, by extension, the unfavorable positions of others). In short, the internal socio-political system of states has generally cleaved along national borders. And this brings us back to relative deprivation (RD).

We had earlier said that RD has an ascribed twin, called "othering" — the act or practice by which an individual or social entity employs some actual or imputed difference to deny attributes or characteristics generally shared by human beings, in order to suggest that one person or group of persons is wholly unlike, is other than oneself, is of another kind, is in fact "another." This "another" is seen to be at odds, inharmonious, discrepant, incompatible, and not the same. Nationalism, in its attempt to construct the identity of nationhood and ensure the successful mobilization of power, has consistently engaged in the practice of "othering." So, too, have social elites within and between countries, as they have sought to maintain their positions of privilege.

A fuller appreciation of how the concept of RD can help to illuminate what we have learned from the wars of the past century requires that we also bring into our discussion the two other dominant ideologies of the time: liberalism and Marxism. The former, which dominated the West during the time in question and which, through the influence of the West, had gained important foothold elsewhere in the world, was then (as it is now) closely associated with capitalism. Indeed, liberalism generally accepted the idea of the nation-state, and espoused a number of positions about the "true" nature of such a state. Included in those positions has been the claim that liberty is and should be the most important social value. Further, it has contended that the circumstances of social life are not the offsprings of mysticism or miracle but the results of causes that are explainable; and that those causes (laws) are capable of being understood by individual human beings. It promised that human beings would find that their possibilities are virtually unlimited, if liberty were re-

spected and the free expression of one's rational faculties were allowed and encouraged. The state under liberalism (the liberal state) should therefore guarantee liberty and the free exercise of people's rational faculties, with a minimum of interference in the lives of citizens.

In espousing the above positions, liberalism became the "perfect host" for capitalism, which preached that economic activities (production and distribution of goods and services) should be organized by the market. That is, the elements of production such as goods, services, land, labor, and money should be made available for exchange (sale) on the market and be permitted to find their own price, without any government intervention. Liberalism therefore came to espouse something called the self-regulating or the free market — one that allows economic activities to operate, with the exception of having the state guarantee legal protection of private property and private contract, free of any government intervention.

Marxism, which furnishes a critical appraisal of capitalism, does not accept either the state of the nationalist or that of the liberal as legitimate, because — contrary to the claims of their respective advocates — neither acts in the interest of the broad masses of people. Why? Because societies, and the states that serve them, are expressions of history, which is dialectical in nature — that is, history is not only defined by change and is conflict-laden, but is inherently conflictual, disclosing its meaning only to those who understand its essential movement and grasp its defining contradictions. Further, Marxism claims that the conflicts throughout history are based on the material circumstances of people — principally in the mode of production and exchange of goods and services. It is the sum total of relations that people enter into, in order to effect the production and exchange just mentioned, that determines the social and political structure of societies.

Marxism claims that people find themselves, throughout history, in varying relations to the mode of production, giving rise to social and intellectual differentiation. That differentiation manifests itself most significantly in the form of social classes, with the dominant class in every historical era gaining its status from its control of the means of production (land, money, skills, technology, plants, and the like) and using that status to originate, develop, and mold the socio-political institutions and belief systems to promote and secure its interests. Within liberal-capitalist societies, Marxists saw the dominant economic class amassing more and more wealth, while the laboring classes became not only poorer and poorer, but increasingly subject to destitution and social abandonment. In exchange for such class-governed domination — and its associated "social and moral othering" — Marxism promised the poor, the lowly, and industrial workers, in particular, relative material equality, social solidarity (within the context of communal sharing), and freedom from social abandonment.

Nationalism, liberalism, and Marxism — the three great ideologies of the twentieth century — competed against each other and, to a large degree, formed part of the context for our understanding of the relative deprivation of the time. All three may be said to have contributed, in profound ways, to the perception on the part of individuals and groups that they were being relatively deprived. As such, the ideologies themselves might be said to have contributed to the wars we are attempting to analyze and explain. For example, those nations that lived under the political domination within multi-national states or empire-states felt relatively deprived, in face of the discrepancy between their condition and the right to liberty and national self-determination, which, respectively, liberalism and nationalism espoused. The right of workers to the wealth they are said by Marxism to have created certainly invited a

sense of being relatively deprived. And the presence of RD in both instances is linked to "othering." But how does the perception of RD lead to actual warfare? After all, every society has had certain mechanisms to help deal with social dissatisfaction on the part of groups within its borders.

The answer to the question lies in the "fear of extinction" — a fear on the part of individuals and groups that they will cease to be. That is, a fear that the "self," which is linked to the positions or status they hold, will be extinguished, if the positions or status were to be radically altered or were to cease to be. And the fear of "ceasing to be" is linked to the type of change that would have to take place, if RD were to be corrected or remedied. This idea of extinction can be refined and better grasped if we include in our discussion certain variables: economic participation, political access (power), and cultural identity.[5]

Economic participation I understand to mean the degree to which a group shares in the economic activities of a society and finds, from that degree of participation, returns that are comparatively satisfactory. Political access refers to the extent that groups are seen to be represented in the institutions that make decisions concerning the norms and processes by which society is governed and values allocated. Finally, cultural identity refers to those areas of human collective being and behavior that emphasize a group's sense of self, of belonging, and of a future together as a group.

In relative deprivation, all three variables might be present in a given context, although one or two may be dominant. Changes may be seen as possible, in the case of one variable, because they do not threaten feared extinction, but not in another variable, because fear of extinction might be present. Very important, also, in the fear of extinction, is a sort of zero-sum psychological dynamic in which one party's gain is seen as an absolute loss for the other party. Let us try to apply the concept.

Two wars should be helpful in defining the twentieth century, in the sense that they had exercised a controlling influence over that century. They are what I term the latterday Thirty-Years War of 1914 to 1945, and the Cold War, from 1945 to 1985. In the case of the former, which many varyingly see as having been caused or continued by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the tense military alliances that existed in 1914, the severe economic sanctions imposed on post-war Germany, and the political rise of Adolph Hitler. But one should ask: why the assassination, the alliances, the severity, and the rise? The answer lies in RD.

The beginning of the twentieth century found Britain occupying a dominant political position in the world, by virtue of its navy, its financial power (London was the financial capital of the world and the pound was the key currency for international transactions), its industrial output, and its empire. Britain was not only conscious of its position, but felt that it had achieved said position by reason of the claimed superiority of its political and social culture. According to one of its most eminent historians, the late Arnold Toynbee, by the beginning of the twentieth century, Britain felt it wombed within its culture the consummation of human evolution and possibilities. It had led humankind to the end of history. Others should emulate Britain.[6]

Lending plausibility to the self-proclaimed end of history was the fact that this small island state had succeeded in building and controlling the largest empire in the history of the world — one on which, as the British then boasted, "The sun never sets." This empire, from which immense wealth was derived, served in significant measure as an outlet for the huge amounts of capital that had accumulated in Britain in the form of profits from industrial enterprises. And because by then Britain pro-

duced but 30 percent of the food it consumed and even a smaller portion of its industrial raw materials, London became dependent on its Asian, Pacific, African, and (to an extent) Caribbean possessions to supply it with foodstuffs and industrial raw materials. In short, the status and identity that Britain had at the beginning of the twentieth century were linked to its empire.

That empire (along with the status and the identity it offered) — the governing class in Britain understood — could be preserved only if London had unchallenged naval power and could preserve its string of strategically located outposts that supported unobstructed communication with all areas of the empire. Hence one finds the same anxiety to secure Gibraltar, Cyprus, and the Suez Canal in the Mediterranean; Aden (now Yemen) and Somalia on the opposite shore of the Red Sea; and Kenya, India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong — all securing London's Asian, Pacific, and East African possessions. Britain used its navy and its economic and industrial power to prevent Russia (that felt relatively deprived of warm-water ports) and the Ottoman Empire from challenging its position. The Anglo-Russian tensions and wars, during the nineteenth century, all had to do with preventing Russia from gaining foothold ports in the Mediterranean, in the Persian Gulf, or in the Indian Ocean (through Persia or Afghanistan).

By 1912, Germany, as a result of its economic dynamism, had caught up with and had surpassed Britain as "the most productive economic power in Europe." But the future of its dynamism was threatened by the absence of markets outside of Europe, to which Berlin could, like Britain, sell some of its industrial products, invest some of its capital, and secure foodstuffs and industrial raw materials. "The markets of the world were being penetrated, dominated, and increasingly monopolized by three great powers": the United States in Latin America; Britain in East and South Africa, South Asia, and the Pacific; and France in West Africa, the Balkans, and Russia.[7] In view of its own self-assessed capabilities, Germany perceived that it was relatively deprived and felt that it, too, should have a "place in the sun." It wanted an overseas empire that would enable it to enjoy a status comparable to the country whose industrial standing it had outdistanced. As early as 1906, it had sought to gain primacy in Morocco and that course of conduct had brought it into conflict with France. Britain, fearing the rising power of a relatively deprived Germany, had thrown its support to France, and Germany had to back down. But now Germany wanted a navy that would enable it to support an empire, to engage in greater international economic participation, and, in so engaging, to gain access to greater political power. Britain saw any such economic and political gain by Germany as threatening its status as the world leader, and Britain formed alignments with France and Russia to thwart Germany's ambitions.

Austro-Hungary also should be brought into this part of our discussion. It sought, with the support of Germany, to fill "the void in the Balkans" caused by the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from the area during the latter part of the nineteenth century. In doing so, however, it found the same type of relative deprivation among the formerly subject peoples that the Ottoman Empire had faced. These peoples of the Balkans — the Serbs, for example — wanted to enjoy the right to national self-determination. But political leaders in Vienna were fearful that their multi-national state and empire would crumble (following what they envisioned as one nation after another demanding independence), and become but a "worm-eaten museum piece," if Serbia were allowed independence.[8] Following the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, the emperor and his officials imposed terms of settlement on the "othered" Serbs that they knew the Serbs could not accept. And those harsh

terms, in part, led to World War I because of the complex system of diplomatic military alliances. In short, the fear of extinction on the part of the governing class in Vienna induced the attempted quashing of Serbia's search for political access (independence, which would confer on it all the rights of a state).

France, of course, had a major role in the coming of the war. After it had lost the 1871 war to Germany (and its, until then, dominant place in continental Europe), it sought psychological compensation abroad, by expanding its empire and by seeking economic ties with the people of the Balkans and with Russia. It, too, felt that its standing was being challenged by Germany when it sought greater economic participation outside of Europe. So Paris used its influence in the Balkans and in Russia, with the collaboration of Britain, to frustrate Germany's ambitions. But in doing so, France invited a fear, on the part of Germany, that it was being "encircled" (France and Britain in the west, Russia in the east, and the Balkans in the southeast). That fear — a fear of having its status as the most powerful country in continental Europe extinguished — induced Germany's military leaders to develop a strategy for a two-front war, a strategy that required an undelayed, pre-emptive execution of specific military orders, once specified contingencies arose. Coupled with all these expressions of RD was the othering of the opponent.

In the case of World War II, the second phase of the thirty-years war, RD continued. Italy, for example, felt that it had been denied access to certain deliberations of the Paris Peace Conference (PPC) and economic participation and control of certain areas of the Adriatic, while Britain and France had enriched themselves with the fruits of victory. So Italy sought to (and it later did under the leadership of Benito Mussolini) revise the international order during the 1920s and 1930s. Russia, too, felt relatively deprived, having lost more people and territory (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania, among other areas) than even the defeated Germany. And Japan, which could not even secure a statement on racial equality at the conference, left embittered. For Germany, claims about national self-determination and equality of nations made it feel even more RD, when it noted that it alone had been deemed guilty of causing the war; that Britain and France had given up none of their colonies; that it was again being "encircled" by French diplomacy in Eastern Europe (Paris was afraid that it would again lose its status as Europe's strongest continental power, if Germany were to regain its power); and it saw that Britain had retained its "empire first" strategy — that of controlling the sea communication between the British Isles and the British empire, maintaining its status/identity, and, thus, retaining the capability to frustrate Germany's search for a change in its own socio-economic conditions and its identity. Germany also saw the harsh terms visited on it as an effort to ensure its long-term inferior status in Europe, a fact that led to the social and economic crises that sponsored the rise of Hitler.

It was that Italy, Japan, Russia (to an extent France), and certainly Germany felt that RD induced them to act in a manner calculated to change the established international order and, in doing so, defied those who benefited from and sought to preserve it. That deprivation, linked to a sense of a self that was denied esteem and denied "being like," largely induced Germany and Russia to enter into secret military deals and impelled Japan to act "like the Europeans" to secure greater economic participation and, thereby, gain access to political equality.[9] It was RD also that brought the "othering" of potential enemies or victims (inhuman, sub-human, less human, animals, brutes, superhuman) to unprecedented public exchange and justified a brutalization of humans in Europe and the Pacific that even today is hard to comprehend.[10] World War II was particularly brutal, because loyalty to nation and

race were combined, transmuting individual selfishness into national/racial egoism — a form of supposed and taught altruism. And when that felt altruism, faced with the need for staving off feared extinction by "animals" was allowed the freedom and power to act, it invited actions that are without moral restraints. The Cold War also gives us some insights into RD.

I understand the Cold War to mean the intense diplomatic and military confrontation that took place between the West, led by the United States, and the East, led by the former Soviet Union, from 1945 to 1985 — a confrontation that, though not having resulted in actual warfare between the leaders, had never ceased to threaten one. This war, however, properly seen and contextualized, is perhaps the greatest historical expression of RD, because it involved the world at large.

To understand it fully, we must disregard the use of the terms "West" and "East" in the preceding definition and substitute in their stead liberal-capitalism and Marxist-Leninist communism. The former dominated the West and western-influenced societies elsewhere in the world, espoused a market economy that was defined by private property, economic inequality, and even social abandonment, if the market required it. Further, liberal-capitalism spoke for political equality and personal freedom, within the context of social order. Marxist-Leninist communism, on the other hand, contended that private property is a form of theft, in that all wealth is something that is socially produced; that the disparities in the ownership and distribution of wealth — which is produced by workers — is the result of the expropriation of workers, the socially deprived; and that since economic resources are those that determine social and political equality, there can be no political equality if there is economic inequality. Further, while liberal-capitalists preached social harmony (social order), the Marxist-Leninist argued that societies are products of historical change, and that history itself is inherently conflictual. In short, Marxist-Leninist communism sought to identify socio-economic contradictions, sharpen people's consciousness of them, and use the sense of RD to urge a systematic overthrow (extinction) of those who controlled the liberal-capitalist societies. If workers were to gain the increased economic participation that Marxists espoused (plus the associated political access that economic equality would bring), were unburdened by the fear of social abandonment, and were allowed a change of identity (from that of nationals/citizens of states that would disintegrate to that of comrades who were not loyal to or even recognized national borders), then there would indeed be an extinction of the capitalist class. It was this fear of extinction that induced the worldwide focus on the "rolling back" or the "containment" of communism; it was also the use of relative deprivation felt by many groups (women, racial and ethnic minorities, religious believing, and colonized people, among others) that gave Marxist-Leninist prospects for the future a fearsome countenance and sent shock waves into the minds of the socially privileged. On the other hand, liberal-capitalism, especially its Anglo-American model, regrouped itself, offered some limited expressions of improvement in people's social conditions, contended that its modes of social order had more to offer humans, and exposed a relative deprivation found in Marxist-Leninist communism: that of political access and personal freedom. So the variables of economic participation, political access, and cultural identity confronted each other throughout the world, including Vietnam.

The war that ravished that country and caused so much social and psychological dislocation in the United States and elsewhere could have been avoided, but for the fear of the extinction of British standing in India and, more generally, British standing in the world. In the words of President Roosevelt, who was troubled by the fact

that France had had control of Vietnam "for nearly one hundred years, and the people were worse off than they were at the beginning":

> I have been terribly worried about Indochina. . . . I suggested . . . to Chiang, that Indochina be set up under a trusteeship — have a Frenchman, one or two Indochinese, and a Chinese and a Russian, because they were on their coast, and maybe a Filipino and an American, to educate them for self-government. . . . Stalin liked the idea, China liked the idea. The British didn't like it. It might bust up their empire, because if the Indochinese were to work together and eventually get their independence, the Burmese might do the same thing.[11]

In other words, the Vietnamese, whom, in the words of President Roosevelt, France had "milked . . . for one hundred years"[12] and who on the basis of relative deprivation were seeking greater economic participation and political access through their clamors for national self-determination, should be denied what they sought. If they were to succeed, they would be a bad example for Burma and other areas of the British Empire in Asia. Such areas might demand the same and extinguish the British position in the world. What happened to Vietnam was repeated again and again in other areas of the Global South. And that denial has been a source of unending conflicts.

What is said above in respect of international relations is, in fact, true of intrastate relations. One has but to look at Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka to discover the truth of the assertion. In the case of the Sri Lanka, the substitution of direct elections for communal rule — which had given the Tamils a guaranteed level of political representation — and of Sinhala (official language) for a number of languages, including English (which had formerly given those who mastered it special privileges to university education, government service, and private sector profession) — altered the socio-political and cultural life of the country. The Tamils who, though a numerical minority, had used their proficiency in English and their guaranteed political access to ensure their economic and social ascendancy and the relative deprivation of the Sinhalese, now found themselves in reversed circumstances, in the face of a change in language emphasis (allowing greater economic participation to the majority) and emphasis on direct election (which gave equal political access to all). Their former status and identity were threatened with extinction, so they sought to fight; and the formerly RD Sinhalese, who now stand to benefit, are also fighting to defend their potential gain. In the case of Northern Ireland, despite some increased economic benefits to the Catholic community there, the Protestant majority is afraid to concede political access to Catholics, because they (the Protestants) fear extinction of their political and social status.[13] This is why the 1998 Good Friday Agreement in power sharing has been suspended and is currently being reviewed.

The "othering" of people — which has fueled RD through the use of religious, ethnic, social, socio-economic, and national cleavages to define the conflicts we earlier mentioned — has also been successfully pursued throughout human history by the use of race. During the second half of the twentieth-century Thirty Years War, the "othering" use to which race was put — drawing on a long history of socialization — produced human slaughter of a scale hitherto unknown. After the War, the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and its Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were created, in recognition of the degree to

which RD and "othering" had led to that War, and in acknowledgement of the need to provide a new international system that would radically move human beings away from RD.

In the case of ECOSOC, its creation expressed the feeling that the UN would have to help remove the social and economic privations that many people felt, if wars were going to be contained. ECOSOC was to help in that containment by promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development. With respect to UNESCO — the objective of which was to remove the cultural stereotypes (false markers) that people held about others and to help to create global moral solidarity — its functions were seen as critical to the evolution of a peaceful world. No area of sought change or reform, however, was as far-reaching in its ambition to deal with the causes of war (RD) than that of human rights.

Designed to eliminate othering, develop empathy, afford economic and political access, and create a common moral and human identity, the human rights regime that was inaugurated in 1948 accepts that each human being is a member of a single *human* family; recognizes the "inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members"; and contends that both that acceptance and recognition are "the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." The first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclaims, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." And this very article goes on to require that we "should act towards one another in the spirit of [sisterhood] brotherhood."

The human rights regime therefore rejects the exclusivity of nationalism, the socio-economic inequality of liberal capitalism, and the class preference of Marxism. Most important, it seeks to eliminate the claimed distinctiveness, which serve as the markers that breed RD. Indeed, while recognizing and celebrating human cultural and other differences, it makes the centrality of one's humanity the cornerstone of the social and political order. For instance, it recognizes one's right to work, to a fair trial, to social security, to freedom of thought and conscience and religion, to medical care, to assemble, to food, to freedom of speech, to education, to housing, to freedom of movement, to participation in the cultural life of the community, and to freedom from torture and degrading treatment. Further, one is entitled to a social and international order — a life-sustaining environment and peace — within which the rights recognized can be fully realized. And the UDHR goes on to state that *everyone* is entitled to *all* the rights and freedoms provided *"without distinction* [my emphasis] of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political and other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." In other words, the old markers that thwarted political access, undermined fair economic allocations, and threatened cultural identity, are potentially removed. And *human* security and identity, not national, social, racial, or other ones, were to preside in the world.

The possibility that the twentieth century provided for the elimination of RD, through the human rights regime, brought with it the dangers of war, also. First, because the recognition of those rights inspired new and emboldened demands for social equality and political access. Second, those demands threatened to extinguish the remaining privileges and identities that social groups and states claimed. And third, because the movement the regime elicited (the human rights movement) became so powerful that it created new divisions (the global North-South axis, for instance), invited fears that concessions on issues such as the creation of a "new international economic order" or the establishment of an International Criminal

Court would only excite new demands, and weakened the very institution (the UN) through which peaceful resolution of differences was envisioned. The end of the Cold War, which had exposed certain hidden forms of RD, far from creating a "peace dividend," increased the sense of RD among groups and invited new or aggravated old anxieties throughout the world. As I write this article, a more sharpened cleavage in the international system seems to be emerging, as Arabs and Muslims are being othered, and the United States, with the help of its allies, seeks to maintain its threatened, "sole superpower" status. Like Britain facing similar challenges during the nineteenth century, the United States feels that its status and identity as a superpower would be diminished, demeaned, and undermined, if it were not to "fight and teach the enemy" a lesson.

What all the wars of the twentieth century have taught us is that only the margin- alization of the conditions that marginalize people — and breed RD — will enable us to find peace. The human rights regime has been an attempt to put that lesson into practice, but those who fear extinction and the impatience of those who seek change have prevented that practice from coming into being. Until we institute that practice, there will be no peace in the world, and military engagement, no matter how apparently promising, will only undermine prospects for peace. z

Notes

1. The writer is aware of the pioneering work of Robert T. Curr in this field, but he has some differences with Gurr's definition and application of the concept. See Gurr's "A Causal Model of Civil Strife: A Comparative Analysis Using New Indices," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 62 (December,1968), 1104-1124. See, also, Rovert T. Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).
2. See Hermann Wellenmann, "Nation-Building and Personality Structure," in Karl Deutch and William Foltz, eds., *Nation-Building* (New York: Atherton Press, 1966), 33-35.
3. This recognition came about because both Woodrow Wilson of the United States and V. I. Lenin of the former Soviet Union supported the idea of nation. Wilson, in his Fourteen Points, gave particularly strong diplomatic and legal support to the idea.
4. One should note the use of the term *international,* not *interstate*, system. Nation is the ideal.
5. The idea of extinction and the three variables, joined together, were brought to my attention by Landon E. Hancock, in his "The Pattern of Ethnic Conflict" (A Paper Presented at the Conflict Studies Conference, Sponsored by the Graduate Programs in Dispute Resolution and held at the University of Massachusetts Boston, October 23-24, 1998).
6. Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 16-19.
7. See William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth Century World* (NewYork: Oxford University Press, 1996), 46.
8. John G. Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go To War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 6-7.
9. See John Dower, *War Without Mercy* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1948).
10. Along with Dower, see Sven Lindqvist, *"Exterminate the Brutes"* (New York: The New Press, 1996).
11. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Bitter Heritage: Vietnam and American Democracy, 1941-1966* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966), 23.
12. Ibid., 22.
13. See Raymond C. Taras and Rajat Ganguly, *Understanding Ethnic Conflict* (New York: Longman, 1998).