

Genocide and Fascism

The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Europe

Aristotle Kallis

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Genocide and Fascism is much more than the conceptually sophisticated and genuinely scholarly book that Daniel Goldhagen should have written on the relationship between ordinary Germans and the Holocaust in the Third Reich. It is simultaneously a major contribution to the comparative study of nationalism, racism, fascism, political religion, biopolitics, eugenics, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, and illuminates the dynamics of all 'eliminationist' campaigns waged by modern totalitarian movements and regimes against perceived enemies on the grounds of ethnicity, biology, culture, or ideology. Kallis not only puts the uniqueness of Nazi crimes against humanity in a wider context which vaporizes many long-cherished myths. He takes the reader to the beating heart of missions to purge humanity of demonized Others, whether by fanatical 'terrorists' or 'liberal' states which still play a major role in shaping contemporary history.

—Roger Griffin, Oxford Brookes University,
Author of *Modernism and Fascism*

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Didier Musiedlak, and Antonio Costa Pinto—all participants in an international workshop on fascist studies held at Lisbon in October 2007.

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Writing these lines of acknowledgement whilst glancing at the full manuscript comes with a huge sense of relief and reward. But this is also the exhilarating and daunting moment of crossing the line that separates private reflection from exposure, transforming ideas and arguments into a form of ‘action’, open to discussion, scrutiny, and criticism. I would therefore wish

*“This is the . . . most favorable opportunity in our history . . .
for cleansing our people of all elements foreign to its soul.
Therefore, without any formalities, complete freedom.
I take full legal responsibility, and tell you, there is no law.”*

*Mihai Antonescu, July 1941
(quoted from Ancel 2005: 252)*

Acknowledgements

I have never concealed my fascination with the ‘big(ger) picture’. Working for years separately on fascism and genocide, I became intrigued by hypotheses that involved connections and overlaps between the two. This is how this project emerged in my mind and took shape through advice and encouragement from colleagues and friends alike. Five years and hundreds of pages later I realised that the ‘picture’ had gotten bigger and bigger. One of my regrets is that I could not possibly do justice to the individual case studies of eliminationist violence featured in the book. Then again, I never saw my project as context-specific. Instead, I sought to analyse how a particular ideology and political praxis shaped eliminationist currents, escalated them, and finally let them loose with only-too-familiar devastating consequences. But, through this, I also intended to reflect on the mechanisms that make genocide desirable, feasible, and justifiable to a particular audience, regardless of time, place, ideology, or system of rule. It is against these benchmarks, I hope, that the reader will judge this book’s intentions, ideas, and content, as well as its numerous shortcomings—for which I alone am responsible.

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to end this prefatory note with some caveats. I never intended this book to be either an account of the Nazi ‘final solution’ or an exploration of other eliminationist case studies in interwar/wartime Europe. I have instead used a comparative matrix to map different degrees and types of ‘fascist agency’, whether direct or implicit, in the eliminationist drive that claimed so many lives in such horrifying ways during the 1930s and early 1940s. Furthermore, whilst the bulk of the material (empirical and analytical) featured here concerns fascism and eliminationism/genocide, the relation that I have tried to forge is one of correlation and facilitation, not of direct or single causality. I believe that the notion of ‘licence’ has considerable mileage in the field of genocide studies—a kind of mileage that goes beyond fascism, beyond the time frame of this book, beyond Europe, even beyond genocide per se. Nevertheless, what happened inside the fences of Auschwitz and Treblinka, in the ravine of Babi Yar, in the streets of places as far apart as Kaunas, Iași, Krakow, Berlin, Antwerp, and Paris can indeed be linked, in spite of fundamental differences of degree and kind. I have consciously avoided the blanket label of ‘uniqueness’ in order to separate them or place them in some dubious hierarchy of evil. I have also attempted to balance the centrality of the NS regime in the genocidal project that consumed the fascist ‘new order’ with the significance of other (non-Nazi) forms of eliminationist agency and their mutually facilitating effects. My main intention was not to offer either a novel conceptual insight into ‘generic fascism’ or an across-the-board explanation of the Holocaust. But I feel that the relation between preexisting structures of intergroup conflict, fascist ideological-political agency, and the peerless experience of mass murder in WW II Europe has been underexplored. This book attempts to chart crucial areas of partial overlap between elements that were critical in the eliminationist drive of the interwar and wartime periods: between nation and race; between faith, culture, ideology, and science; between long-term trends and short-term developments or inputs; and, finally, between ‘fascism’ and ‘eliminationism’ themselves. The result is, I hope, a correlational approach that avoids the overdeterminacy of either agency or structure whilst trying to do justice to both; and one that establishes fascism (and not just National Socialism) as a crucial part of understanding interwar/wartime eliminationism as much as it shows ‘cleansing’ to have been part of fascism’s own wicked vision for rebirth.

Aristotle Kallis

Introduction

Main Concepts: Fascism, Nation-Statism, Eliminationism, and ‘Fascist Agency’

The historiography of generic fascism has come of age in the past three decades. The pioneering work of Ernst Nolte on the origins and nature of interwar fascism in the 1960s was taken in novel and fruitful directions by others—amongst them Walter Laqueur (1979 & 1995), Juan J Linz (1979, 1980, & 2000), Stanley G Payne (1980, 1997), Emilio Gentile (1975, 1993, 2001), Roger Griffin (1993, 1998, 2002, 2007b), Robert O Paxton (1998, 2004), and Roger Eatwell (1992, 1996, & 2003). These and other disciples of generic fascism have produced interpretations and analytical frameworks of stirring conceptual sophistication and breathed fresh air in the fray of fascist studies (Bauerkämper 2006). As a result, fascism emerged out of the historiographical confusion of the first postwar decades to occupy a distinct position amongst the other contemporary ‘isms’ (Paxton 1998: 3–5; Griffin 2002). The precise contours of ‘fascism’ may still be debated and fiercely contested, so that a ‘consensus’ of sorts remains largely elusive (Roberts, De Grand, Antliff, & Linehan 2002). The fact, however, that we can fathom a fundamental analytical convergence in spite of individual scholarly perceptions is the most fruitful legacy of the tendency to ‘take fascism seriously’ (Spackman 1996: x), as ideology, system of rule, and historical experience.

This book owes a lot to the pioneering work of these and other scholars. The 1945 terminus of this study may appear as almost *de facto*, given the book’s focus on persecution and genocide; but it also echoes the Noltean analysis of the interwar period in Europe as the ‘era of fascism’ (Nolte 1965: 18–22). My conceptual understanding of ‘fascism’ revolves around the notion of revolutionary national rebirth—the intellectual child prodigy of Roger Griffin’s attempt to define the critical mass of the generic ‘fascist minimum’ (Griffin 1993). In Chapter 3 I provide an analytical framework for connecting the fascist quest for regeneration with the evident trend towards eliminating certain ‘others’. As I have argued elsewhere, the core of fascist utopianism consisted in an uncompromising effort to reclaim an ‘ideal Fatherland’ for the ‘reborn’ national community (Kallis 2003b). Since then, the publication of two works by Michael Mann (2004, 2005) has provided two further conceptual tools: first, the centrality of ‘cleansing’ in the fascist project as the midwife of the ‘new man’ and of the ideal

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national community; and, second, the fascist obsession with ‘nation-statism’ (Mann 2004) that fused the ideal vision of a pure, homogenous national state with that of a regenerated and ‘cleansed’ national community residing in it. Viewed through this analytical lens, ‘cleansing’ and ‘eliminationism’ emerged as major strategies for the attainment of the core fascist goal—*an ideal national community living and thriving in an ideal nation-state* (see Ch 3).

Some (e.g., Eatwell 2004b) have criticised Griffin’s emphasis on ‘rebirth’ in the sense that regeneration has constituted a rather standard feature of modern nationalism. The notion of rebirth had also been associated with biological theories of individual and collective health since the nineteenth century—this time as a reaction to the perceived danger of social, cultural, and racial ‘degeneration’ (*degenerance*; Pick 1989). Furthermore, ‘nation’ and ‘science’ had been ‘sacralised’ long before fascism made its appearance in the spectrum of political ideas in Europe, though in very different ways. The nation constituted the potent mobilising myth of nationalists from the barricades of 1848 to the radical nationalism of the turn of the century to the crowds that greeted enthusiastically the prospect of a military confrontation in Europe in 1914. Science, on the other hand, acquired powerful kudos in the context of modernity, gradually becoming a primary source of ‘truth’ in modern societies. This process gathered momentum in the second half of the nineteenth century and continued unabated in subsequent years (Peukert 1994). As James Gregor (1999) has argued, the ‘phoenix’ metaphor (the bird that dies in flames but is reborn from its ashes) was—and still is—pervasive, not only in the nationalist discourses of new nation-states but also in the ideology of both radical left and right, if in very different (and contested) ways.

Thus, the validity of the connection between fascism and ‘rebirth’ appears at first tentative. Generic fascism was a particular form of radical ‘palingenetic’ nationalism (Griffin 1993: Ch 1), but there were indeed other nationalist currents in all societies (and not always less extreme in their prescriptions) that predated or coexisted with it. Similarly, whilst a link between fascism and modernity has been eloquently established (De Felice 1977: 24ff, 76ff; Griffin 1993 & 2007b; Payne 1997: 471–86), the reasons as to why fascism emerged only in particular societies that found themselves at different stages of this very modernisation process (and why it notably failed in others, including highly ‘modern’ ones) have not been fully accounted for. Science—and the pseudoscience of race in particular—were fundamental components of the National Socialist (henceforward NS) vision of national rebirth in a way and to a degree that found no parallels in the worldview of other interwar fascist movements. Yet, even in this case most of the radical ingredients and prescriptions of this racialist vision had been fully put forward—in Germany and elsewhere—before the rise of the NSDAP to prominence. Whilst Hitler’s movement and regime took such ideas extremely seriously and pursued them fanatically until the very end,

other kindred fascist leaders showed cautious, partial, or no interest in them. One is left confused as to whether this fusion of radical nationalism with biological racism was reflective of the unique dynamics of German National Socialism, of fascism in general, or of the idiosyncratic circumstances of modern German society (Blackbourn & Eley 1984; Kocka 1988; Weindling 1989).

The link, however, is less elusive than it might appear at first sight. Emilio Gentile (1993, 2000) has provided a superb analysis of fascism as *political religion* to distinguish it from earlier understandings of nationalism as 'civic' religion. The 'sacralisation of politics' that Gentile has identified as a core element of Italian fascism referred to the fusion between the political and the sacred with a view to producing a vision of eschatological salvation for the entire national community. Unlike 'civic religion', which refers to a secular belief system that can coexist with traditional religious ones (Gentile 2000: 25ff), political religion signifies a total alignment with a single mythical core, seeks to displace/replace existing forms of faith, and stands above any conceivable conflict of values, as the inconvertible framework for rebirth and deliverance (Gentile 2004). Not only does it secularise religious terms and functions but it also attempts to sacralise secular institutions, beliefs, and even individuals (Tal 2004: 30–1; Burrin 1997b). It may supplant the validity of traditional religion but it does not create a 'zero-sum' game (Steigmann-Gall 2004), in which the secularisation of religious discourses results in the diminishing influence of the 'sacred' in modern societies. In other words, political religion does not constitute a simple mutation of traditional religious feeling into a secular equivalent (science, state, nation; Gray 2003: 20). In most cases it seeks to reconcile the two, betraying the influence of traditional religious themes in the articulation of modern, secular 'myths' (Blinkhorn 2004: 516–20). Thus, we are dealing with a notion of 'political religion' that denotes both a transfer of 'sacredness' from the strictly religious domain to the emerging secular landscape and a relation of intriguing permeability between the two. This notion entailed an array of parallel processes—sacralisation of the political, politicisation of the religious, incorporation of new 'myths' into the sacred core and so on—that resulted in the promise of a 'new order' of salvation-through-rebirth (Burleigh 2000: 9–10). In the context of this vision, nation, state, nation-state (as the result of an ideal fusion between the two), and race were transformed into mighty 'sacralised communities', laboratories of a utopian future for the individual, the collectivity and the world as a whole.

It is now easier to see how interwar fascism may fit into this schema (Todorov 2001, 2003). Political religion utilised the legitimacy derived from this diffusion of 'sacredness' in order to chart convincingly a different path out of perceived decay, degeneration, and collapse towards rebirth, regeneration, and salvation. Fascism was indeed an offspring of this trend but one that acquired a crucial significance and dominant presence in the particular historical environment of the interwar period. The centrality of the theme of

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rebirth in fascist thought and praxis owed a lot to preexisting processes of sacralising secular ideas (nation, race, state, etc) but went beyond these precedents by, first, escalating and, then, incorporating them in the context of a single revolutionary utopian vision. As political religion, fascism presented this vision as an ultimate reality, intolerant of alternatives or refutations—the single, fully de-contested compass of political action.

Talking about the generic fascist notion of ‘rebirth’, one is inevitably confronted with questions about its specific character, meaning, and ramifications. Perhaps the most bewildering and problematic aspect of the interwar fascist experience was the disparity between the NS lethal obsession with biological racism and the flimsiness or absence of this component in other fascist variants (Sternhell 1994; see also following, Ch 3). Similar contradictions and variations with regard to other ideas abound in the experience of interwar fascism across Europe. Attitudes to anti-Semitism, to Christianity and the church, to territorial expansion, to eugenics, as well as to the idea of a ‘mission’ beyond the boundaries of the nation-state often varied substantially across the spectrum of fascist movements in interwar Europe (Kallis 2000b). It is difficult at first sight to reconcile all these variations in the context of the same generic stress on regeneration. My understanding, however, of ‘rebirth’ is that it constitutes both a conceptual and a historical, context-specific category. The alignment of ‘palingenesis’ with ‘ultranationalism’ takes the debate to a firmly historical environment, whereby each notion of rebirth is signified by particular long- and short-term national and contextual attributes (Kallis 2004b). Thus, ideological variations or even contradictions between different fascist movements become aspects of different *national historical* experiences. The task of a generic theory of fascism is to extract that elusive ‘ineliminable core’ (Freeden 1994) of generic fascism that may account for significant and unique similarities between the various permutations of fascism whilst convincingly accommodating deviations as either nationally or historically specific phenomena. This remains a rather tall order but one that fascist studies have embraced fruitfully, if with often controversial results. Whether in the form of Griffin’s ‘fascist minimum’, of a list of ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ (possibly but not essential) features (Linz 1979; Payne 1997) or of a ‘fascist matrix’ (Eatwell 2003), research on generic fascism has attempted to reconcile conceptual core and variation in the history of fascism.

The aim, however, of this book is not to deal with generic fascism as a whole or to elucidate its emphasis on ‘rebirth’. Its scope is narrower, as it is primarily concerned with the link between fascism and the persecution, expulsion, and eventually mass murder of particular ‘others’. Is it possible to accommodate fascism’s record of degrading and destroying human life in the context of its ideological focus on (national) rebirth and salvation? In order to answer this question we need to understand that the fascist notion of rebirth was predicated on the twin ideal(ised) concepts of a ‘new man’ and a new, fully inclusive but homogenous national community. Therefore,

it mirrored particular perceptions of who would be part of this project and who would be aggressively excluded from it. The fascist vision of national unity as an ideal organic and spiritual condition bestowed upon the nation a mystical, integral quality that transcended divisions of class, status, location, and time (Eatwell 1996: xxiii–iv). This ‘ideal’ nation included all the members of the national community, whether residing in the state or living elsewhere, sometimes including both the living and the dead, united in a single community and (often extended) territory, homogeneous and fully sovereign under the authority of the *nation-state*. Yet this ‘nation’ was a mobilising ‘myth’, a utopia that was painfully betrayed by a reality of alleged national decadence. The ‘ideal national community’ did not coincide with the population living under the nation-state, either because parts of the national community were still outside the realms of the national state or because groups that did not or should not belong to the community (ethnic, religious, even political and ‘racial’) were still living in its midst. If the solution to the former predicament was expansion and inclusion, the latter problem called for exclusion. Michael Mann has referred to this process as ‘cleansing’, identifying it as a fundamental component of the fascist vision (Mann 2004: 16–17). Thus, ‘rebirth-through-cleansing’ constituted the unpalatable side of the very utopia of constructing an ideal nation-state for the regenerated national community (see following, Ch 3).

To be sure, fascism did not add much to preexisting trends of exclusion in national societies. Prejudices, stereotypes, shared memories, and beliefs had always underpinned the process of collective identity-building. Exclusion has historically been at least as important and potent in defining a collectivity as the alleged common bonds of its members. As an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1991), the nation has always made more sense as a group united in opposition to external forces than as a coherent cluster in its own right. Different groups of ‘others’ had always been feared, denigrated, caricatured, demonised, persecuted, and sometimes even violently assaulted by the majorities. Fascism emerged in a historical context in which many of these stereotypical beliefs had maintained their psychological power or had acquired a new relevance to short-term circumstances after the radicalisation of nationalism and the effect of WW I. The cogency and appeal of fascism’s ideological message lay precisely in this continuity with widespread cultural perceptions shared by the majority of its national audience.

Yet the very fact that negative stereotypes against ‘others’ were bequeathed from indigenous nationalism to national variants of fascism should not conceal a process of radicalisation of attitudes towards specific ‘others’ that occurred during the interwar period and coincided with the rise of fascism to prominence. The Noltean ‘era of fascism’ has been inextricably linked with the most aggressive, widespread, and destructive ‘cleansing’ campaign ever witnessed—the NS ‘final solution’ (*Endlösung*) with its numerous offshoots across Axis-occupied Europe after 1939. It has become impossible to talk about fascism without referring to the millions of people who were

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ruthlessly persecuted, displaced, and brutally murdered in this fascist ‘new order’. Although Jews constituted the overwhelming majority amongst them, members of other nonnormative minorities (ethnic, religious, racial, social-cultural) suffered to different degrees from this extraordinary and unparalleled campaign of violent, extreme ‘cleansing’. This book examines whether there was a particularly *fascist agency* (ideological and political) in the escalation and realisation of this project of ‘cleansing’ across Europe in the 1930s and early 1940s. I have adopted the term *eliminationism* in order to describe all these forms of forced exclusion and ‘cleansing’ directed at an array of different ‘others’, as well as all means and degrees of violence employed in this process. This term has been chosen here over the more conventional term *genocide* (Lemkin 1944) for its broader scope and ability to encompass different forms of minority persecution. Whilst genocide refers primarily to the physical elimination of groups of ‘others’, mostly in the sense of a cumulative final result, ‘eliminationism’ encompasses a wider range of strategies of ‘cleansing’ and offers opportunities for analysing the different processes through which a particular ‘other’ is confined to a negative space that may or may not lead to physical removal. Thus, ‘eliminationism’ emerges as a frame of mind, an abstract desire to be worked out in its details, and a process shaped in time through various agencies. It does not constitute a predetermined collective intent to eliminate in a particular way and with a particular result in mind, but is essentially a crucial point of departure—that ‘the others’ are strangers to the national community, that these strangers have no normative place within it, and that the community has to defend itself against them by deploying strategies of exclusion towards them—strategies that *may* include violent means and even physical mass elimination.

The authorship of the concept of ‘eliminationism’ belongs to Daniel Goldhagen (1996). While Goldhagen has employed the term in the specific context of anti-Semitism and genocide, he implicitly attributes to it a paradigmatic value that extends beyond specific groups or patterns of victimisation. As he explains,

[w]hen I refer to eliminationist antisemitism or, especially during the Nazi period, to an eliminationist persecution, program, or onslaught, it does not necessarily mean killing, *because killing is but one of many eliminationist means.* (Goldhagen 2002: 24–25, emphasis added)

For Goldhagen, ‘eliminationism’ refers to any ideological and political campaign geared towards physically *removing* a group from the community; and this process of removal may involve a series of techniques, ranging from persecution to confinement to physical expulsion to murder, or any combination thereof. Thus, he placed his ‘eliminationism’ into a wider axis of aggressive majority-minority relations, with genocide as the most extreme and brutal outcome (Goldhagen 1996: 77–90). However, it is not

clear whether Goldhagen perceived the latter as a causal, even deterministic radicalisation of milder forms of ‘eliminationism’ or whether the relation is more layered. Clearly, most forms of ‘eliminationism’ have historically stopped short of mass murder; this is as true of the persecution of the Jews in the last two millennia as it is of the treatment of other minority groups, whether religious, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or other. But genocide does presuppose what Goldhagen calls an ‘eliminationist mindset’ that renders the prospect of violent cleansing desirable, intelligible, and justifiable to the members of a community (Goldhagen 1996: 78ff). Thus, the crucial question refers to whether certain conditions and factors may lead from those nonmurderous forms of ‘eliminationism’ to eliminationism-as-genocide and mass murder. In other words, is the difference between the two qualitative or quantitative, one of kind or degree, of causation or correlation?

At this point Goldhagen does not have much more to suggest other than a largely deterministic model of transition and a retreat to the notion of ‘German exceptionalism’ (Wehler 1997; Wippermann 1997; Berger 1999). The conscious deployment of the term in the singular context of anti-Semitism saps its potential paradigmatic significance and heuristic value. Of course, by any standards ‘eliminationist anti-Semitism’ was the most horrifying expression of this very mind-set, reaching its shocking climax in the policies implemented by the NS regime in interwar Germany and wartime Europe. This schema, however, obscures an array of potentially fruitful analogies: between Germany and other interwar states; between Jews and other persecuted minority groups; as well as between long- and short-term factors in each national/regional context. Whilst standard persecution, occasional pogroms, abstract ‘eliminationist’ intentions, and genocide are linked, such associations are sometimes assumed as *de facto* rather than proven in Goldhagen’s scheme. In the end, Goldhagen appears to retreat into a narrowly focused essentialism, denying his own theoretical construction any wider applicability and relevance. One is indeed left wondering whether his analysis is simply too much driven by hindsight as opposed to derived from insight.

Equally, however, the broadening of the term’s scope is far from unproblematic or uncontroversial. How is it possible to accommodate meaningfully such a wide range of phenomena—from forced assimilation to legal persecution to expulsion to mass murder—under a single conceptual category without rendering the latter heuristically worthless? I will argue that extending the scope of ‘eliminationism’ to include persecution, displacement as well as mass physical annihilation is a fruitful premise for shedding fresh light on the links between them. ‘Eliminationism’ may be perceived as omnipresent in every form of majority-minority relations of whatever kind and in any given period or context. It is associated both with perceptions of difference and with the (largely atavistic) desire for purity and wholeness. It may manifest itself on the level of intention and desire, of societal attitude and state policy. It may involve indirect pressure to conform to majority

norms, various penalties for not doing so, or an outright policy of rejection and removal—even violent and murderous. Whilst it has become associated with illiberal, undemocratic, and authoritarian/totalitarian political systems (Rummel 1993, 1994, 1998; Mann 2005), it also inhered in long-term cultural stereotypes and social relations, as well as in liberal assimilationist policies and visions of civic nationalism, though less aggressively. ‘Eliminationism’ is, therefore, an umbrella concept, an *Überbegriff*, that encapsulates a multitude of motivations, methods, and objectives.

Nevertheless, in order to salvage this broad concept from the pitfalls of overstretching, some distinctions have to be made. First, there is a fundamental difference between the abstract mind-set of *eliminationism* and a policy of *elimination*, in the sense that the latter is a more specific, radical, and aggressive offshoot of the former. ‘Eliminationism’ refers to an open-ended intention of putting pressure on the minority group, envisaging a spate of very different possible solutions—from acceptance with an inferior legal/social status to assimilation to aggressive removal. By contrast, ‘elimination’ rests on a specific decision on behalf of the majority group to *remove* ‘the other’ and is bent on realising this extreme scenario. This brings us to a second distinction that concerns the goal and method of this removal. As a solution, elimination verges on totality, seeking to eradicate a condition of ‘other-ness’ that is perceived as harmful or dangerous to the in-group. It does not shy away from envisaging violent means, including the *total physical* removal of ‘the other’. Thus, ‘elimination’ constitutes a qualitative escalation of the broad mind-set of ‘eliminationism’ in a more aggressive and totalistic direction. It represents an extreme scenario in the conflict between a majority and a minority that rests on the former’s decision to remove the latter’s condition of ‘other-ness’ completely and, if need be, violently. Physical elimination of the ‘other’ represents an even more extreme scenario that involves the removal of the entire minority from the in-group’s living space, in the sense of eradicating its social presence, influence, and physical existence amongst the national community. Finally, violent physical removal (including the solution of genocide) is the most extreme scenario that seeks to obliterate the ‘other’ in the most irreversible and total manner. It is the main concern of this book to examine this multiple escalation and locate fascism’s contribution to the processes that transformed ‘elimination’ from a distant possibility into the lethal programme of mass extermination across Europe in the 1930s and 1940.

It is important to stress at this point that such a momentous transformation of ‘other-ness’ into the object of merciless mass annihilation presupposes a multitude of radicalising structures and agencies, the outcome of which is by no means predetermined. From the initial state of tension based on a simple awareness of difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ to that of a campaign of elimination against an allegedly threatening ‘other’ we may detect four stages of escalation. First, difference is construed in antithetical terms, thereby creating an impression of incompatibility or clash between the two

groups. Second, one group comes to the conclusion that the other represents a serious threat to the community that rules out the possibility of peaceful coexistence as equals. This is the point where a general condition of ‘otherness’ comes to be regarded as particularly menacing and/or unacceptable, thereby turning an out-group into what Zygmunt Bauman called a ‘contestant enemy’ (Bauman 1989: 62ff). As a result, the members of the out-group are targeted and often victimised but mainly because of their adherence to the offending trait. Accommodation is still theoretically possible but only on the basis of demanding that the ‘others’ shed that trait and accept their subordination to the norms of the in-group (Bauman 1991: 61–65). This demand constitutes the first form of escalation towards eliminationism. It is, however, an eliminationism that singles out primarily attributes and not biological persons. By contrast, the third stage of escalation happens when the offending trait can no longer be seen as separate from the physical person and the group that represents it. By coming to view the trait as inseparable from the individual, physical elimination of the group becomes a meaningful and desirable course of action. It is this third stage that marks the crucial transition from abstract eliminationism to a real *potential for elimination*. From this stage there is one further but lethal escalation needed in order to reach the condition of elimination and, possibly, mass murder (genocide). This is an escalation that has happened only in a few cases but with devastating results for the targeted out-groups. The fourth transition happens when, in certain short-term circumstances, physical elimination, including its violent and murderous form, has become the most desirable solution for the out-group to the point that it has also been rendered justifiable, whether in absolute or in relative (‘lesser evil’) terms. This is precisely the point when elimination may cease being a theoretical scenario and enter the realm of collective action (Bauman 1989; Taguieff 2001).

THE MULTIPLE PATHS TO GENOCIDE: THE CONTRIBUTION AND LIMITS OF ‘FASCIST AGENCY’

Is it a simple coincidence that the escalation, radicalisation, and extension of aggressive eliminationism in interwar Europe unfolded in tandem with the rise and diffusion of fascism? Nobody can deny that the most extreme case studies (i.e., NS genocide, persecution, and elimination of Jewish and Romani communities across the Axis-occupied Europe, annihilation of Serbs in wartime Croatia, etc) were authorised, supervised, and executed by state authorities that displayed fascist leanings, if not a fully fledged fascist physiognomy. Even collaborationist regimes that were installed in the aftermath of invasion by Axis forces rallied the support of indigenous ultranationalist elements that in most cases had already flirted with fascism. Together they often precipitated, fulfilled, and even exceeded whatever demands made by the NS authorities in the direction of eliminating particular others

(see following, Chs 7–8). Ideas and later policies pioneered by fascist movements/regimes proved lethally influential in interwar Europe, affecting both kindred ultranationalist movements in many countries and less radicalised sections of the right, including authoritarian dictatorships (Kallis 2004). The latter have been loosely connected to the corpus of fascism through their designation as *para-fascist*—a term that denotes partial, incomplete, or unsuccessful ‘fascistisation’ but indicates a fundamental departure from traditional authoritarian practices in the more radical direction charted by fascism (cf. Griffin 1993: 121ff; Kallis 2004). Together with the more or less undisputed fascist cases they developed, popularised, and legitimised a discourse of aggressive nation-statism that openly flirted with elimination; and in the overwhelming majority of cases they were behind the implementation of extreme measures of physical elimination, either on their own devices or externally motivated by more powerful, resolute allies. This “continuum of destruction” (Staub 1989 & 2003) that unfolded in the 1930s was driven or escalated mostly by fascism’s disciples; and it reached its most shocking climax inside the chimera of the NS ‘new order’ (*Neuordnung*)—a geopolitical and military order headed by NS Germany but encompassing the agency and support of fascist states, regimes, and movements.

A heuristic link, however, between elimination and interwar fascism has a series of troubling limits and dead-ends. Of the four stages of escalation from the initial perception of ‘other-ness’ to physical elimination outlined earlier, the first two—construction of ‘contestant enemies/others’ and adoption of a generic eliminationist stance against them—had been largely accomplished before the emergence of fascism as an intellectual, let alone political, phenomenon. The third stage (shift from eliminationism to the more specific potential for elimination) developed its own dynamics in the 1920s and 1930s only partly under the aegis of fascist ideologues and politicians. In fact, it was also nurtured by extreme hypernationalist undercurrents that had already appeared in the fringes of the nationalist discourses of many European countries since the turn of the century, if not earlier. Elimination had always been inherent—as an extreme utopia—in intellectual offsprings of ethno-exclusive nationalism, even if such trends had been sidelined by more moderate nationalist ideologies until the 1920s (see following, Ch 4). Finally, the fourth stage (towards a unilateral policy of aggressive elimination, leading to genocide) occurred only in certain cases and not automatically under the auspices of *every* fascist or *para-fascist* regime. We should also not forget that one of the ‘paradigmatic’ fascist movements/regimes—Italian Fascism—displayed a strikingly whimsical relation to eliminationism. While it had no qualms about embarking on such policies in its African colonial possessions (including a genocidal campaign in Libya in 1929–32 [Salerno 2005; Del Boca 1988]), it resisted the trend towards anti-Semitism until 1936–38 (Lyttelton 1996: 12–13). All this was happening at the same time that other ultranationalist authorities or groups—not all of which were indisputably ‘fascist’—had already embarked on a pandemonium of

eliminationist measures against their particular ‘other(s)’, with or without external instigation.

How is it then possible to construct a meaningful link between elimination(ism) and fascism in interwar Europe? While the most extensive, horrific, and devastating campaign of elimination was conceived and carried out by NS Germany, nobody can seriously argue that fascism alone identified ‘others’, that it pioneered eliminationism, that it concocted the shift to elimination, or that it invented ‘genocide’. Generating a ‘potential for elimination’ depended on a complex synergy of agencies and structures—both generic and country-specific, long- and short-term. In fact, some contributing factors to the eliminationist mind-set are also ahistorical. Fear of ‘the other’ (heterophobia) has always been a crucial component of identity building, regardless of period or region (Taguieff 2001). The ‘us versus them’ mentality refers to a psychological need for negative self-determination that has proved so powerful in any form of identity-building process. As Carl Schmitt noted, enmity and conflict are inescapable features of human association and politics. Only liberalism, he argued, attempted to replace the natural state of dissensus with one based on consensus and universality (Schmitt 1996). Antagonism and enmity inhere in political life, whose ultimate goal is the construction of a meaningful ‘us’ and its juxtaposition to a particular ‘them’. These mentalities, so central to the identification and targeting of ‘the other’, are essentially ahistorical and, for this reason, generic—not the exclusive preserve of particular ideologies, political systems, or national traditions.

When it comes, however, to defining ‘*contestant* others’ by the members of an in-group, we are entering the realm of historical processes that are invariably long-term, context-specific, and reflective of highly diverse trends in the history of any given group’s identity-building. The definition of particular ‘contestant others’ may often derive from generic and diachronic prejudices (such as anti-Semitism or prejudices against forms of perceived nonnormative behaviour), but the latter are filtered through a particular in-group’s own experiences, cultural norms, and collective beliefs. Thus, they become highly diversified from place to place, from one state or nation to another, from one historical setting to what preceded or followed it. In addition, a particular group may experience a strong sense of estrangement from, or fear of, a specific ‘other’ in its vicinity, thus creating a different form of ‘other-ness’ that is the produce of a unique interaction and confrontation between two distinct groups. This may explain not only why ‘contestant others’ differ from nation to nation or from time to time but also why ‘ubiquitous others’ such as Jews and Gypsies may have received different degrees of hostile attention by different in-groups or in different historical conditions.

Finally, short-term historical factors, whether generic (e.g., Bolshevik revolution and the wave of anticommunist hysteria after 1918; WW I) or country-specific (e.g., changes in population composition and borders resulting from the post-1918 treaties; communist revolutions in Germany and Hungary, etc), may function as catalysts for escalating an existing potential for

elimination against a specific 'other'. It is here that one may locate the seeds of the momentous transition to the third and fourth stages described previously. But a particular 'other' can only become the object of elimination if both short- and long-term factors converge and jointly enforce the message of fundamental difference and 'danger'—a message that has for some time become part of the indigenous society's cognitive model and is therefore intelligible, convincing, and mobilising. The mere *potential* for elimination rests on solid long-term factors and is fuelled by fear, distrust, and denigration of particular 'others'. Under no circumstances could such a short-lived chapter in the history of ideas and politics in Europe as fascism be so influential as to generate by itself the murderous wave of elimination that afflicted millions in the 1930s/early 1940s.

How then can the 'fascist agency' be accommodated into this scheme if so much was determined by long-term historical or even ahistorical structures? I will suggest and problematise three ways in which interwar fascism entered the process and made a crucial contribution to it. The first pertained to the long-term relevance of fascism to the evolution of nationalist debates and identity-building processes in each community. Almost all experts in the fray of fascist studies have identified nationalism as its most crucial component (Sternhell 1994, 1995; Griffin 1993; Eatwell 1996; Payne 1997; Passmore 2002; Paxton 2004). Fascism was both a crucial link in the long-term development of indigenous nationalism and a short-term radical articulation of its most extreme, ethno-exclusive tendencies (Kallis 2004b). As such it was both the heir to existing (usually extreme) national trends with their own prehistory *and* a catalyst for their selective radicalisation in an uncompromising and aggressive ethno-exclusive direction under fascism's own brand of 'palingenetic populist ultra-nationalism' (Griffin 1993: 26–44).

The second level of 'fascist agency' with regard to elimination rested on its short-term relevance to generic historical forces at play in Europe during the interwar period. The radicalisation of nation-statism, of territorial utopias, of biological theories, the aggravation of geopolitical relations, the anticommunist fear after 1918, the rise and demise of liberalism, the decentring effect of modernity, the perceptions of decay and national humiliation, as well as the widespread desire for a new modern deployment and a 'new beginning' (Roberts 2005; Griffin 2007b) were some crucial elements that shaped and motivated fascism's unique ideological physiognomy and message. These catalysed crucial changes in nationalist discourses across the continent, nurturing and radicalising the exclusionary lines vis-à-vis particular 'contestant others'. Fascism's appeal in the 1920s and 1930s had a lot to do with the successful translation of these generic ideas into fluent narratives that were relevant to deep-seated beliefs and current fears in each national context. Thus fascism popularised and legitimised previously existing but marginal/marginalised extreme prescriptions of nationalism. It capitalised on the dynamics of recent developments, played on fears or suppressed aspirations, and brought them to the forefront of the interwar political debate

in ways that appealed to large, diverse sections of the population. It also provided a psychological space where hatred could be entertained, nurtured, and enacted. In so doing, it crucially enhanced the desirability of the prospect of a ‘life without others’—*shaping, facilitating, radicalising, and unleashing* extreme energies against them.

The third and final form of ‘fascist agency’ refers again to legitimising elimination but on a far more concrete, radical, and action-oriented basis. If generic fascist ideology gave intellectual ammunition and prominence to extreme utopias inherent in the darkest corners of nation-statism, then NS Germany in particular provided a powerful model for the systematic elimination of ‘the other(s)’ on a comprehensive scale and in a lethally systematic, effective way. It was in post-1933 Germany that aggressive ethno-exclusive utopias flirting with elimination merged with biological theories of heredity and dangerous immutability, enforcing a common message of total elimination and paving the way to systematic mass murder. Thus, NS Germany supplied the alibi and the broad blueprint for carrying out elimination across Europe, particularly after the outbreak of WW II in September 1939. If fascist ideology had offered an *intellectual licence* to hate and think in terms of eliminating the ‘contestant other(s)’ as a desirable and defensible solution, NS Germany extended—by example, incitement, and coercion alike—a second *licence to eliminate* in practical, total terms. Its espousal of elimination as nationally essential, biologically urgent, politically feasible, and morally justified option forged a direct link between fascism and elimination/genocide that many kindred movements/regimes across interwar Europe were eager to heed and act upon, even if they did not necessarily endorse all of its components, arguments, or methods manifested in the NS case. The extraordinary *internationalisation of fascism* in the 1930s and 1940s—as an ideological force, political system, military alliance, and eventually ‘new order’—integrated a plethora of parallel eliminationist agencies and projects from across the continent into a single, history-making crusade of pan-European regeneration (Roberts 2005: 79–91; and following, Ch 8) under the aegis of NS Germany and the Axis alliance.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This distinction between the generic, intellectual agency of fascism-as-ideology and the specific—direct and indirect—agency of National Socialism as an unfolding paradigm/blueprint for elimination is reflected in the structure of the book. Part I (Chs 1–2) deals with the formative influences on, and historical determinants of, the fascist vision for an ‘(ideal) new man’, an ‘ideal nation’, and an ‘ideal nation-state’. Emphasis is placed on two interrelated facets: first, the way in which the nation was redefined in modern times, particularly in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, as a community of common historic destiny and descent; and, second, the radicalising impact

of this redefinition on perceptions of ‘other-ness’ in each national setting. In this context, I explore the effects of nationalism and nation-statism, the role of collective *prejudices*, as well as the impact of short-term anxieties on relations between particular in- and out-groups (Ch 1). The cumulative outcome of these factors was the increasingly rigid definition and aggravation of particular forms of ‘otherness’ in different national contexts. Then, analysis moves on to a different concept of defining membership of a group and excluding ‘others’, namely, that of *race* (Ch 2). Anthropological and biomedical discourses of race provided a modern, often allegedly science-based template for attributing different degrees of worth to human beings, whether individually or collectively. The science of race in particular became a powerful channel through which notions of allegedly inherent human superiority and inferiority were articulated, and fears of ‘degeneration’ were juxtaposed to a vague notion of ‘rebirth’ long before fascism came to the fore. Race also provided a model for claiming a common (superior) historic-biological descent for the nation and for linking different forms of ‘otherness’ to hereditary (and, therefore, immutable) factors that widened the gap between the nation and its particular ‘others’. Although very different, these two models (nation-statism and race) displayed remarkable porosity, gradually producing a racialised concept of nation and a nationalised idea of race. This process of fusion and its result (what I call ‘racial nation’) are examined in detail in the second half of Chapter 2. The ‘racial nation’ was a far more rigid community, bound together not just through cultural/historical bonds but also by a biological and anthropological common destiny. Thus, it served two crucial functions: first, it served as a model for interpreting the current state of the nation—its strengths and claims to superiority, its ‘health’ or lack thereof, and the allegedly problematic presence of ‘others’ in its midst; and, second, it provided a blueprint for the rebirth of the individual and the community as a whole, in which ‘cleansing’ was an increasingly legitimate device of national welfare and future greatness. Only a regenerated and cleansed ‘racial nation’ in its purest, ideal condition could successfully wage the two wars for its existence—the one inside itself, the other against other powerful external competitors.

Part II (Chs 3–4) focuses on *fascism as an ideological phenomenon*, both in generic terms and in its diverse national permutations. Given the already highly developed mechanisms of defining both the nation and the ‘other’ in circulation by the beginning of the twentieth century, and their strong influence on fascist discourses, it is important to ascertain whether there was a particular *fascist agency* in intellectual terms with regard to these processes. Chapter 3 deals with ‘fascism’ in generic ideological terms, exploring links between its central notion of national rebirth and the idea of ‘cleansing’. The generic template for analysis suggested here associates the fascist vision of an ‘ideal national state’ with the desire to reclaim the nation and the state exclusively for the national community in their purest and holistic form. Such a vision was often expansive in territorial terms but entirely exclusive

in terms of the anthropological composition of the national community, geared towards internal purity and wholeness. Thus ‘rebirth’ and ‘cleansing’ came to partly coincide in fascist imageries. Like a Venn diagram of partly but crucially overlapping circles, whose areas of intersection created new possibilities and enhanced potentials, the synthesis between the positive vision of national ‘rebirth’ and the negative premise of ‘cleansing’ produced a causal relation, with ‘cleansing’ being now seen a precondition for the former as well as a crucial expression of the nation’s total sovereignty over its own destiny. ‘Cleansing’ was not always synonymous with aggressive elimination of ‘others’; it could equally refer to a campaign of purging different types of internal enemies. However, the overlap between the two ideas created new and powerful causal relations, delineating a psychological space whereby even the extreme course of physical elimination could be desired and justified as an exceptional mechanism for promoting national regeneration. This was the first ‘licence’ that fascism made available to its audience—a licence to think of a future without ‘others’ as a highly desirable and historically urgent prospect, to hate particular ‘others’ as obstacles to national regeneration, and to enact psychologically a violent scenario of cleansing as a more desirable, more legitimate, and less morally troubling prospect. Chapter 4 explores this intellectual ‘licence to hate’ with regard to particular national groups/societies and their own specific ‘others’. This analysis links back to Chapters 1 and 2, where an array of binary oppositions are identified as strong determinants of identity-building in pre-fascist times (Jews and Gypsies as generic ‘other’; Serbs versus Croats, etc). Chapter 4 acknowledges that national variants of fascism borrowed heavily from this tradition but explores how fascist ideologies also crucially radicalised the perception of this opposition and helped legitimise extreme feelings of hatred against those ‘others’.

Part III (Chs 5–6) deals with one specific (and somewhat contested) form of fascism—the NS movement and regime in Germany. Back in Chapter 3 I review the main arguments for and against analysing Hitler’s regime in the fascist matrix, finally making the case in favour of its inclusion in the generic fascist bloc. Nevertheless, I do consider National Socialism a rather exceptional example of fascism in the context of a book devoted to genocide. Chapter 5 focuses on a distinctive element of the NS regime (namely, its obsessive interest in biological-racial dimensions of the Volk) that has led some commentators to consider National Socialism as ‘unique’ and question its comparability to other ‘fascist’ case studies. Through a combination of racial-anthropological concerns about the descent of the German nation and racial-hygienic perceptions of its ‘health’ (both of which had developed a strong pedigree in Germany and elsewhere long before the rise of fascism), the NS regime provided the ground for a unique synthesis between two totalitarian visions: one sponsored by the Nazis themselves and relating to the establishment of a fully sovereign nation-state with total control over every aspect of the lives of its citizens; and another, scientific vision of total

intervention and empowerment over the biological life of the community and its individual members. The result was a genuinely totalist version of what Michel Foucault has called ‘bio-political’ state with a particularly virulent ‘cleansing’ dimension against an enhanced array of different ‘others’—both racial-anthropological (e.g., Jews, Romani, Slavs) and racial-hygienic (groups with ‘nonnormative’, ‘deviant’, and ‘hereditary’ conditions). This synthesis, I argue, rather than the nature of its individual components or the historical/national context in which it was achieved, constituted the basis for the allegedly ‘unique’ experience of National Socialism. In Chapter 5 I also analyse the evolution of this biopolitical agenda between 1933 and 1939, when the first steps towards the ruthless persecution of particular ‘others’ were taken, thus paving the way for the far more devastating NS ‘cleansing’ project during WW II.

Chapter 6 takes the narrative into the 1939–45 period, when the NS eliminationist machine underwent three types of escalation: in terms of scope of victims, of brutality of means, and of geographic reach. Given that the most murderous facet of the NS genocidal policies concerned the occupied areas of eastern Europe, the chapter focuses on the radicalisation of the NS ‘cleansing’ vision—first, in Poland and then in the eastern territories invaded after June 1941. Projects such as the so-called *Generalplan Ost* (a comprehensive plan of population management in the entire eastern Europe, featuring resettlement, ‘Germanisation’ of selected groups, elimination of millions of undesired ‘others’, all leading to the establishment of a ‘new order’ in Europe) offer an eloquent idea of the perversely ultramodern nature of the NS vision, as well as of its devastating consequences for the lives of millions of people. As a result of the particular NS obsession with race discourses, the Nazi ‘new order’ featured a ruthless hierarchy of ‘human value’, with ‘Aryan’ Germans at the top, Jews and Romani at the very bottom, and an array of intermediate categories, the status of whom was determined by racial and national prejudices. What also emerges from the analysis in Chapter 6 is that the NS ‘cleansing’ project, whilst ideologically fanatical and fixed, was also flexible enough to accommodate short-term pressures and urgent considerations of practical nature. In the ideal NS vision for a ‘new order’ in Europe, millions had to perish, others were to be exploited pitilessly, and the chosen would spearhead a revolutionary new era in the history of mankind under the auspices of the thousand-year Reich and its allies. This perverse universality and missionary character of the NS ‘cleansing’ project, alongside the chilling bureaucratisation and mortal efficiency with which it was carried out, constituted crucial indicators of the extreme character of the NS regenerative vision.

By escalating its project of elimination across vast areas of Europe under its control, the NS regime produced a second, far more deadly kind of ‘licence’. This may aptly be described as a veritable ‘licence to kill’. The Nazi regime led the way in this respect, first inside the old Reich and, after 1938–39, in all areas annexed or occupied by its forces. But this was also a

'licence' that others claimed for themselves in the light of the legitimising NS precedent. As early as in the 1920s many regimes across Europe had started introducing eliminationist measures against their Jewish populations, justifying them as a legitimate expression of the nation-state's full sovereignty. At the same time, violent pogroms against the Jews were witnessed, mostly carried out by members of fascist squads and (at least partly) tolerated by the authorities. From 1933 onwards, however, many fascist and 'para-fascist' regimes were inspired by NS practices and attempted to exploit the atmosphere of permissiveness generated by the audacious Nazi measures in order to settle their own troubled relation with their Jewish communities. In addition, many fascist movements became emboldened and escalated their violent actions against 'others', whilst also putting pressure on their national governments to act accordingly or raising themselves a claim to power as the most authentic incarnations of the new fascist epoch. This diffusion of the 'licence to kill' is the focus of the Part IV (Chs 7–10). Chapter 7 explores the mechanisms of this diffusion and escalation of eliminationist practices by analysing the Axis alliance as a Nazi quasi-imperial structure, with a series of allied regimes endorsing elimination as both 'agents' of the NS history-making project and independent actors in their own national jurisdiction. The empowering effect of this structure (which I have called 'agentic order', using Stanley Milgram's analysis of obedience-conformity) lay in the fact that the NS precedent appeared to many to legitimise an appealing vision of 'life without others' and to extend a wider, generic licence to eliminate those 'others' as a justifiable case of *raison d'état*. Thus, many regimes embarked on independent processes of violent, often murderous 'cleansing' within their borders under the aura of permissiveness generated by the NS extreme precedent and the impression of a history-making generic campaign spearheaded by the NS 'new order'. Chapter 8 chronicles the radicalisation of these campaigns under the aegis of three fascist regimes ('Independent' Croatia, Slovakia, and Romania) and shows the crucial empowering effect of the notion that such domestic projects were also part of a wider NS-led campaign. That this 'agentic order' was overwhelmingly voluntary—at least until 1943—is underlined by the fact that most of these autonomous 'cleansing' operations were authorised by fascist regimes with very little or no Nazi involvement, sometimes even against the wishes of the German authorities. NS pressure did increase in some instances from 1942 onwards, when first the illusion of victory and then the shadow of defeat forced the pace of the NS 'final solution'. But even then regimes that were or had become unwilling to conform to NS demands (e.g., Bulgaria and Romania after mid-1943) could still get away with such acts of defiance, in spite of frustration and anger in Berlin.

Chapter 9 deals with a different level of diffusion of this 'licence to kill', this time concerning fascist movements, against or in spite of the policies of their respective national (semisovereign) governments. Such movements often performed a 'fifth column' function, sponsoring far more radical

ideas and policies than those officially sanctioned by the official state. They became the most enthusiastic pillars of ideological collaborationism with the NS authorities, sought power, and, on some occasions, conquered it as 'agents' of the NS 'new order'. Chapter 9 concentrates mainly on the triangular relation between NS Germany, local semisovereign friendly regimes, and radical fascist movements with particular reference to two case-studies (Hungary and Vichy France). But the role of fascist movements in directly occupied countries is also examined (VNV, Rex and Verdinaso in Belgium; NSB in The Netherlands; Quisling's NS in Norway, etc). In all these cases the role of fascist movements in acting as fanatical 'agents' of the fascist 'new order', in radicalising policies of elimination, and in often taking the 'licence to kill' well beyond what even the Nazis themselves expected (or sometimes desired) is indicative of how another kind of specifically 'fascist agency' contributed to the genocidal paroxysm of the early 1940s.

Finally, Chapter 10 completes the analysis of the diffusion of this 'licence to kill' by focusing on individual and group attitudes at the local level. On many occasions—and particularly in eastern Europe—it was 'ordinary people' that precipitated the NS 'cleansing' project in their areas, led the way along with the invaders, or chose to become dutiful 'agents' of the NS project after occupation. The agency of these 'ordinary people' was at the very beginning independent of any direct NS agency, although soon the Nazis took over the project and assumed full control over its overall execution. In the areas occupied in the wake of Operation Barbarossa in 1941, the complete breakdown of order unleashed a 'carnival' of violence against particular 'others', orchestrated by indigenous fascist groups and locals, often without any NS presence or direct involvement. In those instances 'licence' derived from the absence of any inhibiting factors or sense of legal-political order; but it was also facilitated by the perception that the imminent arrival of the NS forces would strongly approve of the undertaking. As occupiers the Nazis capitalised on willing or instrumental collaboration by sections of local societies, who were subsequently heavily recruited (voluntarily) in auxiliary police formations and participated in 'cleansing' operations, often with overzealous devotion to the task. A plethora of motivating factors—ranging from ideological agreement to conformity to 'instrumental rationality' and in some cases fear—created a morbid ferment that released hidden eliminationist energies, radicalised attitudes towards 'others', overcame doubts or inhibitions, and rendered the project of mass annihilation far more brutal and horrifying than anything experienced before.

Genocides have happened in history for a variety of reasons—collective hatred, prejudices and memories, manipulation by authorities, a sense of exceptional 'crisis' and 'threat', unleashing of suppressed rage and resentment—all to different degrees and in different combinations. The pandemonium of eliminationist projects undertaken in the context of the NS 'new order' from the late 1930s until the end of WW II was no different in causal terms. Any fascist or NS 'agency' cannot be assessed in total independence

from existing, sometimes time-old national and local factors. Without them it would most probably have been impossible or at least far less devastating. This book is particularly mindful of this interdependence and mutual influence. Whatever suppressed energies came to the fore as a result of direct fascist agencies or the 'licence' derived from them were there in the first place, in some form, concealed and arrested but nonetheless potent. Any fascist agency explored here, whether intellectual/ideological or political/action-oriented, had to do with both strengthening the factors that bred feelings of 'other-ness' and with weakening or removing the hindrances (political, moral, legal, cultural) that had kept them at bay in the first place. The role of 'fascism'—as ideology, political experience, and international loyalty—is fundamental in terms of understanding why so many victims perished in the fascist 'new order', why so many regimes and movements collaborated in the project with striking enthusiasm, and why so many people became participants in the discharge of the most horrific acts of violence against 'others'. The genocide of the early 1940s was not just the result of direct fascist or NS agency. It was also the cumulative result of *facilitation* of eliminationist energies and *subversion* of inhibiting factors in so many corners of Europe—factors that had kept the prospect of mass murder, however desirable this may have appeared to some or many, off bounds in practical and moral terms. To this dual process of facilitation and subversion of counter-balances fascism made the most critical and devastating input.

Part I

The Overlapping Circles of Nationalism and Race

Constructing ‘Other-Ness’ and Rehearsing Elimination

The ‘genesis’ of fascism is disputed. Whilst it may be possible to identify a symbolic moment in time during which a concrete movement came into being (for example, the 1919 San Sepolcro declarations in Italy), the genealogy of what came to be identified by many as ‘generic fascism’ is an altogether different—and far more complex—matter. The danger of reading history backwards is evident here. ‘Prefascism’ existed only retrospectively and only with the dubious benefit of hindsight. Seeking to identify the long-term ideological, cultural, and historical conditions that produced a new phenomenon remains an ambiguous process of inferring connections and formative influences in the safe knowledge of what followed (Roberts 2005: 39–45).

Nevertheless, the conditions surrounding the ‘birth’ and coming-of-age of fascist ideology may provide crucial insight into fascism’s nature and subsequent agency. This is even more important given the particular focus of this book on eliminationism—a focus that implicates fascism in a wider, long-term process of radicalising communal identities, of desiring homogeneity, and of accepting conflict as an ineluctable historical norm. Part I analyses two fundamental formative influences on the fascist ideological discourses on the nation and its ‘others’. *Nationalism* (particularly in its later form of ‘*nation-statism*’ that identified the national community with a particular territory and the political institution of the nation state) and *race* had developed their own autonomous pedigree across Europe in the nineteenth century. Together they were instrumental in promoting both a narrative of common national belonging and descent and an imagery of putatively incompatible ‘other-ness’ directed at specific groups of perceived strangers. Whilst nationalism was directly linked to the construction of fixed national identities and the legitimation of nation-states, discourses of race originated in the field of modern science, responding to the need for the analysis and classification of human variance. Yet, as in the case of nationalism, in the course of

the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries they were deployed in order to uphold claims of national superiority, homogeneity, and exclusion of 'others'. A process of fusion between the two discourses produced a redefinition of the nation as a closed historic, cultural, and often biological community, threatened by a number of internal and external 'others'. At the same time, the product of this fusion—the idea of a 'racial nation' (Ch 2)—bestowed upon the nation-state a new legitimate but extreme function: that of the supreme guardian of the national community's life and the embodiment of its full sovereignty within its specific political realm. As a cumulative result, the position of 'others' in the midst of the national community (old and new ethnic minority groups, diasporic communities such as Jews and Romani, etc) was transformed from an anomalous exception to the vision of ethnic homogeneity into a matter of national survival and *raison d'état* that called for radical measures and in some cases prefigured aggressive confrontation.

Part I examines the two components of nationalism (Ch 1) and race (Ch 2) both independently and in their momentous fusion. Individually, each defined a pathway whose radicalisation in the past two centuries charted a powerful 'potential for elimination' directed against particular 'contestant others' (Bauman 1989). Together they formed a critical part of fascism's inheritance on the generic ideological level and shaped its discourse of national 'rebirth' (discussed in Part II). But emphasis is also placed on the particular parameters of this fusion between nation and race in particular national contexts that shaped and radicalised discourses of 'otherness', pointing some (though not all) of them in a decidedly eliminationist direction.

1 Identity and ‘Other-Ness’

From Nationalism to the Elimination of ‘Others’

The history of nationalism in modern Europe spans revolutions and wars, proud victories and painful memories, stories of achievements and of untold destruction. It is a history of intellectual and cultural creativity, of political and social freedom, of noble acts of integrity and self-sacrifice as much as it is a chronicle of hatred, violence, persecution, and death. From the nineteenth century onwards nationalism dominated the scene of identity-formation, on the individual and collective levels alike. It became so powerful a sentiment, so pervasive an ideology, and so diffuse a political agenda that it reshaped institutions, ideas, and experiences—even those ones that had predated it. There has been no better testament to its success and dynamism than the widespread belief—unabated still today—that it has an almost suprahistorical legitimacy, as if by default. For an ideology that was mainly the product of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Hobsbawm 1992: 3), this is no mean achievement.

National identity is, of course, an abstraction, like any other collective label. One may point to Benedict Anderson’s definition of ‘nation’ as an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1991), Ernst Gellner’s belief that it is a constructed and largely arbitrary *modern* artifact (Gellner 1983), or Eric Hobsbawm’s notion of ‘invention of tradition’ (Hobsbawm 1983) to justify such a claim. National identity conceals and dilutes a plethora of other identities that both divide the members of any community and unite some of its members with others outside their group. In fact, some of the most ferocious and vicious confrontations in history have involved members of the same in-group (Kalyvas 2006). It was Christians, divided into Protestant and Catholics, that fought the brutal and destructive Thirty Years War in the seventeenth century; French citizens that clashed during and after the revolutionary period; Russians that fought against each other in the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution; Spanish compatriots who committed atrocities against each other in a battle of ideologies during the Spanish Civil War. Somehow the idea of the ‘nation’ attempts to resolve, reconcile, or at least gloss over fundamental chasms, whether social, local/regional, ethnic, cultural, religious, ideological, or otherwise. Whether rooted in history (as the ‘primordialists’ believe—e.g., Geertz 1963; A. Smith 1981, 1986, 1991),

constructed by intellectuals or state authorities in order to give an artificial common sense of descent, belonging and continuity, or both (Hroch 1996: 79ff), in the past two centuries the 'nation' has become the most commanding repository of primary loyalty for individuals and groups.

Thus, nationalism has been a potent historical force of both aggregation and fragmentation, of bridging and dividing. Tom Nairn (1997) has used the celebrated description of nationalism as 'Janus-faced': like the ancient Roman god, one side concerns liberty, fraternity, and the attainment of positive collective goals; the other reminds us of its potential for division, violence, hatred, war, and destruction. The metaphor is a highly appropriate one, for nationalism (as the ideology of belonging to a particular national group) points the collective gaze of the community both to the past and to the future. It encompasses the dynamics of both inclusion and exclusion, of similarity and difference; of 'us' and 'the other'. Clearly, 'the other' (the out-group) is excluded as allegedly different from the characteristics of the majority (in-group); but it is also 'the other' that gives meaning to the commonalities of national identity and highlights the idea of belonging to the in-group, in spite of individual or other differences

'HETEROPHOBIA', PREJUDICES, STEREOTYPES, AND 'SCAPEGOATING'

The process of constructing 'other-ness' as an integral part of identity-building does not lie exclusively within the realm of nationalism (Triandafyllidou 1998). In fact, it originates in an ahistorical dimension as a diachronic facet of human belonging, whether individual or collective. Such ahistorical forces produce a tendency to view the world in terms of similarity/difference, dividing people into 'us' and 'them' and attempting to create a sense of order that maximises security (Schröder & Schmidt 2001: 11). Here, 'other-ness' can be determined by external, physical characteristics and/or by cultural norms and rituals (religion, language, customs, behaviour, etc) that are considered crucial to the definition of the identity of the in-group (Hroch 1996: 79). Even at this level the experience of 'the other' both gives meaning to the existence of the in-group and is further accentuated by it. The perception of difference creates two antithetical norms and erect barriers between the two groups that are not just communicative but also psychological. Pierre-André Taguieff (2001) has identified this level of diachronical opposition as an instinctive, natural human response to the mere fact of difference, without any particular value judgement or conceptualisation of 'other-ness'. This tendency refers to an inherent *fear* of perceived difference, a fear that emanates from the realisation that 'the other' does not fit into the earlier paradigmatic worldview constructed by a specific community prior to its interaction with different groups; that this 'other' is an unfamiliar stranger who appears to defy and challenge the in-group's classification of

the surrounding world (Bauman 1991: 56–61). It is precisely the realisation that humans could be, act, live, and think differently that casts a shadow of doubt over the sense of order underpinning a community's cognitive universe and leads to instinctive *heterophobia* (fear of 'the other').

Heterophobia is an open-ended psychological state. It may lead to gradual rapprochement and even assimilation, defensive limits to interaction, erection of stable barriers, enmity, or conflict. At this stage we are entering the domain of history that determines the outcome of interaction between two groups who perceive each other as *different*. Awareness of difference rests both on objective observation and on subjective perception. Individuals look, think, and behave very differently, even within the boundaries of an in-group. Identity building, by contrast, is a mechanism of promoting intimacy and displacing difference outwards in order to reconcile internal variation and establish a sense of overriding common interest. The process of including certain individuals into the community itself, in spite of their individual differences, whilst excluding others, entails a mechanism of boundary-drawing that is rooted in particular historical experiences. The latter are by definition volatile and particular to each group; and so are the actual contours and membership of the community itself, as well as of 'the other' that it perceives, defines, and excludes. Thus, the process of creating an in-group is based on a constant probing of the meaning of 'other-ness' in order to determine which forms of difference are benign and inconsequential (thereby allowing interaction) and which are potentially harmful/irreconcilable, leading to conflict or even to a deeper, more rigid process of boundary-drawing.

Perceptions of 'other-ness' have operated on multiple levels. Throughout history large groups perceived themselves in opposition to, or under threat from external, often distant, and seemingly irreconcilable 'others'. Culture, religion, and then race remained the predominant forms of differentiation between groups—from the Graeco-Roman 'barbarians' to the religious conflict between Christianity and Islam or the encounter between colonisers and indigenous peoples during the age of discoveries. Then there were distinctions based on dynastic loyalty, state jurisdiction, and later nations or nation-states (Boer 1995; Stadler 2004). Finally, an 'internal' perception of 'other-ness' had to do with the multiple, ever-changing forces of differentiation within the broad group itself. Whilst broadly united against external 'others', members of any group also experienced new internal divisions, rivalries, and clashes, based on perceptions of difference within the group. Some of these proved ephemeral and were forgotten, accommodated, phased out, or simply overshadowed by other, more portentous ones. Others remained unresolved and diffuse, sometimes only artificially marginalised or arrested but always carrying the potential for aggressive recurrence and radicalisation.

It becomes clear that the construction of 'other-ness' requires a combination in varying degrees of an array of factors: strength of belief, long-term

preconceptions, perceptions of considerable and persistent ‘danger’, and sense of threatening proximity. Sometimes, even novel forms of ‘other-ness’ could prove particularly potent and virulent. The example of communism/Bolshevism in post-1917 Europe showed how the strength of belief and the collective hysteria about an alleged external ‘danger’ could compensate for the absence of historical depth, particularly if it could be arbitrarily associated with older prejudices (e.g., ‘Judeo-Bolshevism’, the ‘international conspiracy’ of the Jews and the Freemasons; the clash between Europe and Asia, etc). But in most cases narratives of ‘other-ness’ have displayed a remarkable resilience, fusing the novel and the traditional, the short- and the longer-term, in spite of changing historical circumstances. The reasons for such endurance are multiple. Geographic proximity leads to (undesired) constant interaction and competition. In addition, the difference itself may relate to attributes that are considered central to the identity of the group. Finally, the history of confrontation between the two groups may have created a pool of memory that has become embedded in a negative definition of that identity (‘we are x because we are not z’) and has been passed on from one generation to the other without rational scrutiny or attention to the changing context of interaction between the two parties. On many occasions the *raison d’être* of contestant ‘other-ness’ may have lost its primary position as a result of broader historical developments. Modernity and secularisation, for example, weakened in theory the prior axiomatic value of religion as central determinant of identity, leading to Jewish legal emancipation in many European countries during the nineteenth century. This change, however, did not alter deep-seated popular beliefs in the allegedly immutable ‘otherness’ of the Jews, as the rise of political and racial anti-Semitism clearly showed (Bauman 1991: Ch 4; S Katz 1994). In these cases the changing historical context resulted in a reconceptualisation and rearticulation of the rationale of ‘other-ness’, not in a more positive reassessment of the out-group’s status. What is also interesting is that there have been examples where a change of perception was actively promoted from above but met with resistance on the level of popular sentiment. To take an example that will feature prominently in subsequent analysis, the ideology of ‘Yugoslavisim’, which was promoted as the basis for creating the unified kingdom for Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after 1918, became the all-encompassing official state ideology but was subverted by persisting—and intensifying—divisive nationalist narratives rooted in alleged memories of ‘ancient hatred’ (Majstorovic 1997; see also following, Chs 2, 4).

The persistence of a negative image of ‘other-ness’, in spite of changing historical circumstances or efforts to the contrary, could indicate two tendencies: that the particular out-group remains essential for the delineation of the in-group’s identity by continuing to be in close interaction with and opposition to it; and that the perception of ‘other-ness’ is rooted in deep cultural *stereotypes* with a sort of diachronic cliché validity that is perpetuated uncritically as acquired memory and cultural belief (Brigham 1971;

Brown & Theodossopoulos 2004). The existence of *stereotypes* is a ubiquitous aspect of every identity, whether individual or collective. They both serve the purpose of reordering and simplifying a complex reality by automatically assigning basic characteristics to members of the in- and the out-groups. Thus, they perform the function of 'cognitive economy' by reducing uncertainty and making the human environment appear more ordered and predictable (Ashmore & Del Boca 1981: 27–31). Stereotypes provide a pseudorational and authoritative veneer to cliché attitudes formed not through personal interaction and rational scrutiny but through ignorance or predisposition. They offer an explanation for feelings of 'heterophobia' or 'contestant enmity', making the world fit into our preferred dualistic distinction between 'friends' and 'foes'. The older and persistent the cultural stereotype about a particular group, the tighter its grip on perception, the stronger its effect on in-group collective attitudes, and the higher its ability to supply a sense of belonging through invoking the imagery of opposing, menacing 'other-ness'.

The persistence of a negative cultural stereotype and its enduring popularity amongst the members of a community generate powerful *collective prejudices*. Prejudices have always underpinned and shaped perceptions of 'otherness'. Unlike stereotypes, they constitute integral components of a value-system that lie at a deeper level of a group's psychology and identity (Barnett 1999: 102). They have been instrumental in determining membership of both the in- and the out-groups. They have functioned as the cement of community ties and at the same time underpinned and constantly reinforced the 'other's' troubling externality. The object of prejudice did not have to be physically present to be threatening, feared, distrusted, or despised. Members of a community could/can hold very strong views against another group with which they have had little or no contact simply through their exposure to negative cultural stereotypes traditionally held by the community itself. However, even when contact between members of the out- and the in-groups exists, cultural prejudices are extremely hard to reassess rationally, let alone overcome. The tension generated by a discrepancy between personal experience and collective cultural stereotype usually results in convenient ad hoc distinctions that do not reconcile the contradiction but rather separate and insulate the conflicting parts. For example, the strength of anti-Jewish prejudice on the collective level did not stop individuals from respecting, and even fraternising with, some of their Jewish neighbours. As late as 1943 Himmler indignantly said that every German has 'his one decent Jew' (Arad, Gutman, & Margalio 1981: 344–5). This, however, did not mean that the validity of the wider stereotype was reconsidered under the light of individual experience. Instead, the same person could easily speak highly of a particular Jew and continue to subscribe psychologically to the traditional quasi-demonic image of 'the Jew' (Goldhagen 1996: 87–90). The separation of the two domains (individual and collective) meant that the specific representative of the out-group was confined to a grey zone that permitted

interpersonal rapprochement but could barely lead to their integration into the in-group or to the improvement of their out-group's collective status. In the case of Himmler's comment, it did little to save the bulk of the Jewish population from deportation and annihilation under NS rule.

The case of the European Jewish communities exemplified a particular sort of diachronical *internal externality*—internal in the sense of geographic and social coexistence but external in fundamental psychological terms (Zukier 1995; Mandel 2003: 44–50). What enforced the psychological status of 'the Jew' as the internal outsider par excellence was a combination of a history of diaspora and statelessness, general difference of faith (at a time when religion was the most potent symbolic determinant of collective identity), different appearance ('race', dress, rituals), and a particular theological prejudice that had filtered through formulaic popular perceptions (e.g., the notion of Jewish 'decide'—Perry & Schweitzer 2005: 17–42). The Jews' position was precarious, their residence rights conditional and potentially reversible, their legal protection only partial, and their socioeconomic standing at the whim of rulers and the community members. The existence of 'the Jew' within the in-group enforced and deepened the cultural stereotypes against them, fed the collective anti-Jewish prejudice, and provided a negative integrative platform for the Christian members of the in-group (De Lange 1991; Lazar 1991). A similar attitude of internal externality underpinned the troubled interaction between European states and populations, on the one hand, and the itinerant Sinti/Roma communities in various parts of the continent during the last millennium.

The existence of such an internal outsider serves as a constant reminder of the benefits of negative integration amongst the members of the in-group. In times of crisis, when the need to foster unity and cohesion inside the community increases, the externality of this group may become manipulated in order to serve precisely this purpose. *Scapegoating* has always been a psychological mechanism of displacing responsibility, absolving the in-group, and seeking reassuring interpretations for adverse developments elsewhere (Douglas 1995: 115; Pók 1999). From the early anti-Jewish pogroms in late-imperial Rome and the massacres that took place during the Crusades to the anti-Jewish hysteria in the midst of the Black Death, and from the more modern pogroms in Russia after the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881 to the accusation of an alleged Jewish-socialist *Dolchstoss* ('stab at the back') in post-1918 Germany (Theweleit 1989), the designation of a 'Jewish' scapegoat has offered both relief and a boost to community self-esteem in situations of misfortune and acute collective anxiety. The choice of the scapegoat, however rationally unjustified and arbitrary, is far from random: scapegoats have usually been identifiable, weaker, or unprotected groups, for long victims of strong and enduring cultural prejudice, with an 'outsider' status but within (or close to) the community. These conditions ensure the psychological resonance of scapegoating and thus facilitate the easy acceptance of blame-displacement by the majority of the community's members.

Scapegoating, however, serves a further, more crucial purpose. By providing a—simplistic or arbitrary, but seemingly logical—narrative for the scapegoat's alleged responsibility, it also justifies and often unleashes countermeasures against the earmarked out-group, always in the name of protecting the community. This trend may lead to the authorisation of eliminationist actions, including violent ones. Especially in cases of 'others' that had for long been regarded in contestant terms, the most recent episode of alleged culpability may be portrayed as the final straw in a putatively long list of grievances. Thus, scapegoating often entails more than just retribution and blame attribution for a single event; instead, it may be a symbolic act of cumulative censure for all claimed past injuries. In such circumstances, the in-group may feel that it is no longer bound by conventional moral inhibitions and seek active retribution against the troubling internal outsider.

The example of scapegoating underlines a crucial feature of violence against a particular 'other'. Such violence, so often described as 'blind', is neither random nor meaningless. It is rather a particular form of escalation of 'contestant other-ness' that takes place under context-specific conditions of crisis and severe insecurity. The choice of the target group, the timing of the action, and often the form of violence deployed against it are far more culturally conditioned and predictable than we often assume (Taylor 1999: 103). The grounding of violence, the attempt to contextualise its alleged rationality and causality, show both awareness of, and uneasiness with, its extreme nature as a measure of retribution. As it presupposes a suspension of conventional morality, resort to violence against 'others' is a solution that remains initially repugnant, even to those who ponder it. Its justification rests on considerations of relative gain—whether practical (security, power, control over resources) or psychological (retribution, closure; Schröder & Schmidt 2001: 5–10). This explains why the unleashing of violence against a particular out-group requires a long-term immersion in cultural imageries of 'contestant other-ness', a medium-term escalation of hostility, *and* a short-term catalyst. The anti-Jewish pogroms of 1881 in Russia drew their dynamics from the centuries-old castigation of 'the Jew' as a resented 'other' in Russian identity building. They followed a period of uneasy, grudging liberalisation reforms under Czar Alexander II and reached a boiling point immediately after his assassination—an event that offered the alleged justification for unleashing previously repressed anti-Jewish undercurrents in Russian society (Gitelman 2001: Ch 1). Similarly, the November 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogrom against German Jews was masterminded and authorised by the NS authorities in the wake of the assassination of the German diplomat von Rath in Paris by the desperate son of a Jewish camp inmate, although it is clear from the available evidence that the decision for a pogrom against German Jews had already been taken by the NS leadership (Read & Fischer 1989). In this sense, the assassination provided the alibi for authorising the action. The function of a catalyst is crucial because it adds

a justificatory dimension to the decision to deploy violence by relativising or even lessening its generic moral impropriety. The event that catalyses the action may or may not be significant in itself; in the majority of cases it serves as a subterfuge for a disproportionate but long-desired reprisal. It does invoke, however, the full historical apparatus of ‘contestant other-ness’ in order to contextualise and justify violence in the present tense as allegedly warranted retaliation for all past injuries.

Violence, then, must be imagined before it is inflicted. It must be intelligible before it is considered for its desirability. It must be desired before being morally assessed. It must be perceived as feasible before its logistical aspects are taken into account. Somehow in the nineteenth century the idea of eliminating ‘contestant others’ as an act of security, self-defence, redemption, and healing entered the fringes of respectable thinking—and, through it, the domains of feasibility and admissibility. Only a few decades later it had made the crucial transition, first into mainstream ideological-political discourses and then into mass murderous action. In the course of a few decades a spate of European nationalist discourses completed a lethal transition from abstract heterophobia and prejudice to thinking and eventually acting ‘elimination’. Why this happened, why it happened in a specific time-frame but neither uniformly nor everywhere, why it targeted particular ‘others’ and with varying ferocity—all these questions bring us to the discussion of the historical framework in which violent elimination became intelligible and was realised.

THE MACRO-HISTORICAL DIMENSION: FROM NATIONALISM TO ‘NATION-STATISM’

The ‘long’ nineteenth century started and ended with deeply unsettling explosions. It was the French revolution of 1789 that shook the foundations of the old European sociopolitical order and introduced the term *revolution* to the heart of radical and conservative discourses in its wake. Then, in 1914–18 the continent was plunged into a conflict that not just shattered millions of bodies but also scarred the collective consciousness of a whole European generation. The entire century was defined by its fundamental confrontations: revolution versus stability or restoration; nation versus class; empire versus nation-state; the ideological-political battle between conservatism, liberalism, and socialism; the social battle between nobility, middle strata, and the emerging proletariat. It was an era of fragmentation and conflict, but at the same time it nurtured an obsessive concern for unity, for the grounding of shared identities, for profound but conditional bonding. Faced with the disintegration of the old certainties and the growing fragmentation within the continent, Europeans sought new paradigms of order, common descent, historical continuity, and progress to counter a growing sense of insecurity about themselves and the future.

One such paradigm—and by far the most potent—was nationalism. In most cases nationalism deployed ideas of common descent and historical continuity in order to articulate an integrative vision for the contemporary 'nation'. This, however, did not suffice for constructing a meaningful common identity, thus prompting a recourse to other attributes such as language, religion, and, later, 'race' (Connor 1978). The task of 'making the nation' continued unabated after the acquisition of statehood, fetishising some attributes and ignoring others, with a dual objective: to produce a more homogenous sense of identity amongst the members of a group; and to ground the nation-state's legitimacy and authority over contested resources. Nation-states concerned themselves with control over a specific territory (perceived as belonging to the nation) that they administered on behalf of the national community. The realities, however, of population dispersal and mixing, of regional identities, and of partial state penetration meant that the utopia of 'nation-statism' as an ideal fusion between (expanded) state and (united/uniform) nation was practically impossible. This was a problem even in the case of long-established and centralised 'civic' states, such as France (Weber 1976); but it was a veritable chimera in those states that were carved out of multiethnic empires, especially at a time when other, neighbouring groups were following the same path of national self-determination.

This distinction is not meant as an endorsement of a definitive split between civic/'western' and ethnic/'eastern' forms of nationalism. One should recall Maria Todorova's fascinating proposition that it was the infectious imputation of Western modern nation-statism into the Balkans—rather than any alleged 'ancient hatred' rooted in competing ethnic nationalisms—that has produced the long, brutal history of ethnic violence in the region to our day. Todorova saw in the multiethnic heritage of the Ottoman empire a mosaic of peoples living together in spite of different identity attributes that barely lent itself to nation-statism (Todorova 1994, 1997, 2002). So, when the influence of the West brought nation-statism to the Balkans, the task of defining the identity, population core, and territory of a particular in-group proved substantially more complicated than the designation of an 'other'. The demise of the Ottoman empire (until the early twentieth century the principal 'other' of southern Balkan nascent nations and states) and its territorial retreat from the Balkans left new and aspiring nation-states only too aware of their arbitrary frontiers and cultural overlaps in an area with a long history of ethnic/religious/linguistic blending, coexistence, and conflict. The dramatic decentring of the status quo in the Balkans without any stable state structure to succeed it and manage its transition left behind a spate of new or stateless nationalisms clashing over meagre territorial resources and the ownership of a contested historical memory, with a mosaic of populations sharing cultural attributes, history, and land (Kitromilides 1990).

There was a further problem concerning most areas occupied by the three main multinational empires (Habsburg, Ottoman, Russian). Their centuries-long control over specific territories had created deep fractures that affected

the painful process of 'succession' from one single empire to a mosaic of nation-states. Stateless nationalisms developed utopian territorial visions that often transcended the frontiers of one of these empires. For example, Croats (mostly residing in Habsburg lands until 1918) lay claims over Bosnia-Herzegovina (a grey area of Habsburg-Ottoman contest); Poles were dispersed in Habsburg, German, and Russian territories—the legacy of the 1790s' cynical partitions; Ukrainians could be found in both Habsburg and Russian domains, but also formed a minority in new successor nation-states. This problem could only get worse in the aftermath of WW I that witnessed the concurrent collapse of Habsburg and Ottoman empires, as well as the retreat of Russia and the defeat of Germany. Much that the peacemakers in Paris endeavoured to do justice to the ethnological principle of populations, they were partly restricted by the legacy of past imperial divisions and territorial fault lines between them. Where they decided to transcend or disregard them, they left open wounds that were to be settled later in painful manner. The case of post-WW I Yugoslavia once again demonstrates how difficult it was to overcome this symbolic historical fracture. Extreme branches of Croat nationalism depicted Serbs as an 'eastern' people, steeped in centuries of alleged 'Byzantine' and 'Ottoman' backwardness, and therefore alien to the 'Habsburg' (coterminous with 'Western' and 'European') lineage of modern Croats (see following, Chs 2, 4). The nationalist dreams of the Ukrainians and Ruthenians was drowned altogether in the intricacies of territorial adjustment on the Habsburg-Russian fault line. The new state of Poland clashed with the resurgent Soviet Union in a bitter war for control of the contested territories in west Ukraine (1919–21). Meanwhile, its anomalous western boundary ('Polish Corridor') with its biethnic city of Danzig would become synonymous with the outbreak of WW II two decades later.

A lot has been said and written about the dramatic changes that followed the conclusion of WW I in Europe: the 1914–18 period has been portrayed as the terminus *post quem* of the 'fascist era' (Nolte 1965: 18–22); of a 'European civil war' (Nolte 1987), and of a new 'Thirty Years War'; of the epoch of 'totalitarianism' (Friedrich & Brzezinski 1965: 15ff); of modern genocide, and so on. This was also the time of an increasingly bitter and divisive identification of the (whole, organic) 'nation' with the 'state' and vice versa that resulted in what Michael Mann (2004: 2–4, 27–8) called 'nation-statism'. This concept is intriguing, for it captures accurately the territorialisation and politicisation of 'the nation' through its transformation into a concrete entity (nation-state). This entity was both expansive and restrictive at the same time. On the one hand, it sought the incorporation of the whole nation and its 'historic' territories under its control. On the other hand, it upheld the belief in the alleged historic bonds of the 'national community' that de facto excluded the nonmembers of the nation residing in the geographic contours of the nation-state. Thus, 'nation-statism' encompassed both external inclusion and internal exclusion (Mann 2004: Ch 1).

The demand for national/ethnic self-determination came to a head in 1918, critically nurtured by the Wilsonian 'Fourteen Points' and the collapse of the great European empires. Stateless nations and ambitious nation-states alike sensed that this spectacular collapse of the old European order offered the best chance for realising their dream of independent nation-statism and/or territorial expansion. One by one national delegations gathered in Paris in order to put their case to the four victorious powers (USA, Britain, France, Italy). Armed with population statistics, maps, and historical arguments, they were allowed to dream of 'ideal nation-states', of allegedly unassailable rights over territory, and of illusions of national unity under a single political entity. Territory became a symbolic resource for the aspiring nation-states, sometimes claimed on the basis of the ethnological composition of its inhabitants but often demanded regardless of it (Kallis 2000, 2004). Inevitably, then, the drawing of boundaries in postwar Europe proved a tortuous and largely disagreeable affair, not only for those that were punished with territorial losses but also for those who achieved less than they had hoped for. As new states were carved out of defeated ones or extinct empires, erstwhile majorities became overnight minorities and vice versa. New 'nation-states' came into existence—but neither territorially complete nor homogenous in terms of their population base.

Thus, new and old states (with few and partial exceptions) succumbed to a more virulent 'redemptive nation-statism' with two different objectives: first, to expand their territory in order to 'redeem' those lands and populations that they considered to be theirs but had been awarded to another state; and, second, to promote an 'internal redemption' by actively and aggressively promoting the utopia of unity based on national homogeneity. The more the aspiring nation-states succumbed to the illusion of a homogenous, ethno-exclusive population within their frontiers, the more the difference of 'the other(s)' came to be perceived as an intolerable, threatening anomaly. Young, insecure, unstable, sometimes suffering from an 'inferiority syndrome' vis-à-vis more powerful and established neighbouring states, they could barely resist a feeling of 'fear' and 'danger' from both outside and inside that appeared to threaten their mere survival. Fear and danger supplied arguments in favour of abandoning 'liberal' experiments with equality, power-sharing (consociationalism), and pluralism. Minorities came to be seen as much more than an awkward exception to homogeneity; they were perceived by the majority as the Trojan horse of another nation-state that allegedly subverted the exercise of full sovereignty by the host state. Thus, minority issues became a matter of *raison d'état*, touching on the most fundamental concern of political and national survival.

In theory, the path of integration/assimilation was still open to the members of minority groups. The trend towards toleration of difference and protection of minorities gradually extended its reach. The establishment of an international legal framework for the protection of minorities under the auspices of the League of Nations after WW I (see also following, Ch 4) was

intended to be a guarantee against the homogenising ambitions of nationalism and nation-statism, promising a more pluralist, tolerant, and inclusive society. This proved a highly dangerous illusion, however. In hindsight the liberal paradigm was neither so powerful nor considered irreversible or open-ended, even by its supporters or beneficiaries. Post-1918 many states were forced to accept 'minority protection' legal obligations, as a defensive measure calculated to shield ethnic minorities that ended up under their jurisdiction after the redrawing of boundaries. But this was an onerous and bitterly contested imposition. There was strong opposition and resistance to it, both amongst elites and even more so amongst the population. The spectacular ease with which such otherwise laudable liberal experiments often gave way to aggressive intolerance (sometimes even more vehement than before, in spite of, or, often, because of the liberal interlude [Staub 1989: 102–3]) was symptomatic of the discrepancy between certain elite attitudes and the more traditional and difficult-to-change social beliefs. 'Self-determination' was widely deployed by nationalists across Europe as a guarantee of freedom against repression suffered under foreign (imperial) rule; but once the previously minority group became the majority in its own alleged nation-state, the revolutionaries turned with characteristic ease into reactionaries, the victims into culprits, the oppressed into oppressors (D Brown 2000: 68ff). The institution of the 'nation-state' became the vehicle of enforced homogeneity under the guise of majority rule, unleashing the potential for an even more aggressive exclusion of 'the other'. Once again, Michael Mann captured the essence of this development when he argued that the experience of twentieth-century violence and 'cleansing' resulted from a form of 'tyranny of the majority' (in-group). The exclusive identification of the *demos* (citizenship) with the *ethnos* (nation) was in essence an eliminationist practice that exposed minorities to unprecedented pressures to conform or accept their exclusion from the body politic (Mann 2005).

So, post-1918 nation-statism operated in an unstable context of contested territorial realities, inflated ambitions, minority legacies, and psychological insecurities. 'The others', whether the time-old 'contestant other' or new ones created by recent territorial adjustments, were often viewed as immutable enemies. Paradoxically, the peacemakers' primary focus on national self-determination offered nation-statism unprecedented political gravitas and nurtured its most extreme tendencies. It inflated ambitions, excited expectations, and inevitably underdelivered on both fronts. The peace treaties created new states and reconfigured the borders of existing ones, but nowhere did they produce genuine 'nation-states'. The problem, however, was that the post-1918 states perceived themselves and behaved as 'nation-states'. Rulers and majority population groups viewed new minorities as onerous, but they also became much more alert to the alleged difference of groups with whom they had lived together (not necessarily amiably) for a long time. Viewed from the lens of overblown nation-statism, minorities

became both more visible and more troubling to the majority groups of the aspiring nation-states.

The problem had as much to do with the reality of long-term population dispersal in Europe as with the shortcomings of the postwar negotiations and agreements. The signing of the four peace treaties—the overarching Treaty of Versailles (1919) and its regional offshoots of Neuilly (1919), St Germain (1919), Trianon (1920), and Sèvres (1920)—generated a deep fracture between winners and losers. In fact, the post-1920 European map was made up of three kinds of states: new ones created out of the collapse of the multiethnic empires; existing states that were awarded new territories; and existing states that were penalised by losing some of their erstwhile lands to their neighbours. In any of these three processes the mismatch between territory and ethnic identity of populations residing in it was evident to both peacemakers and national representatives. Unlike previous territorial readjustments following the conclusion of a major war, the post-WWI negotiations attempted to negotiate the victors' desire for compensation and punishment of the vanquished with a normative principle of matching ethnicity with statehood. In these awkward circumstances the result was a reasonable compromise but just not good enough for most. Very few states came out 'satisfied' and 'satiated'; and even then they still had to face the existence of new and/or old minorities within the new borders, or discontented and covetous neighbours. The losers of the Great War were left with both territorial ambitions (later to be known collectively as *revisionism*) and with desires to 'redeem' the territories and ethnically kin populations that were transferred to other states (a phenomenon known as *irredentism*; Kallis 2000: Ch 4). The peacemakers presented the post-WWI settlement as final and incontrovertible, in spite of the desire of many states for revisions. Ironically, it was this intended impression of finality that rendered old and new minorities more troubling to national majorities, new and old.

The dream of nation-statism consumed new and old states in the aftermath of the peace treaties. In it there was no real place for minority self-determination. In spite of legal guarantees and the efforts of the newly established League of Nations, some national majorities sought refuge to the principle of national sovereignty to introduce eliminationist measures already in the early 1920s (see following, Ch 7). A more general descent into eliminationist violence was averted in the absence of a wider momentum and precedent until well into the 1930s, just like it happened in the case of territorial revisionism against the stipulations of the various post-WWI peace treaties. But the increasing diffusion and power of the chimera of nation-statism—inflated or aggravated after the painful territorial adjustments of the 1918–20 period across the continent—had already contributed to the political and psychological marginalisation of many minority groups into the grey zone of 'contestant otherness'. This was the first, decisive step towards a more aggressive discourse of eliminationism, nurtured by both long-term prejudices and contemporary anxieties or fears.

**THE 'UBIQUITOUS OTHERS': THE JEWS AND ROMANI
IN THE ERA OF NATION-STATISM**

As previously stressed, those 'others' did indeed differ from nation to nation, depending on proximity with particular out-groups, memories of past conflicts, as well as their size, visibility, and perceived power. There were, however, also generic and ubiquitous 'others', whose marginal status no longer depended on everyday interaction and derived from deeper, time-old generic prejudices. Apart from being the epitome of the internal outsider (see previous), Jews were such a permanent and ubiquitous 'other' across many European states and societies (Bauman 1991: 66). Centuries of theological damnation, legal persecution, and popular prejudice had generated an almost automatic anti-Jewish feeling—collective and individual—in large parts of the continent (Perry & Schweitzer 2005: Chs 1–3). With few and only partial exceptions (e.g., Ottoman empire), Jews remained the primary targets of internal persecution, of random scapegoating, and of all sorts of prejudices throughout the centuries in most corners of Christian Europe. Accusations of 'deicide', 'ritual murder', and 'blood libels' but also proto-racial beliefs in their alleged materialist immorality and cunning manipulative demeanour (*EJ* 1972: 1120–31; Finzi 1997; Rose & Hillel 2005) had confined the Jews to a liminal sociocultural space, constantly exposed to the whims of ruling elites and local societies. The pictorial depiction/caricature of 'the Jew' achieved a near-universality in popular culture, diffusing and standardising stereotypes through a common visual and oral vocabulary before literacy and the spread of anti-Semitic publications exposed the European public to a new discourse of prejudice. This imagery, for centuries sustained through religious fervour, survived the advent of modernity, the demise of the social influence of the church, and the secularisation of identities precisely because it had always operated on a deeper, popular level of prejudice without much understanding of, or attention to, its theological origins.

While, however, Jews had remained the quintessential 'outsiders' in the religious world of Christianity, the advent of modernisation recast the Jewish 'problem' in a fundamentally different fashion. The new spirit of liberalism and secularism in the second half of the nineteenth century signified the disintegration of the predominant religious discourse and afforded European states the previously unthinkable 'magnanimity' of conceding emancipatory measures to their Jewish minorities. Toleration of diversity and acceptance of cultural difference signified—in *principle*—a paradigmatic shift from demanding uniformity and homogeneity, as well as a more 'neutral' exercise of power by the modern secular state that had jettisoned its traditional mission to enforce a strict ethical code upon its citizens (Innes 2002). In theory again, this involved the possibility of a wider project of inclusion, by tolerant integration or long-term assimilation.

This, however, proved to be the exception, not the norm. In fact, traditional anti-Jewish prejudices continued to function as a reference point

for negative integration within many nations and nation-states. What happened was that the conventional religious divide (often weakened but never eliminated) was supplemented by novel generic dichotomies. The advent of socialism from the second half of the nineteenth century produced an internationalist revolutionary alternative to the idea of cultural integration propagated by the national state. The numerically disproportionate representation of Jews in its ranks and their ensuing socioeconomic visibility offered new prospects for the perpetuation of anti-Jewish prejudice in European societies (Herf 2006: Chs 2–4). The conventional religious prejudice was gradually filtered through the new nationalist/internationalist fault line, allowing it to continue to operate in a more modern, secular setting, yet in almost unbroken continuity with traditional anti-Jewish sentiments. This was a process of updating and redefinition, informed by standard impulses of Judeo-phobia but radicalised in the light of new, short-term concerns. This functional transformation of the core of modern anti-Semitism (Ettinger 1988) involved a *nationalisation* of a time-long prejudice. By that time the anti-Jewish imagery had already become a powerful, widely shared cultural/religious idiom across Europe, operating as both an internal problem within a community and a much wider question that attributed to 'the Jew' an impersonal but allegedly threatening quality for the whole civilisation of Europe.

This change signified and in turn nurtured a process of radicalisation. Before, Jews were regarded as enemies of the generic Christian order and morality; now, individual Jewish communities residing within the boundaries of nation-states became 'harmful outsiders' to a much more rigid, psychologically evocative, and tangible community—that of the nation. This nationalisation of anti-Jewish prejudice brought Judeo-phobia significantly closer to the perceptions and fears of the national community's members. Now, as nation-statism gathered momentum, the Jews provided once again the perfect target: a 'people without history' (Wolf 1982), without land and identity, without state and allegiance, had no place in the 'closed' nation-state. For their own specific reasons, many Jewish leaders and individuals had indeed supported a number of internationalist structures over the prospect of the division of empires into nation-states. For example, many Jews of the Austro-Hungarian empire, caught in the middle of an intensifying interethnic conflict between Slavic, Germanic, and Magyar elements, chose to support the integrity of the multinational empire as their separate identity would be more secure in a political entity with no unitary ethnic character (Pauley 1992: 77ff). This did not mean that they actively opposed movements for the emancipation of individual populations within the empire, but that they saw their position as infinitely safer within the melting pot of the imperial structures. At the same time, Jewish communities often opposed projects pursued by state authorities that would strengthen the ethnically/religiously uniform character of their 'host' state. When the modern Greek state pursued with zeal the nationalist utopian goal of the 'Great Idea'

(*Megali Idea*) in the first two decades of the twentieth century (a plan envisioning the territorial reconstitution of an expanded Greek state in the lands associated with the nation's past from ancient to medieval times), Jewish leaders opposed it in order to avoid the marginalisation of the indigenous Jewish element amidst a state policy geared towards homogenisation (Veremis 1983; Skopetea 1984). In these and other instances the attitude of the Jewish populations raised pathological concerns amongst sections of the 'national community' about the Jews' allegiance and commitment to their 'host' nation-state.

Further arbitrary associations added to the customary popular inculpation of the stereotypical 'Jew'. Traditionally Jewish communities had been associated with liberalism, economic and political, as well as with capitalist materialism. However, critiques of materialism, of the greedy lust for accumulation of capital, and of the alleged social disintegration that innovations in the socioeconomic and political field brought with them, gathered momentum in the last decades of the nineteenth century, fostered by new economic anxieties amidst an atmosphere of crisis and intensifying competition. The emergence of economic nationalism, expressed in a plethora of ways such as the introduction of tariffs and restrictions in the conduct of international trade, projected the need to defend *national* wealth against covetous competitors, from both outside and inside the state—the latter category implying 'the Jew' as the archetypal greedy materialist and 'plutocratic' creature (Perry & Schweitzer 2002: 119–73; Brustein 2003: Ch 4). Thus, an additional deep cultural rift—between modernity and national uniqueness—widened even further the gap between the stereotypical image of 'the Jew' and the interests of the national community. Nationalist agitators in a plethora of countries started to call for a dynamic defence of national qualities against any form of internationalism—not only socialism but also 'Western' liberalism, materialism, bourgeois cosmopolitanism, and 'plutocracy'—all of which implicated somehow a stereotypical image of 'the Jew'.

What was even more disturbing was the porosity between all these very different anti-Jewish discourses and their cumulative effect. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century France witnessed an outburst of anti-Jewish feeling fuelled by a plethora of different sources, events, and arguments. The alleged Jewish role in the collapse of the Union Generale bank in 1882 revived the anti-Semitic momentum in French society through a combination of traditional prejudice and new, 'modern' socioeconomic anxieties (Brustein 2003: 192–4). Yet, in hindsight, this was only the beginning of a new wave of anti-Jewish agitation in France that soon produced two further outbursts—the first in 1891 with regard to the Panama Canal scandal (Mollier 1991) and the second in 1894 with the Dreyfus Affair (Wilson 1982; Cahm 1996; Arnold 2000: Ch 2). Though different in causes and symbolism, the latter two incidents fed into a cumulative reservoir of resentment against 'the Jew' that had become a central facet of contemporary political

debates about the future of the French nation, state, and society (Kaplan 1995; Debevoise 1999: 139–54).

This broader assault also had serious implications for the campaign for the integration of the Jews in national life. The more the values associated with cliché 'Jewishness' were rejected as harmful by indigenous nationalist doctrines, the less palatable the idea of Jewish assimilation became. As a result, calls for the Jews' forced assimilation in the context of an exclusive loyalty to the state and the national community became more widespread, vocal, and aggressive (Goldhagen 1996: Chs 1–2). The development of a distinct Jewish national sentiment towards the turn of the century, in the form of Zionism, did little to improve the standing of European Jews in the suspicious eyes of the gentiles. Ironically, for some rabid anti-Semites the prospect of a Jewish homeland was a far more acceptable solution to integration or assimilation, as it essentially involved the voluntary elimination of the Jewish communities from Europe through emigration. But for the majority of gentiles the Zionist political platform served as further evidence of the Jews' alleged lack of commitment to their host nation's interest, highlighting their putatively deliberate alienation from the life and priorities of their 'hosts'. As internationalist and antinational, religiously and culturally deviant, socially nonconformist, and economically materialist, 'the Jew' became the focal point of such cumulative intolerance (Wistrich 1989). It is indicative of modern nationalism's capacity for reproducing old prejudices that accusations of national betrayal, corruptive materialism, and political connivance coexisted with the more archaic ones of 'blood libel' and 'deicide' (Nižňanský 2004: 209). Thus, 'the Jew' became burdened with new hues of 'other-ness' without having been relieved of the stigmata from traditional negative stereotypes and prejudices of a bygone era (Bauman 1991: 65–8).

A similar process of nationalising a generic enduring prejudice affected another ubiquitous group of 'others' allegedly without history or land, the 'Gypsy' (predominantly Sinti/Roma) populations residing in various parts of Europe. Although disparate in their customs, culture, language, and shifting geographic location due to their mostly nonsedentary lifestyle, the members of this group had become the targets of violent persecution in Europe since the Middle Ages. Unlike the case of the Jews, imposed segregation from the authorities was not an option with regard to Sinti/Roma communities as their nomadic life had rendered them voluntary social outsiders from the outset (Barany 2002: 83–111). But legal persecution, intimidation, expulsion, and sporadic pogroms had been disturbingly common in the past centuries, especially at times of crisis and war (Lewy 2000: 1–14). Anti-Gypsy prejudice was not rooted in either theological beliefs or popular religious prejudices. Instead, the origins of their marginalisation and victimisation lay in more diachronic social judgements: about their itinerant, insular, and largely self-sufficient lifestyle that fostered their depiction as social 'parasites'; their unconventional morality that seemed to condone

deceit and theft against the *gadjo* (non-Gypsy; Bauer 1982: 46–7); and their dogged resistance to integration and cultural assimilation, as well as lack of interest in acquiring a state or a form of institutionalised society (Fraser 1992: 151ff). Unlike Jews, Sinti/Roma were far less visible in socioeconomic terms, occupying marginal positions and showing very little inclination to exert more influence. Like Jews, however, they were dispersed and identifiable, without a reference nation or state to protect them. All these factors rendered them even more vulnerable to prejudice and victimisation.

In addition to ingrained prejudices against their traditional nonsedentary status, new waves of Romani emigrants from the Balkans to central Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century exacerbated the generic stereotype of ‘the Gypsy’ as the immutable, uncivilised, and rootless ‘alien’ (Lewy 2000: 4). Although distinctions between various subgroups were often evident in popular perceptions and cast the more sedentary and assimilated ones in a more positive light, the negative power of the generic stereotype did not wane. In Estonia, for example, the oldest and largely assimilated group of the Laiuse was distinguished from subsequent emigrants from Russia and Latvia; but the very linguistic origins of the Estonian word for ‘Gypsy’ (*mustlased*, meaning ‘black’) betrayed a fundamental core of racial denigration and prejudice (Weiss-Wendt 2003: 33ff).

Eliminationist measures against the Gypsies had a long historical pedigree in Europe. Attempts to expel or resettle them, to force them to adopt a sedentary lifestyle, to ban their language and rituals, to prevent them from begging or from other economically unproductive activities, and to contain their alleged criminal behaviour had been pursued across the continent from medieval to modern times (Kenrick 2000: 79–85). But the emergence of the ‘Aryan myth’ in the late nineteenth century (see following, Ch 2) introduced a new dimension to the discussion of ‘Gypsy’ descent. There were indications that the Gypsies were linked to the so-called Aryan race and their language belonged to the ‘Indo-Aryan’ group. In contrast to earlier beliefs that they had originated from Egypt (hence the name ‘gypsy’—Mayall 2001: Ch 3), it was now claimed that the group had its origins in India and that it should be considered part of the Aryan race per se, as a sort of romanticised ‘noble savage’. However, this conclusion clashed with centuries of prejudice and a prevalent belief that they were a fundamental, irreconcilable, and dangerous alien (*fremdartig*) in Europe—a mongrel race derived from uncontrolled miscegenation with other, ‘lower’ races that led to its own racial degeneration (Trubeta 2003). The increasing interest of ethnographic and anthropological studies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries soon included the issue of the Gypsies’ racial origins. No consensus was reached between the Romantic idea of ‘the gypsy’ as a ‘noble savage’, the notion of their allegedly ‘Aryan’ descent, and their denigration as a ‘mongrel’ race by modern racialist ideologies. One of the doyens of race theory during the Third Reich, Hans Guenther, blamed Gypsies for introducing ‘foreign blood’ into Europe and identified them as one of the main causes

of social-racial degeneration (Guenther 1925: Chs 1–3; Novitch 1984). In his *Uomo Delinquente*, the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso devoted a large part of his analysis to the allegedly genetic origins of the Gypsies' 'criminal' behaviour, using a language that NS racial experts would deploy extensively more than half a century later to legitimise their own anti-Gypsy ideas (Lombroso 1876). The nineteenth-century Scottish natural scientist and anthropologist Robert Knox went even further, branding the Gypsies 'the refuse of the human race' (R Knox 1850). Arthur Gobineau, on the other hand, studied them with mixed feelings (some admiration for their ideal status as 'noble savages' permeated his otherwise very negative assessment of their 'racial value'); and even the notorious preacher of the allegedly Teutonic racial superiority, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, drew a sharp distinction between 'pure' and *Mischlinge* (mixed) 'gypsies' (Asséo 1994). Nevertheless, it is extremely doubtful that even the most positive assumptions of research into the origins of the Sinti/Roma seeped into popular collective imageries and questioned traditional prejudices—or indeed were free from them in the first place. In the absence of systematic approaches to the 'Gypsy question', the overwhelming majority of measures were introduced in a piecemeal, decentralised manner that resulted from the desire of local authorities to eliminate the Romani from their particular territories. Even in modern Germany, where the *Zigeunerfrage* received significant attention as both a security and a hygienic matter, initiatives were localised and any statewide policy was thwarted prior to 1933 (see following, Ch 6).

The emergence, however, of an aggressive nationalist inclusion/exclusion discourse from the second half of the nineteenth century contributed to the further deterioration of the Romani social standing across the continent. For, apart from being regarded as alien clusters amidst the proceeding homogenisation of national life, they also continued to migrate, either voluntarily or as a result of mass expulsion and involuntary migration. The latter trend increased in the second half of the nineteenth century, especially in southern Europe, where new nation-states attempted to instil a sense of national homogeneity to their populations by targeting the Romani. This and the legal liberation of the Romani from their previous status of serfdom resulted in a large wave of migration northwards and westwards, making them appear even more obviously as 'intruders' into the social and territorial domain of their new host 'national communities' (Hancock 1987: Ch 5; Achim 2004: Ch 4). Once again conventional bigotry against 'the Gypsy' dovetailed with the new discourses of national homogeneity and socioeconomic conformity to produce a potent platform for their intensifying persecution as 'burden' and 'threat' to individual nations and nation-states (Sehns 1998: 82–83, 105).

Intriguingly, even those supporting integration into the national community did not necessarily endorse the two groups' right to continued specificity. Progress in terms of emancipation and extension of rights to previously 'alien' groups produced intellectual distortions even amongst the liberal and

progressive camps. Historically, campaigns in favour of Jewish emancipation concealed concrete social expectations of voluntary and full-hearted integration (Bauman 1991: 69–73). The Christian religious integrationist strand had introduced the term of conversion, which essentially entailed the voluntary repudiation of their theological-cultural specificity as a condition for acceptance. From 1791, when the French revolutionary National Assembly voted to extend equal rights to French Jews (not without strong objections), the prerequisite of conversion was jettisoned in what appeared like a shift to unqualified civic citizenship for all. However, such moves projected hopes for a long-term natural integration through voluntary but full assimilation. When it became evident that this would not be the case, some liberal commentators assumed the offensive against the alleged insularity of Jews, as their attachment to a highly ritualistic code of life was now regarded as an impediment to their full integration into civic society. At the same time, radical critics of modern society, including nineteenth-century socialists, added to the prevailing stereotypical representation of ‘the Jew’ by viewing their traditional professional ethos as a crucial impediment to social transformation (Fourier 1848). Even Jewish thinkers, such as Karl Marx, sought recourse to some of these stereotypes in order to criticise the Jews’ attachment to religion and particular socioeconomic activities (Bauman 1991: 137ff). All these criticisms were, of course, rather different from the intolerant discourses of social exclusion or cultural/religious conformity propagated by conservative visions of social integralism, let alone the emerging racialist exclusionary arguments that would become so widespread during the twentieth century. But they did very little to dissipate animosity towards them (De Lange 1991).

WW I, with its pressing demands on the nations for the total mobilisation of their human resources, signified a short-lived interlude for most Jewish communities in Europe. ‘Alien’ members of the national communities were conscripted in the war effort and most of their leaders issued enthusiastic declarations, stressing their dedication to the national cause as integral members of the nation (Katz 1980: 311–12). The atmosphere of external threat fostered the appearance of internal unity. By the end of the hostilities in 1918, however, the landscape had changed dramatically. The revolutionary wave that originated in Russia with the Bolshevik seizure of power swept across Europe, engulfing Germany and Hungary as well as creating an atmosphere of menace across the continent. That prominent leaders of the socialist revolutions were indeed Jewish was factually accurate: Trotsky, Kamenev, and Zinoviev in Russia; Kun in Hungary; Luxemburg and Kautsky in Germany; Eisner in Bavaria, and so on. But the idea of an alleged ‘Judeo-Bolshevik international conspiracy’, masterminded by Jews through communism, had invaded the mainstream of postwar European nationalist discourses (Perry & Schweitzer 2002: Ch 3; Herf 2006: 17–49). This connection was extremely powerful, especially at a time when nation-statism was gathering momentum in direct opposition to any form

of internationalism. In medieval times the sinister power that was attributed to 'the Jew' was theological and moral, derived from his alleged pact with the devil (Brustein 2003: Ch 2). Now, however, 'the Jew' was bestowed with a new form of political and economic power, rooted in the secret channels of an international conspiracy that was allegedly tangible and targeted the very foundations of national life. The forged *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, masterminded by the Russian secret police in the 1890s, presented the amorphous, decentred Jewish Diaspora as the Trojan horse of an alleged plot conceived by a central sinister elite and carried out through local and national 'fifth columns' (Cohn 1970; Eisner 1995; Segel 1995; Bronner 2000). Even the previous idea of the moral salvation of 'the Jew' through baptism and/or cultural assimilation came to be regarded by some as part of that putative ploy and was therefore targeted as devious.

Alleged antinational conspiracies, organised by a web of powerful international agitators (Jews, Bolsheviks, finance capital, Anglo-Saxons, liberals, and intellectuals—in any arbitrary combination), had allegedly placed each nation in an almost desperate position of self-defence in an uneven struggle that threatened the very foundations of national life. Thus, the 'enemy within' was at the same time the agent of a gigantic coalition: the Jewish international plot to overthrow the national order (the most powerful subtext of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*), the 'four confederated estates' according to the leading ideologue of the proto-fascist *Action Française* Charles Maurras (Wincock 1993: 125–56), the 'plutocratic western powers' and the 'great Jewish bankers of London and New York, bound by the chains of race to those of Moscow' according to Mussolini (OO, XIII, 169), the 'Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy' perceived by Hitler and the entire Nazi leadership (Hitler 1971), the 'democratic-Soviet alliance' castigated by Oswald Mosley (Mosley 1936: 383), and so on. 'Jewish' bankers, corruptive social influences affecting the cherished cultural essence of the nation, the enslavement of internal political and professional life to the hostile interests of 'alien' forces, a concerted plot allegedly geared towards the denationalisation of European civilisation, the divisive impact of internationalist ideologies such as socialism and liberalism—all had supposedly corrupted the nation, contaminated its creative pool, and seriously undermined its ability to halt the process of degeneration.

By the time the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia and established their regime, the main components of the 'Jewish-Bolshevik' conspiratorial narrative had been firmly in place. After 1918, vanquished countries sought to explain defeat as the result of a process of internal subversion that weakened the resolve of the national community and eventually betrayed its confidence. In Hungary, the 'Trianon myth' emerged as a powerful psychological lacuna for the negative integration and rallying of the Hungarian nation against the pervasive feeling of national humiliation and internal degeneration (Karfunkel 1982: 457ff; Vardy 1999). In the early 1920s the historian Gyula Szekfű presented a historical narrative of early greatness and present

decline for Hungary, which implicated the Jews as the main culprit of the nation's recent misfortunes (Deák 1992: 1049–51). The diffuse scapegoating of the Jews in the post-Trianon period claimed alleged links between the country's Jewish population, Freemasons, and communists in the context of a much wider conspiracy against European nations (Pók 2006). At the same time, the anti-Jewish pogroms that immediately followed the collapse of the Béla Kun regime during the summer of 1919 betrayed a combination of traditional anti-Jewish feeling prevalent in Catholic and aristocratic Hungarian circles, and of a belief that defeat and revolution were the results of subversive Jewish agency (Ungváry 2004: 238–9). In Germany, the explosive combination of defeat, revolution, humiliation under the Versailles Treaty, political compliance through the Weimar Republic, and severe economic dislocation represented a historical breakdown for the nation that large sections of the German society were prepared to associate with the alleged motives of the stereotypical Jew. The 'stab in the back' myth that devoured nationalist circles in Weimar Germany portrayed the November 1918 revolution (and the subsequent attempts in Bavaria and Berlin to establish a communist system) as evidence of Jewish-socialist connivance to bring down the German Reich (Geyer 1998). Theodore Abel's interviews with more than 500 early Nazis showed the astounding degree of psychological infiltration that the 'stab in the back' idea had achieved amongst the ranks of radical nationalists who joined the NSDAP. Whilst, however, the overwhelming majority of the interviewees claimed that they were fierce anti-Semites, their reasons for this had mostly to do with the attribution of recent historical developments (defeat in WW I, Versailles Diktat, revolution, etc) to 'the Jew' as internationalist, antinationalist, and socialist (Merkl 1975: 382ff).

It was not just defeat or fear, however, that enforced and radicalised anti-Semitic prejudices. Victory and the realisation of the quintessential nationalist dream (i.e., establishment of nation-state) did very little to shield the indigenous Jewish communities from victimisation and persecution. In Romania, Jews, especially those residing in recently gained eastern territories bordering on the Soviet Union under the Treaty of Trianon, were regarded as agents of either Bolshevik subversion or Hungarian revisionism—both an anathema to interwar Romanian nationalism (Mendelsohn 1983: 187). In Poland, Jews were widely persecuted and victimised as both hostile to the Polish national cause and 'Russian' or 'German' in terms of allegiance (see following, Ch 4). Thus, it is not coincidental that anti-Jewish violence reached lethal proportions during the Polish-Russian war of 1919–20, during which Jews were accused of serving the enemy (Korzec 1980; Mendelsohn 1983: 32–43). A similar fate awaited the Lithuanian and Ukrainian Jews in 1919–20, who were once again held responsible for subverting the indigenous nationalist movement by allegedly conniving with the Russians (Shohat 1958: 7ff).

In the aftermath of imperial collapse in 1918 and of the ensuing territorial reorganisation of the continent by the various peace treaties, Jewish

communities previously scattered in large imperial territories alongside competing ethnic groups were transferred under the political jurisdiction of national authorities that were bent on defending a very narrow concept of national unity and security. The enforced nationalisation of the new states' life made ample use of rigid unitary strategies of constructing a common identity that were heavily intolerant towards any form of nonconformism. It came as no surprise, therefore, that in such circumstances the most resilient and diffuse form of prejudice (anti-Semitism) received a new, even more lethal lease of life.

THE AFTERMATH OF WW I: NEW 'NATION-STATISMS' AND NEW 'OTHERS'

Apart from creating new nation-states and nurturing new chimeras of nation-statism, the new geopolitical situation after the peace treaties of 1919–20 created new 'others' for many European states as a result of the redrawing of boundaries and the arbitrary transfer of population groups that came with it. New borders created not only new states but also new minority problems. They altered relative population relations and disrupted patterns of social, economic, and cultural communication. The case of Romania—perhaps the country that benefited the most from the territorial readjustments after WW I (Sharp 1991: 133ff)—highlights these new problems eloquently. The incorporation of Transylvania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia into the new Romanian kingdom signified the near-realisation of a territorial utopia that had inflated the ambitions of Romanian nationalism since the nineteenth century. However, it also came at a high price: the transfer of territory created new (and relatively large) Jewish, German, and Hungarian minorities inside the 'new' Romania, the members of which had historic links with neighbouring countries and very little in common with their new host (Livezeanu 1995: Ch 1). This heightened sense of mutual alienation between Romanians and the minorities inside the new state, as well as the hostile reception of the minority protection measures imposed by the peacemakers and only grudgingly accepted in the 1923 constitution, incorporated specific perceptions of 'other-ness' into a generic template of xenophobia. This not only strengthened eliminationist discourses against individual minorities but also resulted in a cumulative escalation of hostility towards all of them (Pearson 1992). Similar complications arose in almost all 'successor' countries of the erstwhile Austro-Hungarian empire—Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland—in the Baltic states, and the Balkans—Greece and Bulgaria. They strengthened the demands of 'nation-statism' in terms of assimilation, sustained a situation of psychological or literal 'distance', and occasionally slipped into aggressive modes of eliminationism.

The emerging psychological hierarchy of 'other-ness' in each nationalist discourse reflected both long-standing enmities and knee-jerk responses

to new circumstances. 'Fear' was based far more on perception than on a dispassionate diagnosis of the situation. Long-term stereotypes inevitably interfered and distorted these perceptions. For example, many countries that received German-speaking minorities within their new boundaries had much more to fear from a resurgent German irredentist nationalism than from their Jewish communities, old and new. However, with the exception of Austria (where the aggressive pro-*Anschluss* platform of the indigenous NSDAP threatened the very independence of the state) and to an extent Italy (due to the German-speaking minority in South Tyrol), nowhere were the Germans perceived as the most threatening and dangerous group. Similarly, the kingdom of Romania had clearly much more to fear from either the revisionist Hungary to the west or the unpredictable Soviet Union to the north than from its Jewish communities; and yet, it was the latter who became the target *par excellence* of Romanian nationalism's eliminationist tendencies in the interwar period. Whilst eliminationist discourses, even aggressive ones, made their appearance in the 1920s and 1930s in many countries, they mostly targeted groups that had been traditionally portrayed as inferior in cultural and even racial terms.

Thus, in the aftermath of WW I the potential for eliminationist measures against minorities increased dramatically, even if this did not become immediately apparent. The state was imagined by some as ethnically homogeneous and 'pure'—a genuine organic community of the nation, the whole nation, and nothing but the nation. Elimination inhered in this utopian condition, however inadmissible or impossible it might have appeared to most as a blueprint for immediate or future action (Bartov 2000: 151–7). But, once imagined as desirable and intelligible, it was also rendered possible, even if this possibility remained initially exiled to the fringes of the in-group's collective consciousness as a far-fetched utopia. The gap between reality and utopia (of a 'life without others') still appeared to most people real, prohibitive, and unbridgeable. Taking this extreme utopia seriously and acting on it would require something more, something profound that would render it not just desirable but also legitimate, feasible, and/or unavoidable; and this happened in the period between the 1920s and the end of WW II, becoming the horrifying legacy of the 'era of fascism'.

Nationalism, then, and its particular historical articulation as aggressive, insecure 'nation-statism' provided the first path to the potential for elimination of 'others'. Its crucial contribution lay in providing a solid, potent historical template in which the utopia of group homogeneity within an ideal nation-state became intelligible, feasible, and desirable. It 'nationalised' prejudices, aggravated perceptions of 'other-ness', radicalised the notion of in-group membership, and institutionalised a realm of diminishing moral responsibility for eliminationist actions that *could* be undertaken in the name of defending the national community from perceived threats. By demonising 'other-ness' and fetichising the exclusive rights of the community, by displacing negative developments and features towards particular

'contestant others', as well as by perceiving nonconformity as a hostile anti-national act, nation-statism contemplated a political, socioeconomic, and cultural domain of unmitigated national jurisdiction. In so doing it had already turned its back on the vision of pluralism, looked beyond conventional practices of cultural assimilation, and reached the doorstep of aggressive eliminationism.

In a post-1918 world of new and old states devoured by national and international insecurities, where nation-statism appeared in grave danger from both worldwide trends and internal subversion, anti-Semitism became the (more) acceptable laboratory of eliminationist solutions against the national 'other'. It was indeed more acceptable because it rested on centuries of cultural preparation for accepting the idea that 'the Jew' was a liminal and threatening presence in Christian Europe, that their existence was culturally and racially regressive, that their presence threatened the survival of national and European civilisation. Jews, like Sinti/Roma, were already deemed by many to be rootless and history-less, immutably inferior, and thus could be excluded from the 'civility' of standard human relations. As early as August 1919 a group of Hungarian nationalists demanded the 'solution to the Jewish question' through forced expulsion (an unmistakable recipe of elimination). Little by little the idea of a 'Jew-free' (*judenfrei*) national territory spread infectiously across the continent before it became a horrifying reality in NS Germany and elsewhere in the 1930s and 1940s.

To view these measures purely as a heavy-handed unleashing of anti-Semitism would obscure a further crucial function: that through the persecution of the Jews interwar nation-states were testing the ground for the broader vision of an ethno-exclusive ideal state, freed from *every* conceived form of 'otherness'. The Jews remained the most intelligible, the most reviled and symbolic 'anti-group' for most European societies from amongst the plethora of new and old 'others' within each national context. Their widespread victimisation, apart from telling us so much about the strength of anti-Jewish feeling in the interwar period, was also a feasibility test, a symbolic dress rehearsal and 'licence' for realising the extreme utopia of nation-statism. The cumulative radicalisation of anti-Jewish persecution in the 1930s and 1940s made a new kind of violence imaginable—a violence that could be deployed against the Jews but unleashed more broadly against 'others' who had also suffered denigration or even dehumanisation in the past. It is in this context that the contribution of modern racialist thinking and the emergence of the idea of the *racial nation* have to be evaluated.

2 'Race', 'Nation', and the 'Internal Enemy'

Parallel to the rise of nationalism and the growing fixation with nation-statism, another fundamental shift in the interpretation of human history was already in full motion by the end of the nineteenth century. The emergence of an allegedly authoritative epistemology of 'race' questioned a series of key assumptions upon which grand historical narratives of human civilisation had been constructed. Traditional racist thought, based on the idea of *monogenesis* (that is, the single biological derivation of all modern human groups), did not lend itself to discourses of inherent superiority and inferiority of human groups. Yet, the contact of European colonisers with populations in previously unknown parts of the world during the age of explorations and imperialism (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries) produced a need to account not only for the different levels of 'civilisation' between the European 'metropolis' and the colonies of the new world, but also for visible differences in the physical appearance and demeanour of peoples in the two spheres. The idea of the 'inequality' of human races, as propagated by prominent modern racial theorists such as Arthur Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain (but, as we shall see, implicit in much earlier discourses of civilisational 'otherness'), coincided with broader cataclysmic developments in European culture. On the one hand, science had made impressive inroads into social and political analysis, responding to the need for rational explanations of historical phenomena and supplying novel opportunities for interpreting them in very different ways. On the other hand, the second wave of imperialism (nineteenth century) had brought Europeans into contact with African and Asian peoples, offering them unprecedented opportunities to devise *and* implement a system of power relations based on the assumption that their alleged superiority justified the subjugation and exploitation of allegedly inferior new 'others'. By arrogantly assuming that the Eurocentric model of civilisation represented the apogee of human evolution and by setting benchmarks derived from it (technology, political structures, art and architecture, etc), they came to the conclusion that domination was the ineluctable and immutable result of biological determinism. Social Darwinism lent further validity to such assumptions, first by legitimising the struggle between groups for control over resources, and second by interpreting

this 'inequality' as the result of the alleged fixity of biological qualities that were particular to each 'racial' group. Thus, the discourse of 'race' became an indispensable device of legitimising relations of domination-subjugation by suggesting and promoting systematically a notion of immutable biological hierarchy of 'human value'.

As we saw in Chapter 1, ideologies of cultural differentiation had always been an integral part of a group's identity-building. However, the modern deployment gradually reconceptualised the notion of the alleged European 'superiority' vis-à-vis other civilisations, populations groups, societies, and cultures. In the context of searching for new, secular explanations, the concept of *race* acquired a new pivotal significance. The construction of 'race' accumulated anthropological, biological, and historic observations but also combined them with traditional narratives of 'superiority', rooted in prejudice, heterophobia (fear of the different 'other'), and domination. It became an integral extension of European imperialism, justifying the exploitation and subjugation of other peoples. 'Race' was versatile enough to advance anthropological, biological, and cultural arguments in support of the notion of European 'superiority'. It also proved instrumental in reconciling the fundamental contradiction between discourses of equality, democracy, reason, and human rights inside Europe, on the one hand, and exploitation, prejudice, separation, and repression in the extra-European colonial domain, on the other (Weitz 2003: 22–4). That this tendency coincided with the emergence of more chauvinistic and exclusionary forms of nationalism in Europe enhanced its political expediency and prefigured the emergence of competing discourses of 'racial superiority' that were no longer limited to the encounter between the new and the old worlds but drew hierarchical lines between European nations too.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF 'RACE'

The history of the *concept* of 'race' is very long and complex, not necessarily coinciding with the history of the linguistic term. In medieval times 'race' was in ample but unsystematic use, mostly referring to different breeds of domesticated animals and not humans (Weitz 2003: 17–21). The loose application of the term continued in the following centuries, only gradually and unsystematically entering the realm of human variance. Sometimes it referred to external characteristics (skin colour, skull shape and dimensions, etc); on other occasions it denoted psychological and cultural divergences, whether biologically or environmentally/geographically determined. Two key issues underpinned the debates on race right through to the nineteenth century: first, whether there was a common descent for all humans, regardless of their group differences; and second, whether the empirically and/or historically observed variations were important enough to justify talk of different *species* of unequal 'value' (referred to as 'speciation') or constituted

different *varieties* of the same species (Banton 1998: 81). With regard to the former issue, the theory of monogenesis (single derivation) remained the main paradigm for the study of human descent until the nineteenth century, linked as it was also with orthodox theological views on human creation. When it came to the latter debate, the most systematic early attempts at 'racial' classification displayed a bewildering ambiguity, failing to make clear statements as to whether difference suggested simple variation or fundamental 'speciation'.

The main impetus for extending the concept of 'race' to the systematic study of the human species came from the experience of colonial expansion that brought Europeans into contact with previously unknown, bewildering to them populations and cultures. The first systematic classification of 'races' by the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus produced a four-type distinction based on geographic criteria (European, African, American, Indian) that echoed the bewilderment of the European mind from their encounter with new (very different in appearance) colonial 'others' in different parts of the world. In his *Systema Naturae* (1735) Linnaeus did not question the common descent of the human species—all types appeared as subdivisions of the single species *Homo sapiens* (Stanton 1960: 3–4). He did introduce, however, an implicit hierarchy of intellectual rigour and beauty, with the 'European' (considered 'white') type unquestionably at the top (Fredrickson 2002: 56–7). In spite of its shortcomings and obvious arbitrary assumptions, Linnaeus's scheme constituted a pioneering attempt at secularising the explanation of human descent whilst at the same time responding to the need for distinctions derived from awareness of different physical appearance and civilisation status. The influence of enlightenment thought did strengthen this tendency in the following century, placing increasing emphasis on the role of environmental conditions in determining 'racial' characteristics. Thus, another eighteenth-century naturalist, the French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, attributed the differences between 'white' and 'black' populations to the impact of geographic/environmental, cultural, and social conditions, concluding that

everything therefore comes together to prove that humankind is not made up of essentially different species, that to the contrary there was originally only one sole species, which . . . underwent different changes, though the influence of the climate, differences in food, diversity in way of life, epidemic illnesses, and also the infinitely varied mix of more or less similar individuals. (Buffon in Eze 1997: 528)

Even more importantly, Buffon stated clearly that even the most disparaged varieties of the 'African' type should still be classified as humans rather than considered a different species closer to apes, as some had started to argue. He insisted that even the 'Hottentots' (Khoikhoi) of South Africa—a group widely regarded as a veritable outcast from the human 'race' with a

predominance of allegedly 'beastly' characteristics that pointed to apes—should be unequivocally considered members of the human species (Fredrickson 1981: 39–40, 116–17; Hudson 2004: 308–32). Similar conclusions were reached by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in his treatise titled 'On the Natural Varieties of Mankind' (1775), which upheld the theory of monogenesis and rejected a wholesale speciation of humans. The stress on environmental factors as responsible for human variation continued to dominate the scientific field, pushing the counterparadigm of *polygenesis* (derivation of human groups from different species) to the fringes of the debate, at least until the nineteenth century (Wheeler 1999: 309–32). The foundations, however, of a wholesale questioning of the monogenist hypothesis and of secularising the debates on race by plotting alternative interpretations to the biblical theme of single creation and common descent had already been established. Already in the mid-seventeenth century Isaac La Peyrère had advanced the 'pre-Adamite' hypothesis, which claimed that the story of Adam and Eve could not account for the varieties of human civilisation and physical variation (Fredrickson 2002: 52). Although his theory received near-universal condemnation in 1656, it was emblematic of a growing tendency to separate an empirical-'scientific' debate on human descent from the realm of theology (Barkun 1996: 152–3). In the eighteenth century the Jamaican physicist and jurist Edward Long described the 'Negro' as 'incapable of civilisation' (Barker 1978: 163–77) and employed polygenist arguments to support his theory that the blacks constituted a separate species, between humans and apes.

It was one of the most distinguished philosophers of the Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant, who advanced a more nuanced hypothesis for the explanation of human variation. For him the idea that the human species had a common descent was unequivocal; but so was the classification of 'races' along geographic lines and skin colour (European, American, Senegambian, Indian). Kant introduced a more systematic distinction between 'race' and 'type' (or variation) by stating that the former referred to irreversible inherited characteristics whilst the latter was either of lesser significance or reversible. The passages in which Kant describes the qualities of the non-European ('white') groups are replete with condescending references. He asserted, for example, that 'the race of the [native] American cannot be educated . . . it has no motivating force, for it lacks affect and passion'. With regard to the inhabitants of African, he noted that they could only be turned into servants, as their 'extreme passion' made them incapable of exercising reasoned choice (Eze 1997b). Kant, however, did reject the polygenist platform as a whole and its arbitrary use by proponents of slavery as a means for attributing to 'negroes' the permanently inferior status of a different species (Neugebauer 1990).

The example of Kant highlights some of the fundamental contradictions that the Enlightenment brought to the discussion of 'race'. On the one hand, as George Fredrickson has noted, the emphasis on empirical observation

of the natural world and the inquisitive mind of rational scrutiny “made a colour-coded racism seem thinkable and thus set the foundations for nineteenth-century biological determinism” (Fredrickson 2002: 63). On the other hand, it introduced a discussion of human equality and reason that challenged traditional interpretations based on social prejudice, cultural insularity, and religious intolerance. The development of new forms of empirical enquiry in the nineteenth century, such as the measurement of external bodily features (skull, bones, etc—Schafft 2004: 39ff), highlighted this contradiction. Following at the steps of distinguished enlightenment thinkers (such as David Hume and Voltaire, who shared the belief that the ‘Negro’ was inferior and unreceptive to any civilisation—Bernasconi 2001: vii–viii) and empirical scientists (such as Long—see previous), in 1799 the Manchester-based physician Charles White published a detailed treatise whose title (‘Account of the Regular Gradation of Man’) suggested a different approach to human descent and classification (Banton 1998: 13–15). For White the allegedly manifested inability of the ‘black’ populations to advance technologically, culturally, and socially was indicative of their belonging to a different species to that of the ‘European’/‘white’ group. Then, in the 1830s Samuel Morton conducted a large survey of skull volumes by comparing average sizes of the European, African, Asian, and American endocranial sizes. His findings led him to suggest that there were noticeable variations between the examined ‘races’ in terms of skull volume. He then used this empirical observation to claim that the differences were indicative of a hierarchy of ‘racial’ intelligence, predictably with the ‘white’ group occupying the highest position and the ‘black’ placed at the bottom (Gossett 1997: 58–64).

Less than a decade later, Louis Agassiz, a Swiss paleontologist who emigrated to France and then to the USA, gave further currency to the ideas of polygenesis by arguing that different geographic regions of the world were dominated by different species of fauna and flora, as well as by different ‘racial’ human groups. Agassiz attempted to reconcile an empiricist departure from the biblical story of common human descent with an underlying belief in the existence of a ‘creation’ master-plan that included polygenesis (Gossett 1997: 60ff). The polygenist hypothesis received further validation through the work of Charles Caldwell, who applied chronological calculations based on historical knowledge in order to prove that the Adamite biblical narrative of common human descent did not really add up (Markus 2001: 11–12).

However, even before the debate on ‘race’ moved into the realm of heredity and biological determinism, the way in which Eurocentric thought approached the differences (physical, cultural, technological, social, moral) of the colonial ‘other’ betrayed a sense of self-congratulatory superiority (Kitson 1999: 15–16). In sixteenth-century Spain, the debate as to whether it was morally justifiable to enslave the indigenous populations in the New World contained derogatory remarks for the latter that would not have

been out of place in many nineteenth-century racial-biological discourses. When Juan Gines de Sepulveda argued the case in favour of enslavement, he presented the indigenous people of the New World as barbarous, cannibalistic, and consumed by the lowest passions, thereby classifying them as 'homunculi' and not proper humans (Llobera 2003: 24–27). Even those who attempted to use strictly 'scientific' taxonomical criteria could not resist the temptation to apply classical theories of beauty and Eurocentric aesthetic criteria in order to designate the 'white race' as the most beautiful. In fact, the polygenist German historian Cristoph Meiners went a (crucial) step further by perceiving external beauty as evidence of inherent intellectual superiority (Stauffer 2005/6: 1–37). In 1810 the American Presbyterian minister Samuel Stanhope Smith established an allegedly empirical correlation between skin fairness, intellectual capacity, and civilising potential, claiming that the 'negro' could become 'fairer' by living in the civilised environment of the USA, but could never rise above the status of the 'inferior (white) labourer class' (Smith 1965: 157.) The British anatomist William Laurence attributed 'racial' variation to heredity—not environmental factors—and claimed that the 'Europeans' were not only more beautiful and civilised but also intellectually superior (Lawrence 1823: 113, 312–13). And if colonial groups constituted a soft target for this kind of discourse, one should not forget that the inhabitants of Lapland in northern Europe had also suffered a similar fate. In the seventeenth century the first taxonomist of 'race', François Bernier, excluded the 'Lapps' from his 'European' racial type (which, interestingly, included both certain Asian and African populations) on the basis of their external appearance (stunted body, oversized legs and shoulders, 'wretched animals'; Stuurman 2000: 1–21). Thus, the perception of different 'races' as 'ugly' and the attribution to them of animal-like characteristics constituted a further attempt to dehumanise 'the other' by grotesquely exaggerating their difference and asserting the alleged superiority of the 'white' group in every possible domain.

The tendency to describe the external appearance of certain groups through animal analogies reached its apotheosis after the second age of explorations (nineteenth century), particularly with the discovery of new native populations in previously unexplored parts of Africa, Asia, and America. The initial curiosity of explorers soon gave way to a serious questioning of the 'humanity' of these seemingly alien creatures. It was not just that they *looked* different (and it is no coincidence that the term 'black'—a direct reference to their darker skin pigmentation—was deployed rather loosely to describe a wide range of population groups across continents) or that they lived in material, social, and cultural conditions which invoked to the European mind an imagery of 'primitiveness'. They also lived in a strange environment, wild and untouched, also inhabited by previously unknown animals. Thus, for example, the questioning of the humanity of the 'negro' was largely fuelled by the habitat in which he was found. The blurring of the distinctions between human and animal worked both ways:

the ‘negro’ allegedly displayed animal-like external features and behavioural traits (e.g., sexual conduct) whilst at the same time the chimpanzee or the orangutan appeared strangely human-like (Jordan 1968: 29–31). Buffon and Long boldly based their claim that the ‘negroes’ were an intermediary species between the ‘white European’ and the ape on the extraordinary idea that African women allegedly copulated with the latter (Kitson 2004: 11ff)! Such arguments became progressively empiricised and grounded in allegedly scientific enquiry, aided by developments in anthropology, biology, and craniometry. Charles White conducted a limited number of measurements of African sailors reaching the port of Liverpool and claimed that, whilst the ‘white race’ was by far the most beautiful one, the ‘negro’ was closer to the animal state than any other human species (White 1799: 137).

In addition to new discourses of ‘speciation’ against colonial ‘others’, traditional prejudices against known population groups were also distorted by the idea of ‘speciation’. This was primarily evident in perceptions of ‘the Jew’ in medieval times that blended effortlessly religious prejudice and proto-biological concerns. Although religious anti-Judaism did not appear to question the humanity of ‘the Jew’ (and the prospect of his salvation through conversion to Christianity), the notion that ‘Jewish blood’ was an immutable and threatening defining ingredient of Jewishness was also gaining ground (Achinstein 2001: 87; Gigliotti & Lang 2004). The proclamation of the ‘pure blood laws’ (*limpieza de sangre*) in fifteenth-century Spain betrayed a growing tension between Christians and Jews who had converted to Christianity using exactly the allegedly escape route of conversion (termed *Conversos* or *Marranos*, which meant pig). The new institution of the Holy Inquisition applied these laws to converted Jews and declared that the existence of ‘Jewish blood’ in their bodies (ascertained through lineage up to two generations) was so polluting that salvation was not possible, even through baptism and participation in the other sacraments (J Friedman 1987: 3–30). In late seventeenth century, Increase Mather, the leader of Boston’s Congregational Church, warned that Jewish ‘blood’ could not mix with that of other groups; a Jew, he argued, could never become anything else, in spite of religious conversions or intermarrying (Jacobson 2000: 241).

What is also interesting is the way in which this composite anti-Judaism prefigured racialism. The demonic qualities conventionally attributed to ‘the Jew’ in medieval Christian Europe were partly replicated in attitudes to Sinti/Roma (Lewy 2000: Introduction; see also Ch 1). Around the late fifteenth century the general perception of the ‘Gypsy’ (a term whose linguistic origin denotes the initial assumption that they came from Egypt due to their darker skin tone—see Ch 1) changed dramatically. Not only were they now denigrated for their nonsedentary life, their begging practices, and rituals, but they were attacked as ‘dirty’ and devious. Their darker skin colour was also linked with their allegedly negative qualities, alongside their social and cultural difference. The combination, however, of colour-coded prejudice and sociocultural intolerance soon acquired a distinct metaphysical

dimension that brought the image of 'the Gypsy' closer to that of 'the Jew'. Albert Krantzius provided a vivid description of how Gypsies in the German lands were perceived at the beginning of the sixteenth century. He saw them as 'black, dirty . . . barbarous', burdened with the guilt of having refused to help Joseph and Mary, and thus condemned to eternal wandering (a penalty that they could not shake off even after baptism). Krantzius used an animal analogy to describe their lifestyle ('they live like dogs') and saw in the stereotype of the Gypsy woman fortune-teller a threatening indication of heresy as well as a petty trick for theft (*Saxonia*, 1520). Then in 1652 Jacobus Thomasius correlated the Gypsies' skin colour with their animal qualities and denied them 'human' status. He wished that they disappeared from Europe, never to be seen again (Gronemeyer 1987: 157). In all these—and many subsequent—descriptions the attempt to discredit the Gypsies by appropriating the vocabulary of damnation used initially against the Jews was evident. They, like Jews, were seen as a 'wandering' people, self-exiled from the grace of God, endowed with metaphysical qualities that emanated from an alleged pact with the devil, engaging with child abduction, sorcery, and other similar activities (Liégeois 1987: 120–30). But it was also clear that new discourses of 'otherness', defined in the colonial field, could both infiltrate the perception of already known 'others' and be influenced by them.

RACE AND MODERNITY

So, racism had already developed a substantial, wide-ranging pedigree by the time that modern, (pseudo-)scientific enquiry shaped it into an authoritative paradigm for the study of human relations from the nineteenth century onwards. Proto-racial ideas, based on vague and elementary biological notions of immutable heredity, existed on the popular level long before they were synthesised and transformed into coherent doctrines of scientific racialism, legal practice, and fully-fledged 'modern' state policy (Wodak & Reisigl 1999: 178). The emergence of a systematic scientific approach to matters of 'race' from roughly the 1850s onwards, whilst very different to earlier perceptions of 'otherness' in context, methods, and devices, owed a lot to these earlier attempts to rationalise and justify 'speciation' in tandem with a discourse of alleged European superiority. It may be that modern racism, rooted in the use and abuse of scientific knowledge, put forward a biological determinism that was extraneous in theory to the universalist Christian creed (Puzzo 1964: 581). However, it is grossly inaccurate to see modern racism as replacing (wholly or partly) old stereotypes. As Claussen (1994: 230–4) has argued, racism is a syncretic and cumulative phenomenon, encompassing both scientific theories, surviving religious beliefs, social stereotypes, and persistent cultural prejudices. There is no other way to explain the continuity of Jewish persecution, of Gypsy denigration, or antiblack racism well into

the twentieth century and even beyond (Burleigh 1997: 196–8). As Edward Said noted, “the old religious patterns of human history and destiny and the ‘existential paradigms’ were . . . reconstituted, redeployed, redistributed in . . . secular frameworks” (in Bernasconi 2001: 5).

Nevertheless, the advent of a particular model of modernity invoking ideals of egalitarianism, human equality, and fundamental individual rights opened up a new niche for ‘inegalitarian (biological) racism’ (Taguieff 2001). The ‘new’ discourse of race sought to disseminate in allegedly empirical-scientific terms a reality of fundamental and irrevocable human inequality to audiences increasingly exposed to ideas of human equality and reason. That this discourse was perfected in a place like the USA in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (e.g., the ‘Jim Crow’ laws)¹ is far less surprising and contradictory when analysed as a consequence of (rather than as a divergence from) the popularity of revolutionary, egalitarian doctrines of constitutional citizenship rights. There, as well as in post-1789/post-Napoleonic France, the radical levelling-out of social differences on the basis of a common citizenship deconstructed the significance of traditional hierarchical labels (e.g., class or religion) and generated a search for new paradigms of internal hierarchies (Pick 1989: 37–73). It is in this context that we should understand the far more pronounced diffusion of ‘scientific’ theories of racism in France and the USA rather than in Britain or Spain (Fredrickson 2002: 67–8).

The increasing popularity of racism in the scientific, political, and popular domains also has to be understood in the context of wider historical developments across Europe. The advance of modernity opened up new areas of enquiry to science and empowered empirical research to seek wider, more ‘total’ explanations of human problems (Bull 1990). Grand scientific theories, such as Darwinism, Malthusianism, or Haeckel’s ‘Monism’, purported to offer universal prescriptions for a better human order, making increasing incursions in areas that had hitherto remained extraneous to scientific intervention, such as reproduction and healing (Weindling 1989c; Tucker 1994: Ch 2). Conventional wisdom about the causes of certain diseases, the effects of natural and social environment, or even the benefits of procreation became challenged by new science-based theories (Brunton 2004). A stream of cognitive advances in the study of the natural world (e.g., Mendel’s laws of heredity and Weismann’s germplasm theories), initially confined to plants and animals, were gradually imported into the analysis of the human condition (Kühl 1994: 29–30). This trend carried with it a potential for bringing into the focus of scientific enquiry and intervention a wide range of human activities that were traditionally seen as belonging to the ‘private sphere’ and/or were regulated by a different set of moral codes (e.g., the role of religion in influencing patterns of social conduct, sexual morality, and reproduction). At the same time, a sense of unbound opportunity (*Allmachtswahn*), fuelled by the elevation of science’s prestige and a positivist belief in steady human progress, provided fresh support for thinking in utopian terms about

new forms of human agency and new teleological visions of society (Dickinson 2004). Making full use of modern forms of enquiry and technological progress, science could now claim jurisdiction over an ever-expanded range of perceived human pathologies, promising a better future for those affected by them and for society as a whole. As a result, science fuelled a cultural optimism that solutions to human pathos may be obtained through exploiting the full resources of the scientific paradigm.

The drive towards scientific empowerment, however, had also a distinctly defensive rationale, derived from a degree of uncertainty vis-à-vis the effects of the overall modern deployment. Concerns about a growing disequilibrium between population and resources (Jackson & Weidman 2004: Chs 3–4), unease about certain effects of modernity (such as urbanisation, alcoholism, and insanity), and the ubiquitous fear of European and/or Western 'decadence' (Stepan 1985; Pick 1989) cast a shadow over the optimism of human progress and betterment. Increasingly bleak imageries derived from the idea of a lethal 'danger' (*Gefahr*) to society from detrimental influences, both within each community (the fear of sociocultural and biological *degenerance*) and from outside (e.g., immigration and population mixing), were radicalised and gave a new sense of urgency to the extension of scientific principles into the realm of societal management. New forms of social pathology were identified as impediments to the realisation of new utopian visions and as perversions of positive norms. A decidedly modern productivist ethos recast idleness in decidedly more negative terms. Emphasis on pronatalism as a counterbalance to the decline of fertility rates in Western Europe incriminated individual behaviours that appeared as reticent vis-à-vis procreation. Similarly, competition for resources prompted a reexamination of the welfarist axiom of protecting the 'weak' as inherently dangerous for the 'health' of the collectivity.

Already at the turn of the twentieth century the idea that the humanistic principle of aiding the physically and mentally 'weak' could become a lethal source of 'degradation' for society had found enthusiastic disciples amongst the social Darwinian scientific constituency (Weiss 1987: Chs 2–3). In 1920 two Germans—the jurist Karl Binding and the psychiatrist Alfred Hoche—published a landmark book with the eloquent title *Permission for the Annihilation of Life Unworthy of Living* (*Die Freigabe der Vernichtung Lebensunwerten Lebens*) that broke the taboo of the sanctity of human life. The two authors focused on the category of what they called "mentally dead", particularly in congenital terms. According to them, members of this group were "empty human cells", with neither the will to live nor the will to die, and therefore constituted "worthless people" for society. This assessment, in their view, supported the moral, scientific, and economic case for their 'elimination' in order to benefit the rest of society. What Binding and Hoche had referred to as "excessive cost of maintaining useless people" (Tucker 1994: 112) found an equally radical expression in the work of the biologist Nobel laureate Alexis Carrel, who saw in the preservation of

“useless and harmful beings” both an economically wasteful and a socially dangerous confusion of societal priorities (Carrel 1935: 16–17).

Such and other fears reflected concerns about the path of modernity itself, about the opportunities it had opened up, and about its side-effects. In tandem with more traditional, even antimodern objections, they evinced a growing unease with new social and cultural developments; unlike them, however, they sought to redefine modernity, not to reverse its historical offensive (Roberts 2005). In this new modern context, choices in the private sphere entailed a crucially enhanced sense of collective responsibility for the group/community, thereby blurring the distinction between private and public, between individual and society, between society and state. On the one hand, it was claimed that individual self-determination was to a debatable extent tied to notions of collective welfare, which had to be addressed and promoted, even if this implied a certain concession to individual freedom. On the other hand, society and the state had a heightened duty to approach individual grievances through the lens of social responsibility, providing short-term relief and advancing long-term ‘solutions’ for the benefit of the collectivity. The question was no longer whether any deviation from these norms would be tolerated or allowed, but whether remedial action would be geared towards *integrating* the allegedly deviant individuals/groups into, or *excluding* them from, the collective body.

The historical context in which the ‘new’ (post-1850s) biological racism emerged as an increasingly alluring paradigm for explaining and managing the human condition was also influenced by the dynamics of colonialism and nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. The drive towards imperialism had revived a wider interest in the differences between ‘white’ and ‘nonwhite’ peoples, in social and anthropological terms alike. Increasing contact with colonial populations fuelled a rigid ‘us-them’ mentality, already evident in earlier patterns of imperialism but becoming more and more systematised and imbued with allegedly scientific (*ergo*, in theory, objective) knowledge (Macmaster 2001: 124–9). In this respect, the second wave of European imperialism in the second half of the nineteenth century proved instrumental in engendering discourses of biological (racial) superiority, rooted in heredity, and in identifying new ‘threats’ to the biological health of the ‘white’ peoples. At the same time, the escalation of nationalist feelings and ideas—culminating in the rise of aggressive ‘nation-statism’ (see earlier, Ch 1)—produced centrifugal tendencies within the ‘white’/European imperialist bloc. It fuelled competition for colonial resources and, eventually, for the domination of the continent itself (Stoler 1995). In contrast to earlier racist ideologies, which articulated very broad juxtapositions between ‘white’ and ‘nonwhite’ populations, from the second half of the nineteenth century competition and tensions in the colonial field were gradually imported in Europe. This set off a process that gradually intensified frictions and presaged a more chauvinistic phase in the history of nationalism, pitting one European nation against another in a veritable ‘struggle

for existence'. The concern of modern ideologies of race with the racial-biological derivation of peoples coincided (partly but crucially) with nationalism's obsessive interest in the notion of common descent for the national community. As a result of this shared interest in descent, there was a 'slip-page' between nation and race that gradually transformed the nation from a political or cultural community to a racial one (Arnold 2002: 110; Weitz 2003: 28–31).

FROM 'RACE' TO 'NATION' AND BACK: TOWARDS A RACIAL HIERARCHY OF EUROPEAN GROUPS

From the beginning of the nineteenth century the claim of an alleged European 'racial' superiority had received a new boost through the articulation of the 'Aryan race' theory (Poliakov 1977). In 1808 Friedrich von Schlegel produced a theory that linked Greeks, Romans, and Germanic groups with a single 'racial' group, which he called 'Aryan'. These Aryans, von Schlegel argued, originated in central Asia and moved to Europe around 1000 BCE, colonising large parts of the continent and producing those intellectual and cultural values that enabled subsequent generations of Europeans to dominate the world (Gillette 2002: 13–14). Interestingly, von Schlegel's foundation for the new theory was the linguistic affinities between Greek, Latin, and German—affinities that were now presented as variations of Sanskrit. But he moved on to attribute both spiritual and physical unique qualities to this 'racial' category that set it apart from other groups, both within Europe and across the world.

Almost four decades later, the Swedish professor of anatomy Anders Retzius introduced a normative distinction between so-called dolichocephalic (narrow skulls, longheaded) and brachycephalic (broader skull, short-headed) races as a way of subdividing the European/'white' population. The introduction of the 'cephalic index' as a device for classifying racial groups constituted a systematic attempt to advance the debate on classification from its emphasis on skin colour to other external criteria. By the end of the nineteenth century a plethora of other benchmarks had been articulated: hair type, nose shape (Liggett 1992: 21ff), different approaches to skull measurement (ratio, circumference), brain volume, colour of eyes, and general body posture (Haller 1970). Phrenology in particular (the systematic study of the skull) gathered momentum throughout the century, supplying allegedly empirical validation for earlier theories of human speciation. By underlining race-based distinctions between Caucasians, on the one hand, and Mongolians, Ethiopians, Americans, and Malays, on the other, such theories proved instrumental in advancing a scientific justification for imperialism.

Yet, at the same time, the identification of such specific criteria made empirical research more aware of variations within each group. In the 1830s Samuel Morton, for example, confirmed the division of the human

species into the standard five ‘races’ mentioned earlier, but noted that each group contained a spectrum of subcategories. In the 1880s the Russian-born anthropologist Joseph Deniker put forward an extremely detailed and complex racial taxonomy of Europeans, distinguishing no less than thirteen different groups by using a combination of skin, hair, and eye colour, as well as body and face shape (Schafft 2004: 42–43). At the turn of the century William Ripley somewhat simplified the scheme by proposing three European racial groups (Nordic, Mediterranean, and Alpine), the first two of which he considered as old ‘pure’, elite races and the third as a nonindigenous buffer group that separated the Nordics and the Mediterraneans into two distinct geographic spheres (Northern-Southern Europe; Ripley 1899; Johnson & Bond 1934: 329–32).

The question of how to account for such variations unfolded more cautiously in the case of the ‘white’ race than it did with regard to the discussion of racial differences across the world. The temptation, however, to interpret external dissimilarity as an indication of variable racial quality was there from the beginning, fuelled by rival nationalist narratives and state competition for hegemony. From the 1850s onwards a veritable industry of historical and scientific literature engaged with the subject, producing an exciting but highly confusing kaleidoscope of hierarchies and classifications. Arthur Gobineau’s *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* took the ‘Aryan’ hypothesis to a new level by claiming that this group was the dominant race, responsible for the highest achievements of civilisation (Mosse 1963: 79–81). Gobineau’s definition of ‘Aryan’ was expansive enough to incorporate most of Europe’s historical civilisations and phenotypical variations (UNESCO 1961: 40–41); and he was quick to point out that, since breeding across the racial divides was an unavoidable (if highly regrettable to him, for this was the cause of the decline of civilisations) fact of history, the purity of any race was a chimera. As an admirer of aristocratic rule, he had only contempt for the proletariat and went as far as pointing out that in his native France only the aristocracy had maintained a high degree of its earlier racial (that is, ‘Aryan’) integrity (Hannaford 1996: 264). Whilst careful enough not to introduce fundamental distinctions between his contemporary French and Germans, he projected his analysis of racial degeneration to the study of Italians, whom he saw as an example of harmful miscegenation leading to a people with “a herd mind . . . mediocre . . . (and) dulled by fatal somnolence” (UNESCO 1961: 25). In fact, he even suggested that the ‘Mediterranean’ race had degenerated so much that it could be likened to the inferior ‘black’ race (Gillette 2002: 14).

Gobineau’s crucial role in the process of ‘racialising’ history and time cannot be exaggerated. Even if his successors took his theories in directions not unequivocally envisaged by him, he supplied historical currency to the idea that the ‘Aryan’ race was the highest form of human existence, that ‘inferior’ races did exist even within the ‘white’ group, and that miscegenation between an allegedly superior and an inferior race led to the degradation of

the former and of its civilisation—the concept of the so-called 'chaos of the people' (Mosse 1985: 52–56; Weiss 1987: 92–94). The 'Aryan' racial idiom established a lasting benchmark of 'racial' value for contemporary Europeans, sparking off a bitter struggle for the ownership of its imaginary biological pool. Whereas previously 'white' Europeans were largely conceived of as a more or less single racial category with internal differences based on physiognomic variation, gradually a hierarchy of white peoples started to crystallise, with the 'Nordic', 'Germanic', 'Teutonic', or 'Saxon' groups placed decidedly at the top of the scale (Spiro 2002: 35–48). Gobineau himself alluded to a loose connection between 'racial' and national superiority, particularly in his references to the 'Germanic spirit' that were replete with praise and admiration. In this respect Gobineau was instrumental not only in lending validity to the notion of 'Aryan' superiority but also in suggesting ways in which this superiority could be appropriated by contemporary (national) groups and defended ruthlessly against allegedly harmful influences.

Until the end of the nineteenth century such connections between race and nation in the 'Aryan' theory were implicit and loose. One of the major theorists of the 'Aryan' race, Georges Vacher de Lapouge, attributed to the stereotypical 'Aryan' (blue-eyed, fair-haired, dolichocephalic northern European) the highest form of biological 'fitness' (Lapouge 1896, 1899). But for Lapouge the biological 'aristocracy' did not coincide with national groups but rather with elite social elements across parts of Europe. Writing about France, for example, he associated the country's social aristocracy with the survival and defence of its allegedly 'Aryan' racial status (Weiss 1987: 94–95; L Clark 1981: D1039–41). Thus, for Lapouge—as for Gobineau—the 'Aryan' remained a supranational and idealised entity (Hecht 2000: 295–6). But once again a slippage between 'race' and 'nation' at a time of growing national(ist) competition was already evident. Like Gobineau, Lapouge occasionally used 'race' and nation interchangeably (Turda 2003b: 26). He also pictured an apocalyptic vision for a future "*conflict between races [both] within . . . and between nations*".

It took a much bolder statement for the connection between (primeval and ideal) race and (contemporary) nation to be firmly established. In 1899 Houston Stewart Chamberlain published his *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, in which he glorified the historic achievements of the Germanic 'race' in the history of European civilisation. Chamberlain employed a variety of criteria, ranging from appearance to nebulous spiritual qualities and blood, to account for the vast variety of what he perceived as 'German racial' contribution to the most glorious phases of European history (Chamberlain 1899). He was in his most expansive mood when he spoke of the 'Germanic genius'; for the latter lay behind centuries of cultural achievement across Europe, transcended geographic barriers, and went beyond the identification with the blond-haired, blue-eyed dolichocephalic race. From Jesus to Luther, from Frederick the Great to Bismarck, from Dante to Goethe, from

Leibnitz to Galileo, Chamberlain detected nothing else apart from the creative knack of the Germanic ‘race’. In this broad definition Chamberlain had already departed from Gobineau’s perception of the ‘Aryan’ as an ideal type. Instead, he identified ‘Aryanism’ with a spiritual core that was associated with a contemporary political ideology (Germanism) and pointed to a particular, idealised nation-state (German Reich; Turda 2005b: 51–65). This reading of history that led to the association of the ‘Aryan’ with the ‘Nordic, the ‘Teutonic’, or even the strictly ‘Germanic’ had already been in circulation since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Important figures of the Romantic literary movement (with Friedrich von Schlegel as the most prominent amongst them—see earlier) had disseminated the idea that European civilisation had been the work of the continuous regenerative influence of the allegedly pure Germanic blood (Arvidsson 1999 & 2006: Ch 1). But Chamberlain carried this idea to its most extreme formulation by anchoring ‘Aryanism’, ‘Nordicism’, and ‘Teutonism’ on the ideology of *Germanic* superiority (von See 1983; Puschner 2001). In so doing, he gave intellectual ammunition to a growing tendency to ‘nationalise’ history and time that would find many more overeager disciples in the first half of the twentieth century, in Germany and elsewhere.

Chamberlain did share with Gobineau a cardinal disdain for racial miscegenation. For him a superior biological capital should be defended at all cost through careful inbreeding and prevention of racial mixing. The difference, however, of such an argument being made in the 1890s as opposed to the 1850s was enormous and highly significant. For by the end of the nineteenth century a seismic change of scientific paradigm had also taken place with the publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* (1859). In his treatise Darwin cast a grave shadow on the idea that ‘races’ were fixed, immutable, and permanent realities of human history. He also maintained a rather exciting ambiguity in terms of the role of ‘natural selection’ in the evolutionary scale. While Darwin considered the latter a crucial mechanism of the origin of species “in the large sense (of the phrase)” (Darwin 1859/III: 24), he did not rule out the prospect of a less confrontational, more cooperative narrative of evolution (Rogers 1972: 268). But it is also crucial to understand that Darwin’s theory owed a lot to recent and older scientific theories, such as those of Herbert Spencer and Thomas Malthus, from which he had borrowed many of his ideas and core terminology. For example, it was Spencer who had spoken of ‘the survival of the fittest’; and it was Malthus who, in his concern with the population-food ratio, spoke of a continuous ‘struggle for survival’. Darwin, however, provided an exciting synthesis that shifted the focus of his two major influences. In contrast to Malthus, his idea of ‘struggle for existence’ was a positive force of ‘progress’, equipping species with the necessary skills for their long-term survival. Furthermore, in contrast to Spencer’s interest in social betterment, his concept of ‘progress’ had a distinct biological meaning (better adaptation to external circumstances, biological perpetuation of the species; Weikart

1993: 469–88). All in all, Darwin's theory of evolution as explained in *On the Origin of Species* appeared to uphold the positivist belief in constant progress whilst avoiding making clear-cut analogies between the animal (his focus) and the human realms (Pick 1989: 191ff; Tucker 1994: Chs 2–3).

Darwin's contribution to this debate was indirect and perhaps arbitrarily interpreted. In his *Origin* he steered clear of the human species but hinted at the idea that the latter constituted part of the animal realm in terms of evolution and adaptation to natural conditions. In his second major work, *The Descent of Man* (1871), he spoke clearly of 'civilised' Europeans and 'savages', castigating the tendency of Western societies to protect the 'weak' and thus interfere with natural selection. In fact, Darwin's second book was distinctly more pessimistic when compared to *On the Origins of Species*. For now he appeared sceptical about the allegedly inexorable drive of 'progress', even in his own, ambiguous biological sense. Moral issues, he claimed, could distort the process of adaptation, preservation, and elimination in a way that could lead to regression. With the publication of *The Descent of Man* Darwin not only entered the territory of human evolution but also reflected on the various challenges to this process, both within a single society and between different groups. Towards the end of his life he appeared willing to accept the alleged superiority of the 'Caucasian' race and produce a reading of the historical struggle between Europeans and 'Turks' (Ottomans) as example of how a group rendered superior through natural selection could successfully defend and further its existence in a ferociously competitive environment (in Rogers 1972: 274). His ideas, complex and sometimes ambivalent as they were, lent themselves to projections onto other fields and models of enquiry that, however unintended by Darwin himself, could appear as logical extensions of his groundbreaking evolutionary theory.

“CONFLICT BETWEEN NATIONS”: RACIALISING ‘NATION’ AND NATIONALISING ‘RACE’

The scientific and intellectual path that led from the early evolutionary theory to the development of a fully fledged doctrine of 'social Darwinism' by the end of the nineteenth century was determined by the particular conditions of the ideological, political, and social environment of that period in countries as far apart as Britain, the USA, Germany, and Italy (G Jones 1980; Clark 1984; Weikart 1993). Social Darwinism took the 'struggle for survival' to a different level by suggesting that races and nations were locked in a constant fight for contested resources. Their allegedly inherent inequality invested claims of political domination with a vocabulary of alleged biological superiority and granted moral sanction to aggressive forms of confrontation. This particular adaptation of the original Darwinian evolutionary doctrine had been one amongst many competing readings and scientific narratives of that time. That it became so diffuse in subsequent decades and developed

its own momentum that brought it into spheres not necessarily envisaged by Darwin himself tell us much more about the historical context in which it unfolded than about the original Darwinian theory itself (Llobera 2003: Ch 6). As new forms of nationalism shifted their focus from uniqueness and self-determination to superiority in a fierce competition for resources and supremacy, biological racism furnished new weapons for conceptualising *national* preeminence vis-à-vis other nations and states. The ‘achievements’ of colonial powers were used as alleged evidence not simply of ‘white’ superiority, but also of specific national superior qualities; and the study of the past—through history, archaeology, various branches of anthropology, linguistics, and so on—became an invaluable resource for adding validity to such claims. Thus, new forms of racism saturated nationalist discourses of elitism, providing an ostensibly rational explanation for the differing fortunes of different states and nations (Turda 2003b: 11).

Social Darwinist thinking infiltrated nationalist discourses across Europe and was conditioned by the logic of aggressive, confrontational nation-statism. In bringing the idea of eternal conflict between nations and races for domination to the nucleus of a new radical understanding of human history, social Darwinism essentially promoted a *racialisation of the nation*. Chamberlain’s *Foundations* offered the most blatant alignment of anthropological speculation with the spirit of ethno-exclusive nationalism and the idea of a social Darwinist ‘struggle for survival’ amongst nations that was to set the tone in the future. During the first decade of the twentieth century the famous German physician Ludwig Woltmann published a series of works (mainly in the *Politisch-anthropologische Revue*, which he had founded in 1902) in which he restated the idea that the ‘Aryan’ race was at the top of the ‘racial’ scale. He sought recourse to a much older idea—that the stereotypical fair-haired, blue-eyed ‘Aryan’ race was the most beautiful—but adapted his ideas to the logic of upholding the idea of Germanic superiority. In 1905 he published his highly controversial *The Teutons and the Renaissance in Italy*, in which he more or less attributed every achievement of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Italy to the alleged creative genius of the ‘Aryan’/German race and spirit (Woltmann 1905 & 1907; Becker 1990: 328–74). What was even more insulting to the Italians was the way in which Woltmann denigrated their ‘racial’ value by claiming that “[whilst *die Germanen*] are the aristocracy of humanity, the Latins . . . belong to the degenerate mob”. The idea that the achievements of the Roman and the Renaissance civilisations were made possible through the influx of ‘Aryan’ racial stock had by that time a rather significant ancestry in earlier theories of ‘Aryanism’ (Llobera 2003: 137ff). But the blatant downgrading of the ‘Latin’ peoples to the status of a degenerate mob was a direct assault on the endeavour of nascent Italian nationalism to present itself as the heir to this dual pan-European heritage (Roman and Renaissance civilisations) and thus stake its own claim to national superiority. In Woltmann’s view, the Mediterranean basin played a crucial role in the history of European civilisation *in spite*, not because of, the ‘racial’ value

of its indigenous populations. Like Chamberlain, Woltmann used 'race' in a farcically expansive manner, appropriating historical time, space, cultural processes, and individuals of great significance on behalf of an 'Aryan/Nordic race', which only made sense in the context of contemporary nationalist ideologies of Germanism. When Woltmann claimed that the Italian Renaissance owed its creative momentum exclusively to 'Aryan' influence, he was appropriating a glorified part of history (and one of the foundation myths of 'European civilisation') for the 'Aryan' race and its contemporary 'German' highest incarnation. The same may be said of Kaspar Stuhl and Vacher de Lapouge, who stretched the mantle of 'Aryanism' both geographically and chronologically by claiming the civilisation of ancient Greece (Lapouge 1896, 1899; Orsucci 1998; Stuhl 1911, in Puschner 2001: 85–86).

The racial-anthropological ideas that may be traced back to Gobineau and particularly to Chamberlain were taken to different directions by a series of 'anthropo-sociologists' (Lapouge, Woltmann, Otto Ammon—Ammon 1893 & 1900) and proved particularly popular in fin-de-siècle Germany (Weindling 1989: 1–10). Yet, support also came from the other side of the Atlantic. At around the same time, the American zoologist and naturalist Madison Grant provided a comprehensive 'racial' history of Europe, in which he came to a strikingly similar conclusion to those of the German racial anthropologists. Although Grant's main concern was with the growing immigration to the United States (immigration that, in his view, threatened the role of the 'Anglo-Saxon' racial elite in the country), he nevertheless echoed Chamberlain and his successors in arguing that the greatest accomplishments of European/Western civilisation resulted from the 'racial conquest' of the continent by the "Nordic, Anglo-Saxon, and Teutonic race" (Grant 1916/1970; Alexander 1962: 73–90; Gossett 1997: 353–62). There was little originality in Grant's racial schema. His tripartite taxonomy (Nordic-Alpine-Mediterranean) owed a lot to the (slightly) earlier classifications of Ripley and Denniker (see earlier). His use of the external physiological indices for distinguishing between the three races depended on Retzius's 'cephalic index' and the earlier use of other criteria (e.g., nose and skull shape). His insistence that the achievements of the Mediterranean race resulted from an alleged Nordic infiltration echoed the views of Woltmann. But Grant's major asset was his ability to synthesise (selective) existing strands of interpretation and provide a 'theory' that reflected every one of his personal fixations. For him, the Nordic race was the only one indigenous to Europe. Whilst he credited the Alpine race with founding the classical civilisation (again, though, with an alleged influx of 'Aryan' blood), he was intent on proving that it had originated in Asia, in contrast to the members of the Nordic race who had only subsequently moved to Asia and spread their civilisation in the area that was previously thought to be the cradle of their civilisation (Grant 1916/1970: 153–65).

Nevertheless Grant was entirely pessimistic about the Nordic race, as the title of his treatise (*The Passing of the Great Race*) clearly suggested.

Viewing history as a constant struggle between allegedly superior and inferior racial groups, he explained that their coexistence in Europe did not favour the Nordic race. He interpreted the collapse of the Roman Empire as a victory of the so-called inferior races over the allegedly superior Nordic spirit—a victory that would be repeated in the longer term many times, casting a grave shadow on the “great race’s” overall chances of survival. Bringing his grand model of racial history to the twentieth century, he concluded that the amount of Nordic blood in every contemporary national group in Europe accounted for its strength, drive, and capacity for civilisation; but it was gravely threatened by the uncontrolled influx of alien/inferior racial qualities that other groups brought to the pool of the “great race” through immigration and miscegenation (Grant 1916/1970: 193–7).

In Britain too racial anthropology was deployed as a means for constructing a form of national consciousness steeped in ideas of inherent superiority. The notion of ‘Anglo-Saxon’ superiority dated at least back to the sixteenth century, when Protestant England needed a new founding myth to extricate itself from the Roman tradition. But this idea had undergone a process of racialisation in the course of the nineteenth century. It was in the racial anthropology of the Edinburgh-based professor of anatomy Robert Knox that the most extreme version of Anglo-Saxonism found its outlet (Richards 1989). Knox not only had contempt for the ‘dark races’ (which, in his view, could not become civilised through any form of social intervention) but also for the Celts (whom he considered the greatest misfortune of the Anglo-Saxon world on both sides of the Atlantic), the Romans, and the Jews (R Knox 1850: 89ff). He opted for the term ‘Scandinavian race’ instead of ‘Aryan’ (which, in his opinion, had lost any heuristic value by including the allegedly inferior Jews and ‘Gypsies’; Latham 1850) and considered its members as the genuine diachronic racial elite in European and world history. For Knox the connection between biological race and contemporary nationhood was irrefutable; but the existence of nations was a mere accident, overshadowed by the primacy of race in human history. Best known for his dictum “race is everything” (1850: 5–7), Knox spearheaded a distinct tradition of thought in Britain that erected categorical and immutable biological barriers between primordial ‘races’ (Macmaster 2001: 13–15). He saw the future in extreme social Darwinian terms, as a struggle between races waged through contemporary nations (Knox 1850: 29ff). He and other disciples of polygenism spearheaded the founding of the Anthropological Society of London (after seceding from the more moderate Ethnological Society), whose members propagated the benefits of a ‘scientific’ approach to matters of race and rejected the Darwinian evolutionary theories (Ellingson 2001: 240ff). Fears, however, about a resurgent German Reich after the unification of 1871 and concerns about the increasing emphasis on the ‘Aryan’ theory in continental Europe convinced the majority of British experts that the most effective way to talk about the population of the British Isles was by focusing on the benefits of a unique racial fusion—and not purity—leading

to a decline in the popularity of racial-anthropological theories in twentieth-century Britain (Poliakov 1977: 36–53).

The so-called 'Latin' countries had to try much harder to articulate any claim to superiority—national, racial or both. In France, a centuries-old debate about the nation's 'racial' descent had taken a rather bizarre direction in the notion of a 'war of the two races': the indigenous Gauls and the invading Franks (Poliakov 1977: Ch 2). The intricacies of this debate do not concern us here. It is noteworthy, however, that the pre-1789 consensus about the alleged Frankish-Germanic descent of the French aristocracy started to crumble after the French revolution. This event—and the recurrent revolutionary upheavals of the nineteenth century—became the focus of an analysis that racialised French history and society. Thus, historians like Augustin Thierry and Henri Martin presented the revolutionary conflict as the final chapter in the centuries-old struggle between the dominant Germanic Franks (aristocracy) and the dominated Gauls (the people, the 'mob'; Tombs 1991: Ch 1). Writers with aristocratic leanings lamented the apparent victory of the latter and attributed to it the 'degeneration' of the French nation (Noiriel 1995: 374–5). Others greeted the liberation and triumph of the Gauls, seeing it as the stepping-stone to national rebirth (Ouglé 1925: 165, 171; Llobera 2003: 49ff). Under Napoleon I, but particularly during the rule of Napoleon III, the romanticisation of the French nation's alleged Celtic origins started as a weapon against the Frankish fantasies of the Bourbon restorationist circles amongst French aristocracy but soon became a psychologically powerful founding myth of collective French identity. Through historical narratives, archaeological excavations, and a systematic monumentalisation of the Celtic past, Napoleon III helped embed a national mythology that overshadowed the claimed Frankish legacy (Dietler 1994: 587–8). The idea that the creative knack of early-modern France (and Europe) derived from the qualities of its Celtic racial foundations (to which subsequent invaders, including the Teutons, had been allegedly absorbed—Jackson 1872) emerged as a powerful antidote to increasingly vocal claims of Germanic superiority in nineteenth-century Europe.

Clearly, France's cataclysmic defeat by Prussia in 1870 and the subsequent fear of German power rendered the old theories of Frankish-Germanic descent far less appealing or useful to French commentators. But it also cast a shadow of pessimism on the racial fantasies of Celticism too. Getting out of this cul-de-sac was not a facile task. It was no longer plausible or acceptable to attempt an appropriation of the Franks, as Jean Bodin had done in the sixteenth century when he claimed that they were Gaul refugees who crossed the Rhine and then returned as 'liberators'. The predominance of the 'Aryan' theory across the continent, and its growing association with Germanism so carefully cultivated by experts within the newly founded German Reich, resulted in a redirection of the anthropological paradigm in France away from the one-'race' theory, steering it clear of any suggestion of direct Frankish/Germanic descent (Poliakov 1977: 4–5, 34–35). As the prominent

nineteenth-century French historian Jules Michelet claimed, “it was France that made France, and the element of race is only of secondary significance” (Michelet 1869/1971: 3–7; Noiriel 1995: 375)

In Italy, too, the debate about the nation’s glorious past and perceived present decline became essentially racialised. The criminologist Cesare Lombroso assumed a hierarchy of human (biological) value based on colour—from the ‘primitive’ black race to the intermediary Semitic to the allegedly advanced ‘Aryan’ one (Lombroso 1871; Poliakov 1977: 68). The nascent discipline of Italian anthropology gathered momentum in the uncertainties and anxieties of the postunification period, amidst a growing concern with the direction of political reform and in the hope that science-based modernity could become a credible alternative to either Catholic conservatism or perceived liberal inertia (D’Agostino 2002: 320–1). It was also the product of a period that witnessed the rise and frustration of the hegemonic ambitions of the new Italian state in the colonial field. In particular the defeat of the Italian colonial army in Ethiopia (Adowa) in 1896 produced an avalanche of national pessimism that also touched upon the subject of ‘race’. Not only did the Adowa debacle constitute a severe blow to the ambitions of postunification Italy to become a great power (*grande potenza*) by acquiring a colonial empire in Africa (Vigizzi, Rainero, & Di Nolfo 1985; Kallis 2000: Ch 1), but it also cast a grave shadow on the country’s ability to rise above its contemporary state of perceived mediocrity and underachievement.

This atmosphere of pessimism also coincided with the popularity of pseudoscientific constructions of ‘Aryanism’ and ‘Nordicism’ that had embarked on a systematic process of denigrating, marginalising, or at least questioning the historic contribution of all those ‘non-Aryan’ Europeans. A growing inferiority complex plagued Italian self-perceptions at the turn of the twentieth century, especially since the country’s record after 1859 remained unimpressive in comparison to the other ‘latecomer’ in the north (Germany-Baglieri 1980; M Knox 1984: 1–15; Kallis 1998). The cultural, historic, economic, and social diversity of the Italian peninsula did not lend itself easily to claims of ‘racial’ purity or unbroken anthropological continuity. Furthermore, Italy’s geographic position (stretching from the Alpine regions of the north to areas close to Africa in the southernmost regions) raised questions about the ‘racial’ credentials of modern-day Italians—and, particularly, those who lived in the southern half of the peninsula (Teti 1993). Lombroso and his disciple Enrico Ferri extended the theory of delinquency to the particular dimensions of the ‘southern question’, linking the higher rates of criminality in the south with a process of racial regression particular to the populations of these regions (Ferri 1895; Gibson 1998: 105–7). A further disciple, Alfredo Niceforo, attempted to reconcile biological determinism with environmental influences in explaining why many southern provinces recorded substantially higher rates of criminal behaviour than elsewhere in Italy (Niceforo 1897). But, being younger than Lombroso and Ferri, Niceforo’s work extended well into the twentieth century. The different timing

exposed him to the far more aggressively promoted theories of 'Aryan superiority' during the first decades of the new century, making him increasingly sceptical about their validity or indeed the expediency of arguing the case on behalf of the Italian 'race'. Thus, his work steadily moved away from the rigid biological determinism of his mentors and towards an acknowledgement that racial purity was a chimera with little relevance to any contemporary nation (including, of course, modern-day Germans; Niceforo 1917). As the process of nation-building in Italy appeared to stumble upon persisting regional difference and political inefficiency, the need for a cohesive myth to unite all the inhabitants of the new state and offer them a renewed stake in the 'racial superiority' debate was more pronounced than ever (Gibson 1998: 107–9; D'Agostino 2002: 326).

It was in this context that the theory of the '*Mediterranean* race' gathered momentum in Italy around the turn of the century and developed into a scientific paradigm through the works of the Sicilian anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi during the last decade of the nineteenth century (Gillette 2002: 24ff). Sergi reacted angrily to the claims advanced by the 'Aryanist' camp that the most glorious achievements in Italian history emanated from the influence of Aryan/Nordic elements. He also derided the efforts of indigenous scientists to recast the Italian 'race' as a predominantly 'Aryan' group, rejecting the idea of a deep racial divide between the north and the south of the peninsula (Sergi 1895 & 1898). For Sergi the 'Mediterranean' race was the instigator of so much that was worthy in the history of European civilisation. Having located the origins of all European populations at the horn of Africa (a truly heretical proposition in itself!) he distinguished between Africans (who stayed in Africa), Mediterraneans, and Nordics (whom he did not consider Aryans but rather Aryanised Africans). Even more unorthodoxly, he considered the 'Aryans' invaders of Asiatic origin whose infiltration of central Europe caused the most "catastrophic" upset in the history of the continent, driving the dominant 'Eurafrican' race to Scandinavia but not affecting significantly the racial makeup of Southern and Western Europe (in Teti 1993: 179–83). For him, Italians unambiguously belonged to the 'Mediterranean' race, having successfully digested a plethora of racial-cultural influences throughout the centuries. He considered the indigenous 'Mediterranean/Eurafrican' populations of the peninsula (*italici*) far superior to all invading tribes (Huns, Goths, Arabs, Germans), who left very little or nothing from their racial traces in the northern regions of Italy. Thus—contrary to Woltmann—he claimed that the great achievements of the Roman period and of the Renaissance had to be credited exclusively to the 'Italians' (Sergi 1906). Sergi also fused an environment-oriented Lamarckianism with the belief that spiritual unity could lead to racial cohesion, rather than the opposite (Sergi 1898: 23–41, 209ff). As in England and France, the idea that 'race' was the fortunate result of fusion ('mistovariation') proved to be highly popular as a means of countering the emerging orthodoxy of 'Aryan' alleged superiority, which Sergi called contemptuously *germanismo*. Thus,

a new narrative for European history and civilisation emerged as a counterparadigm to the dominant ‘Aryan’/‘Nordic’/‘Germanic’ theories. As the early-twentieth-century anthropologist Angelo Mosso suggested, from the Minoans of Bronze-Age Crete to the Romans and to the Renaissance, the ‘Mediterranean’ race invariably set the standard of civilisation. By contrast, he argued, the ‘barbarian’ (‘Gothic’) tribes that had been so fetichised (not only in northern Europe but also in Spain—Poliakov 1977: Ch 1; Douglass 2004: 98) had contributed very little (Gillette 2002: 32).

A similar process of ‘renationalising’ historical time and extricating it from the grip of Aryanism was far more complicated when it came to all those nascent nationalisms in Eastern and Central Europe which were busy forging autonomous historical identities and narratives under the control of alien rulers and amidst fierce competition over ownership of the past. It was there that theories of alleged national superiority sought recourse to the notion of ‘race’ in order to lend validity to claims to independent statehood (Turda 2005b: 38–51). The evolutionary theories of the Polish-born sociologist Ludwik Gumplowicz supplied an imagery of eternal strife between both classes and nation-races that found receptive audiences amongst those who equated the acquisition of statehood with national homogeneity and with eliminating the influence or presence of ‘the other’ (Barnes 1948: 192ff; Porter 2000: 167–72). Especially in the territories of the Habsburg empire the competition of diverse ethnic groups for autonomy and statehood had already started to generate tensions. The 1867 agreement between the empire and Hungary (*Ausgleich*) established the model of a ‘Dual Monarchy’ and, through it, a second *Herrenvolk* (dominant people) ruling over the mosaic of nationalities. Hungarian nationalists instantly saw in this elevation of their internal political status the opportunity to claim a sense of ‘racial’ superiority for their nation. With the 1868 ‘Law of Nationalities’, Hungarians pronounced in legal terms their claim to superiority by denying particular rights to other minority groups. Thus, the predominantly rural Slovaks, Romanians, and Ruthenes were forced to live in a state of presumed inferiority under the de facto rule of the Hungarian aristocracy. Gumplowicz’s earlier theories too came in handy, for he had considered both Germans and Magyars as the two natural dominant ‘races’ in Central Europe (Gumplowicz 1883: 1875: 17–19; Porter 2000: 167–71). Now, an army of Hungarian ethnographers and anthropologists rose to the task of proving Magyar ‘superiority’, developing fascinating, if arbitrary, arguments to that effect: from Arminius Vámbéry’s ‘Turanism’ (tracing the Hungarian racial origins to an allegedly archaic Turkic group emanating from Asia; Turda 2005b: 88–90, 102–6) to Gusztáv Beksics’s combination of historic and biological theories of Magyar alleged destiny to dominate (Turda 2005b: 117ff). Many Hungarian experts, such as Zsolt Beőthy and Oszkár Jászi, also capitalised on the distinction between ‘historic’ and ‘nonhistoric’ European nations precisely because it afforded Hungary the privileged status of a medieval or even ancient conquering group (Turda 2005b: 67–69, 107ff). In spite of

foreign conquests and intermixing, the argument went, Hungarians maintained their distinct qualities through absorbing and diluting alien influences (Turda 2005b: 79–80). Such views served as an antidote to Herder's earlier prophesy that the Hungarians would soon drown in a sea of foreign peoples and races that would engulf them. The idea of *nemzethalál* (extinction of the nation) had gripped the literary and political imagination of 1830s/1840s Hungary, leading to a deep sense of cultural pessimism about the future of the nation that appeared doomed to disappear. Yet, the events of 1848 and particularly 1867 came as a huge relief and evidence that the Hungarian *Volkgeist* was alive. Thus, the post-Ausgleich trend towards a *Herrenvolk* Hungarian nationalism fused selective historical, ethnological, and anthropological ideas in a type of racial-ethnic synthesis that charted a way out of the agony of degeneration and prefigured subsequent discourses of national rebirth.

Hungarians were not alone in their determination to capitalise on the currency of being considered a 'historic' nation. Other nascent nationalisms in Central and Southeastern Europe hastened to make the most of it at the expense of their own minorities, neighbours, and competitors. Another generally regarded as 'historic' nation, the Croats, asserted their putative superiority in similarly expansive terms. The nineteenth-century politician and literary figure Ante Starčević earned the title of "father of Croat nationalism" due to his efforts to construct a meaningful Croat identity in opposition both to the Habsburg imperial structure and to the growing ambitions of the Serbs. In 1861 Starčević founded the Party of Rights (*Stranka Prava*, SP), which initially sponsored a moderate political agenda of reform inside the framework of the Habsburg monarchy with a view to promoting the interests of Croat self-determination. However, the initially moderate line was abandoned in the 1870s/1880s, when the party embraced the vision of full Croat independence. Starčević drew a distinction between the Orthodox inhabitants of Croatia (whom he considered 'Orthodox Croats', in the sense that their political loyalties lay within Croatia and not across the border) and the 'genuine' Serbs (*Slavoserbi*), who identified themselves with the state of Serbia and every other opponent of Croatia. This was a distinction that was initially driven by a predominantly political rationale, directed against those Serbs in Croatia that had voted in favour of pro-Habsburg parties and subverted the emancipatory struggle of Croat nationalism. Yet, his hostile views to these Serbs intensified in the last decades of his life and moved in new, increasingly racial directions that implicated 'Serbs' as a generic ethno-racial category. Starčević relegated the *Slavoserbi* (a name that, in his opinion, indicated their double identity as 'slaves'—'sclavus' and 'servus') to the lower status of a nomadic people of eastern derivation (Vlach or Morloch) who had degenerated throughout the centuries and now constituted a 'threat' to the other groups in the region (Starčević 1894). He even went as far as proposing their 'extermination' as the only safeguard for the future of the Croat race (A Djilas 1991: 103–7; Yeomans 2007: 102–3). Furthermore,

Starčević's vision for a future independent Croatia offered no place for Jews, whom he considered 'aliens'. He criticised them for their allegedly corrupting influence on Western European societies and in the Dual monarchy (particularly in Hungary, for which he claimed that it was run by the Jews; M Gross 2000: 709–13). His anti-Semitism was also fuelled by the perception that the Jewish community residing in Croat lands had shown strong support for pro-Habsburg political parties. This said, whatever animosity towards the Jews (racial, political, or economic) existed in the ideology of the SP or Starčević personally was overshadowed by the vehemence of their growing disdain for the Serbs, at a time of increasing Serb national mobilisation and ambition, both within Croatia and in the entire region.

But Starčević's ideas were far more complicated than his later anti-*Slavoserbi* views would suggest. For example, he supported many of the political goals of the French Revolution and often put forward a vision of civic nationalism (a "citizens' state") in a future Croat state that did not exclude other nationalities—including those 'Orthodox Serbs' (Ramet 2002). It was precisely this vision of coexistence that led some to suggest that the views of Starčević (as well as of some other prominent members of the original Party of Rights, such as the cofounder Eugen Kvaternik) prefigured the twentieth-century vision of 'Yugoslavism'; and that his views, complex and contradictory as they often were, became subsequently distorted by the more extreme 'Frankish' (*frankovci*) section of Croat nationalism (Bogdanov 1951: 8–9), headed by Frank Josip. It was the latter who held the most venomous views about the Serbs—in fact, *all* Serbs, thus cancelling the distinction regarding 'Orthodox Croats' made earlier by Starčević. In 1895, Frank's faction split from the main SP to form the Party of Pure Right, which remained the most vocal opposition to both imperial restructuring and Serbo-Croat rapprochement (Banac 1984: 94–96; Kristo 2005). In the end, it was the *frankovci* who reconstituted themselves as Croat Party of Rights (*Hrvatska Stranka Prava*) in 1918 and became the main pool of the subsequent fascist Ustaša movement, fully appropriating for their movement Starčević's name and legacy but within a virulent eliminationist anti-Serb platform that owed much more to Frank's extreme views (see Ch 4). In fact, the radicalising effect of Frank's views can be clearly seen from the 1890s onwards (Yeomans 2009). At the turn of the twentieth century the archaeologist-turned-ethnologist Ćiro Truhelka restated Starčević's equation of Serbs with Vlachs but went a step further in this exercise in ethnic-racial speciation by equating them to the Jews, in a clear attempt to exaggerate their alleged 'alien' status in the territories which they inhabited (Yeomans 2007: 103–5). When, during WW I and in its immediate aftermath, the counterparadigm of 'Yugoslavism' (literally, 'south Slavism', envisaging a political coalition amongst various ethnic/religious groups in the region) gathered momentum as the basis for the union of Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes, the Bosnian jurist-politician Ivo Pilar addressed the "south-Slav question" and reached identical conclusions—about the alleged Vlach origin of the Serbs, their likeness to the

Jews, their destructive racial-cultural influence, and the nonviability of the 'Yugoslav' solution of coexistence. He and the anthropologist Milan Šufflay propagated strongly the idea that the conflict between Serbs and Croats was essentially a clash of historically-culturally incompatible civilisations—the 'European west', on the one hand, and the 'Asiatic east', on the other (Tanner 1997b: 47; Yeomans 2007: 105–7).

The expansive mood of Hungarian and Croat nationalisms left other neighbouring nations—and particularly those deprived of the kudos of the primordialist 'historic' nation status—in a disadvantaged position of assumed inferiority. To this challenge they too responded through a combination of historic-anthropological and racial-biological arguments. The notion of a putative Romanian national superiority was difficult to articulate throughout the nineteenth century, as the predominantly peasant indigenous population compared unfavourably to the socioeconomic profile of other neighbouring ethnicities—particularly the Hungarians. Still, in the 1870s the nascent kingdom of Romania succumbed to the allure of the discourse of national superiority. With large parts of the Romanian population still living under foreign rule (in Transylvania, Bessarabia, Bukovina, etc), the idea of a spiritual and racial unity of *all* Romanians gained currency and envisaged the creation of an expanded, pure Romanian nation-state. Prominent intellectual figures, such as Vasile Conta, Alexandru Cuza, and Nicolae Iorga, but also politically active scientists, such as Aurel C Popovici, made a crucial contribution to the popularisation of an expansive vision of organic Romanian nationalism based on common racial descent (Oldson 1991: 99ff; Ioanid 1992; Turda 1998 & 2008; Neumann 2002). The unity of nation and race in defining fin-de-siècle Romanian nationalism was asserted by Popovici, partly in response to the Hungarian claims of racial superiority and partly as a mobilising myth for the creation of an all-inclusive but pure Romanian nation-state (Turda 2005b: 143–53). A Transylvanian himself and leading figure of the Romanian National Party in the region since 1891, Popovici argued that 'national consciousness' resulted from common racial descent; in fact, the former was the expression and evidence of the latter (Turda 1998). During the nineteenth century the idea of a common Romanian descent from either the ancient Dacian tribes or the Roman soldiers who settled in this distant outpost of the empire during the rule of the Roman emperor Trajan created a symbolic historic pool for claims of racial-cultural superiority (Hartman 2006; Rizescu 2005: 310). Thus, in the atmosphere of contested nationalisms that marked the disintegration of the Habsburg empire between 1867 and 1918, Popovici's theories were instrumental in articulating a vision of social Darwinist struggle between racial-national groups—a struggle whose final goal would be the creation of an ideal Romanian nation-state in which notions of ethnic homogeneity and racial purity would define the nation itself.

Sharing these concerns, Cuza and Iorga followed a different path by turning to a form of anti-Semitism that incorporated racial-anthropological

ideas (Bucur 2002: 54ff; Turda 2008). At the same time, the discourse of biological ‘degeneration’, which played a crucial formative role on the development of an indigenous brand of eugenical thought in fin-de-siècle Romania, also turned against the alleged influence of disruptive forces on the country’s development. This critique, again evident in intellectual, literary, political, and scientific works, focused on the tension between the idealised Romanian peasant, on the one hand, and the degenerate ‘Jew’, on the other (Bucur 2002: 65ff). The former encapsulated the essence of Romanian ‘racial purity’, the basis of the nation’s racial continuity, and the vessel for its national regeneration. Romanian peasantry, as the liberal nationalist ideologue of the mid-nineteenth century Ion-Eliade Rădulescu claimed, was a model of national community and morality that was superior to anything that the ‘West’ had to offer (Trencsényi 2004). By contrast, ‘the Jew’ epitomised symbolically the putative threats of a distorted, alien model of modernity that, it was claimed, cast a grave shadow on the cultural and racial identity of Romanians (Rizescu 2005: 293–7).

From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, the definition of both ‘Romanianness’ and of national ‘otherness’ unfolded in both culturalist and racialist directions without precise boundaries between the two (Turda 2005). Whether speaking about the cultural or the biological capital of the nation, claims of Romanian superiority were based on an abstract fusion between race and nation that was to play a central role in interwar Romanian nationalism. The interwar eugenicist and sponsor of extreme racialist views Iordache Făcăoaru attempted to give a pseudoscientific grounding to such claims by classifying European peoples on the basis of their alleged ‘racial value’. Whilst ensuring that the Romanian would be placed high on the list, predictably Hungarians suffered the ignominy of being relegated to the very bottom, featuring a strong influence from allegedly ‘non-European’ racial elements (Turda 2007). Thus, the imagery of a romanticized Romanian peasantry as the cultural-racial basis for the modern Romanian nation dovetailed with the denigration of the two main ‘contestant others’ of national identity—for different reasons, Hungarians and Jews—and became a political weapon in the struggle for independence and territorial expansion. A primordialist racial discourse traced the origin of many inhabitants in the Carpatho-Danubian basin to a ‘race’ predating the great medieval invasions (thus, also the arrival of the Hungarians). Laying claim over the disputed territories of Transylvania and Bukovina in the west was far more intelligible on this basis, as it was now argued that most Hungarians living there were actually ‘Magyarised Romanians’ (Turda 2007: 431)! The same could be argued about the other lands that came to be associated with the vision of a Greater Romania in the nineteenth century—Bessarabia and Transnistria in the north, and Dobrudja in the south. A panoply of ostensibly scientific arguments put forward by Romanian scientists in the years before and after the treaties of Neuilly (1919) and Trianon (1920) served a supremely political function of defending the inflated territorial ambitions

of modern Romanian nationalism. The territorial utopia of Greater Romania was articulated and then defended systematically also on the basis of primordial racial modalities, as both an expansive and a defensive concern for the same goal—the unity of the biologically defined Romanian nation.

In the case of Serbia, the emergence of nationalism followed two distinct paths. The first was associated with 'Yugoslavism', which rested on the notion that all groups residing in the area were 'tribes' belonging to the so-called Dinaric race—a group that appeared in Deniker's taxonomy as 'Adriatic' and in Guenther's scheme as partly related to the 'Nordic' group (Guenther 1927: Ch 4) but which Yugoslavist theorists went to great lengths to construct as an independent racial category, unrelated to the more established 'Nordic' or 'Alpine' types (Yeomans 2008: 94ff). The espousal of 'Yugoslavism' as the basis for future statehood also rested on the belief in the benefits of mixing between the various 'tribes' in order to produce a new 'Yugoslav' man. The second trend in Serb nationalism differed from the 'Yugoslav' ideology in that it attempted to counter or reverse the Croat claims to alleged superiority by generating a counternarrative about Serb descent and macrohistory. Romantic ideas about the (re)creation of a 'Greater Serbia' (the vision of *Nacertanije*) entered the mainstream of Serb nationalism in the 1840s, pioneered by the writings of Ilija Garašanin. The drive towards Serb territorial expansion also touched upon the racial-anthropological makeup of the other groups residing in the claimed areas (Bože Čović 1993: 70). Vuk Stefanović Karadžić assumed a conciliatory tone when he claimed that the term 'Serb' could be easily applied to all these populations with very few exceptions, in spite of the existence of big religious divides. As a linguist he was eager to show that the differences between the various population groups in the lands identified later with Yugoslavia were insignificant, as they all spoke languages that could allegedly be traced back to an alleged Serb core. Therefore, Karadžić concluded, they were all 'Serbs', belonging to the same (future) state and nation, but artificially divided on the basis of religion and different historical experiences. Yet, this tone was subsequently altered as competition for territory became more acute and antagonistic nationalist platforms were developed in neighbouring areas. At the turn of the century Nikola Stojanović could claim that Croats were not a separate nation—and could not be one, as they had the same language, customs, and external features as the Serbs. For him, Serbs and Croats were two 'parties' (or, as he called them elsewhere, two 'tribes') of the same (Serb) nation, whose lands extended over Dalmatia and the rest of the then Habsburg lands in the north, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, as well as in Serbia and Metohija in the south. Conceiving of Croats as simply a different 'tribe' of the Serb race was a useful weapon in the fight against the tendency of Croat nationalism to denigrate Serbs as 'eastern' and nonindigenous ('alien') to their territory (Beljo 2000). However, in a growing atmosphere of national antagonism and competition for the same economic, territorial, and historical resources, the vision of *Nacertanije* also became a weapon for

articulating increasingly chauvinistic claims of Serb national superiority vis-à-vis other regional competitors (Croats, Slovenes, Albanians).

“CONFLICT WITHIN NATIONS”: EUGENICS AND THE MEDICALISATION OF THE ‘RACIAL NATION’

The growing interest in race as heredity and common descent also coincided with an intensifying concern with the impact of modernity on European societies. The popularity of the discourse of *degeneration* in the nineteenth century betrayed a growing pessimism about the future of modern society, including its ‘racial’ ‘health’ (Pick 1989). On the one hand, many applauded the fact that modernity had supplied new scientific tools for social diagnosis and intervention, both preventative and corrective. On the other hand, it appeared to many that the same modernity had brought to the fore new social problems and had aggravated older ones. In addition, many came to believe that liberalism and ideas of human equality had allowed a series of ‘humanistic’ principles to interfere with the laws of natural selection, thereby creating a dysgenic context in which degeneration flourished (Weitz 2003: 40–41). The initial optimism about science’s capacity for guaranteeing evolutionary ‘progress’ dissipated very quickly under the weight of revolutionary upheavals and perceptions of a growing social pathology in the form of disease, ‘delinquency’, and criminality. A deeply pessimistic turn had already become evident by the end of the nineteenth century. It now appeared that the *laissez-faire* approach had nurtured a plethora of new social pathologies and aggravated existing one, making the earlier belief in the inevitability of social ‘progress’ seem more and more misplaced. Since regression was possible or even inevitable, the evolutionary drama could not be left to its own devices and modern society could not be trusted as the vessel of human evolution. Instead, concerted state action and scientific management were needed in order to bolster the effective regulation of social and productive issues. The question was what sort of corrective intervention was needed.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century some felt the answer to these troubling questions—and the key to reversing the degenerative trends—lay within, not outside or beyond, modernity itself. *Eugenics* (literally ‘good birth’) emerged as a viable paradigm that promised a fruitful, science-based management of social relations and natural selection in a positive evolutionary direction. Immediately after the publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* the English anthropologist and statistician Francis Galton took many of the suggestions made by his half-cousin about evolution and heredity to a new radical direction. Although he did not coin the term ‘eugenics’ until into the 1880s, he began to emphasise the imperative nature of selective breeding as necessary remedial action to the pathologies associated with modern society. Armed with the highly convincing, articulate, and systematic apparatus of the Darwinian synthesis, Galton challenged the benefits of

the whole *laissez-faire* approach to evolution. But he was also eager to chart a new path that empowered the authorities to streamline the mechanisms of evolution. Galton's preferred evolutionary vessel was 'national society'—a group of people bound by civic and pragmatic ties rather than by fanciful bonds of common 'racial' descent *qua* Gobineau and, later, Chamberlain. His prescription was the regulation of a qualitative 'better' society through interventions aimed to maximise the breeding and reproduction of 'healthy' forces, for example through medical examinations before marriage. *Positive* eugenics became rather in vogue towards the end of the nineteenth century, derived from a belief that social engineering could put an end to the reproduction of 'inferior' forms of life and enhance the community both quantitatively and qualitatively. The conviction that social pathology and its deeper causes could be remedied through scientific management was aligned to the prospect of a society that would be realigned with an optimal evolutionary path. Reflecting on the exact nature and goal of this intervention, Galton followed a tactical approach. He suggested that past admired societies should be studied in order to identify the desired characteristics of those considered 'fit' and whose presence has to be strengthened through selective breeding (Galton 1908: 323; McConnaughey 1950: 412–14). Thus, whilst acknowledging that eugenics was perhaps a harsh remedy, he maintained that it was also a far more effective, faster, and (in the longer term) more humane approach to collective progress (Pick 1989: 197–200).

This was one side of the eugenic prescription. There were others, however, who were willing to contemplate intervention at the other end of the evolutionary process. If, as they claimed, the alleged 'nonfitness' or unacceptable behaviour of certain groups had not been caused by environmental influences passed on to subsequent generations—as Jean Baptiste Lamarck had advocated—but by genetic flaws, then neither positive eugenics alone nor inclusive social engineering could address the problem effectively. As critiques of liberalism gathered pace in the second half of the nineteenth century (Kovács 1994: 32), the quintessential liberal idea of human equality—within and across societies—came under attack, as it appeared to fly in the face of the social Darwinist belief in innate biological inequality. Thus, the only conceivable solution was separating or removing 'inferior' forms of life from society and forcing an end to their reproductive potential. This more radical prescription—subsequently called *negative* eugenics—rested in fact on a call to return to unimpeded forms of natural selection, freed from the distortions of humanism, Christian morality, and sentimentalism. But in the shorter term it called for harsh interventions in order to forcefully restore the allegedly natural state of evolution. Negative eugenics had developed its own intellectually impressive pedigree even before Galton introduced the term 'eugenics' in the first place. In the late 1860s William Rathbone Greg (1868: 353–62) spoke of a "failure of natural selection" as a result of liberal egalitarianism, social reformism, and the interference of a deeply ingrained but decidedly dysgenic moral code in Western societies.

The Victorian philosopher Herbert Spencer saw in corrective interventions based on traditional moral principles of responsibility towards the weaker a disrupting and distorting influence on the drive towards a future state of perfect human equilibrium. Yet, although he objected to any form of initiative to help the weak, his underlying belief was that humans would embrace self-improvement if left entirely to their own devices to experience the consequences of their behaviour (Spencer 1879). In contrast, the statistician Karl Pearson (1910, 1919) embraced social Darwinism in his belief in a constant ‘war between races’ and saw in the survival of the fittest races the key to evolutionary progress, even if this process involved natural elimination of the allegedly weaker.

A similar idea was propagated by Georges Vacher de Lapouge in the 1890s. Lapouge had openly criticised the ‘sentimentalism’ of modern societies towards allegedly inferior and harmful biological influences as a dangerous anachronism, rooted in a morality that had been superseded by modern socioeconomic developments (in Hecht 2000: 287; Llobera 2003: 103ff). The Italian maverick criminologist Cesare Lombroso focused on the ‘delinquent’ personality, which he explained as an evolutionary throwback into earlier (‘primitive’) stages of human development. Having studied in great detail physiognomical characteristics of many criminals, he concluded that the reappearance of primitive hereditary biological traits (*stigmata*) caused the revival of the ‘primitive savage’ in modern societies. It was rather the unhindered reproduction of such hereditary regressive phenomena that pushed modern societies deeper into the path of degeneration. Thus, Lombroso advocated complete segregation as well as an enforced ban on breeding between ‘unfit’ individuals (Lombroso 1876; Villa 1985).

Eugenics—and its negative variant in particular—was a largely heretical prescription in the intellectual, scientific, and cultural climate of the late-nineteenth century. It was not even automatically accepted by vehement supporters of what we may call ‘classic’ Darwinism. The main thrust of the critique, however, came from the disciples of progressive social sciences. Many objected furiously to the ‘intrusion of anthropology’ into the precincts of sociology and political economy (Cummings 1900; Closson 1900). In Germany, the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1907) attacked eugenicists for their arbitrary application of “unscientific” criteria of ‘fitness’ in selective breeding. He refused to accept that isolating, segregating, and restricting the reproductive capacity of individuals displaying ‘degenerative’ qualities was the solution, calling instead for a more conventional social reformist approach as a means of stamping out the deeper causes of such degeneration. In France, where social Darwinism had a far more difficult time penetrating the core of a still powerful Lamarckian emphasis on environmental influences on heredity, neo-idealists like Charles Renouvier (1874) rejected the application of biological theories in the study of society (Buican 1973: 241; L Clark 1981). The main thrust of proupublican propaganda continued to pay lip service to ideas of ‘solidarism’ and social harmony as an

antidote to the harsh realities of the social Darwinist 'struggle for existence' (L Clark 1981: D1031ff).

Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century a number of highly disparate paradigms of 'race' had been brought to the fore without shedding any convincing light either on the meaning of the term or on how the spectre of 'degeneration' should be best addressed. Darwin's classic theory of evolution had discredited the notion of 'racial' fixity, but other theories pointed to the opposite direction. In the 1860s Gregor Mendel promulgated his laws of heredity, painting a more deterministic picture of genetic inheritance than the one suggested by Darwin's idea of 'blending' between inherited and acquired traits. Although his observations went largely unnoticed at the time of their initial dissemination, they were rediscovered in 1900 and were deployed as a refutation of Darwinian evolutionary theories (Mayr 1982: 710–26). Between the 1880s and 1890s the biologist August Weismann (1893) formulated the theory of 'germ plasm', according to which crucial genetic traits present in germ cells of an organism were passed on in the reproductive chain unaffected by external factors. Taken together, Mendel's and Weismann's theories of heredity legitimised ongoing concerns with genetic inheritance and cast a shadow on both Darwinian and Lamarckian evolutionary theories. Evolutionism and progressionism were partly separated but this did not arrest the rise of radical utopian thinking that envisaged the open-ended possibility of human perfectibility and the production of a Nietzschean 'superman' (Stone 2002). Social Darwinism enabled the arbitrary application of ideas such as 'the struggle for existence' and the 'survival of the fittest' to the contemporary political and social milieu of national competition across Europe and class struggle inside society. The fascination with 'race' as both a conceptual device for explaining the past and a vehicle for attaining a better future transcended disciplinary boundaries and fuelled academic controversies that had as much to do with epistemology and methodology as with professional antagonisms and political fixations (Weiss 1987: Ch 4).

MEDICALISATION, RACIALISATION, NATIONALISATION: TOWARDS AN ORGANIC 'RACIAL NATION'

In an atmosphere of growing concern with the 'health' of the individual and of the collectivity, where diseases had to be eradicated, and well-being had to be rigorously defended against a multitude of external threats, the discourse of *medicalisation* became increasingly pervasive, altering perceptions of 'health' and 'deviance' on many different levels (Nye 2003; Witzig 1996). In his account of epidemics in Eastern Europe, Paul Weindling (2000) maintained that the experience of dealing with large-scale epidemic diseases supplied a powerful imagery and vocabulary of 'externality' to disease. Epidemics were seen as coming from afar, borne by 'aliens' (e.g.,

immigrants), and presenting a threat that had to be entirely removed. They were unwanted and menacing 'visitations', forging a psychological link between 'disease' and the 'alien' status of those that carried it (Sontag 2002: 133ff). Weindling detected in the growing medicalisation of both 'health' and 'disease' the seeds of a trend that would become ubiquitous in all cases of twentieth-century genocide: the extension of the medical metaphor of 'vermin' from the condition itself to the individual carrying it. Medicalisation thus became a mechanism that enforced the dangerous externality of 'others' both on the scientific and psychological levels. It also helped determine the 'health' of the collectivity as a defensive struggle against an alleged invasion of detrimental elements. The strategy deployed in order to deal with such problems, Weindling argued, was confinement and disinfection—all within a medicalised imagery of elimination that was depicted as the only sensible solution for restoring the 'health' of the affected collectivity. It should come as no surprise, then, that discourses associated with genocide have always tended to present the chosen victims in terms of a lethal medical threat (vermin, pest, plague, etc). The 'speciation' of 'the other' is in itself a powerful licence to think in very different terms about the value of this form of life and behave towards it in ways unimaginable in the context of 'normal' human relations.

The trend towards medicalisation of 'health', 'disease', and 'deviance' bestowed upon biomedical sciences increased societal legitimacy and nurtured illusory hopes for eradicating illness—or, as Detlev Peukert (1994) put it, for overcoming death itself. It did not operate in a social or cultural vacuum, however. Long-standing prejudices against particular groups considered as 'alien' within each community operated on every level, including that of alleged scientific rationality. Medical metaphors used to accentuate these groups' externality and alleged deviance became increasingly popular, fostering calls for their 'speciation'—and then containment within, or even elimination from, society. This brings us to the second trend in operation—the *racialisation of the nation*. Organic nationalism conceived of the nation as a living entity, whose health had to be defended at all cost against disease and deviance. Anything considered as detrimental to its 'struggle for survival' had to be excised from the body of the nation, especially since growing concerns about hereditary influences and biological determinism meant that such conditions would only spread and become more acute if left unchecked. Therefore, the discourse of 'race hygiene' encapsulated both positive and defensive ideas of welfare—strengthening the health of the community *and* minimising the impact of (subjectively defined) detrimental hereditary conditions. The idea of the *nation-as-race* opened up the life of the national community to ideas of scientific management. Belonging to the nation was not an automatic, *de facto* condition but contingent upon the contribution that each individual member made to the 'health' and welfare of the collectivity. If this condition was not met, then individuals or groups within the population had to be subjected to the benevolent corrective

action of state authorities or risk marginalisation. This was a sacrifice that the individual had to make for the sake of the welfare and eternity of the national body—a logic similar to the arguments put forward in the first decades of the twentieth century against forms of 'life unworthy of living' (see earlier).

Deviations from the norm were indicative of some form of pathology that had to be 'healed' through resolute intervention. This perception did not preclude corrective action aimed at the reintegration of those affected into the body politic. The growing belief, however, in the mechanisms of biological heredity turned nonnormative behaviour into a 'disease' and 'infection'—and, as such, identified it as a target of 'cleansing'. The projection of medical metaphors onto the nation meant not only that 'disease' was personalised but that the person itself was medicalised in the context of the body politic. In other words, the object of 'disinfection' was not an element within the individual body but the person itself and all those who were characterised by a nonnormative condition; and, conversely, nonnormative behaviour became associated with medical disease and warranted the same treatment with that used against any form of illness and infection.

Finally, the medicalisation of deviance and the racialisation of the nation were complemented by a third trend that may be described as *nationalisation of race*. If the racialisation of the nation (nation-as-race) involved an organic view of the nation through the prism of biological heredity and collective 'health', the nationalisation of race (race-as-nation) pointed to a very different relation between race and nation. The idea of a common historic descent that bound the members of a national community together had a lot in common with anthropological theories of racial classification. It was always assumed by advocates of organic ethnic nationalism that all members of the nation belonged to the same broad racial-anthropological group and that they formed a distinct subgroup within it. As competition amongst nations (and nation-states) increased in the last two centuries, so did the need to present the nation as an 'elite' group within the wider racial-anthropological hierarchy. Everything national—not just language, which had been so central to definitions of nationhood, but also religion and the vague concept of 'culture'—became the object of adulation and relish. The recapture and preservation of this elusive national core from the perceived ills of modernity, degeneration, and dilution became a mythical pursuit that provided the nation with an evocative compass towards an ideal future. At the same time, as miscegenation was widely thought to lead to racial degeneration, upholding the 'purity' of the race became a focal concern of many nation-states. This entailed a ruthless defence both against those who were believed to belong to wholly different 'races' and against 'alien' ethnic minorities or groups linked to different subdivisions of the 'race' itself.

By that time, of course, the predominance of the 'Aryan' racial-anthropological discourse had established a paradigm of subdividing the 'white'

race into categories of relative racial value. Whilst it was easy for those nations that could claim membership of the Aryan/Nordic group to invoke a superior status vis-à-vis those who could not, the latter had two conceivable options for a similar claim: they could either profess that, in spite of conventional wisdom, they too belonged to the 'Aryan' racial group; or they could challenge this dominant hierarchy. The 1930s witnessed the popularity of debates about the autochthonous or allochthonous origins of the Slavs, as well as about their 'Aryan' or not designation. The Bulgarian zoologist Stefan Konsulov went even further, challenging altogether the idea that the Bulgarians were Slavs (Promitzer 2006: 241). Questioning the 'Aryan' theory did not necessarily involve refuting that a hierarchy of racial value did exist. On some occasions scientists challenged the identification of 'Aryan' with 'Nordic', attacked the notion that the latter constituted an elite group within the 'Aryan' race or suggested wholly different hierarchies of racial superiority (see Sergi's case previously). What was common, however, to all these approaches was the centrality of the racial-anthropological principle in theories of *national* descent. Even in those cases in which the word was not used as a biological concept at all or was substituted with obscure synonyms, racial nationalism was fast becoming the currency of national superiority in competition with other national groups and within the nation-state itself. History, culture, language, and the myth of 'descent' had become racialised (Grant 1916/1970: v–viii); and so had stereotypes of 'otherness'—whether national, racial or both.

Thus the 'nation' became the object of a utopian pursuit—for racial-anthropological purity and/or for racial-hygienic health. It was a hybrid kind of community, allegedly bound by both specific historic-cultural traits and exceptional racial-biological inheritances; a *racial nation*, to be remade, tweaked, maintained, engineered, and defended at all cost. 'Cleansing' was implicitly or explicitly a crucial part of the solution and the vehicle for a utopian future. The lethal potential of the 'nation-as-race' argument lay in the discourse of eradicating 'disease' and disinfecting the body politic from threatening nonnormative conditions. The alternative idea of 'race-as-nation' promoted 'cleansing' as the primary mechanism for purity and organic wholeness. Racial-anthropological concepts were usually obsessed with the problem of miscegenation between allegedly superior and inferior biological groups. Racial-hygienic ideas singled out 'harmful' hereditary conditions inside every group and the 'dysgenic' influence of certain cultural norms (such as 'pseudohumanism', religious morality) as the main distorting factors in the progressive-evolutionary scheme. In the former case, 'race' had to be defended against the detrimental external influence of 'alien stock'. In the latter case, 'race' was subverted from within, from hereditarily 'unhealthy' members of the group. What remains striking is how the very same differences that divided intellectuals and scientists at the turn of the century became so lethally reconciled in the 1920s and 1930s under the banner of a vicious racial nationalism (Griffin 2006b: 436ff).

THE 'DEATH OF THE NATION' VERSUS THE 'DEATH OF THE OTHER'

Race, then, became the hard currency of both national differentiation and superiority vis-à-vis other competing ethnic groups. 'Race' discourse emerging across Europe in the decades preceding WW I displayed a remarkable circulation and porosity amongst members of intellectual political, and scientific elites in every European nation or state. Ideas, findings, assumptions, and paradigms travelled fast and far, imbuing national debates with international trends. International scientific congresses organised by anthropologists, criminologists, biologists, 'eugenicists', and others became increasingly influential fora for the dissemination of advances and for the internationalisation of the idiom of 'race'. The German 'racial hygiene' (*Rassenhygiene*) movement, founded officially in 1905 by the biologist Alfred Ploetz, was instrumental in setting up the first international structure with the founding of the International Society for Racial Hygiene (*Internationale Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene*) in 1905–07, even if by 1910 hopes for a truly international movement had been almost abandoned (Weiss 1987: 148–50). More similar events followed in what was becoming a pattern of almost yearly gatherings in different parts of the continent (1911 in Dresden, 1912 in London, 1913 in Paris) with ever-expanding participation in terms of numbers of experts and national delegations (Kühl 1994: 18–39). Eugenics-oriented societies appeared in the first years of the twentieth century—with Germany, Britain, and the Scandinavian countries spearheading the trend—and began to spread across the continent through the initiative of scientists who, having attended such international congresses, endeavoured to implant their personal enthusiasm into their host countries. Scientists schooled in Northern Europe returned home with the experience of ultramodern experiments and visions that they sought to disseminate, adapt, and implement in their own countries, even if they were aware that favourable conditions there were largely absent (Turda & Weindling 2006). The new 'eugenic religion'—as Galton himself had referred to it—was spreading with the dynamism of an emerging international scientific gospel (see also following, Ch 5).

Awareness of this radical new paradigm for the future of the social order spread amongst scientists and then became politicised and popularised, reaching wider sections of society. People spoke of, about, for 'race' even if they did not use the term or understand its full implications. They employed an imagery of unshakeable heredity—the foundation of racialist theories—without referring to or echoing scientific developments that upheld such conclusions. The grand scientific theories remained largely impenetrable by the vast majority of people of every class, who had to rely on secondhand dissemination and popularisation of the complex ideas. By contrast, the anthropological works of Gobineau and Chamberlain, the anti-Semitic drivel of the journalist Edouard Drumont in France in the last two decades of the nineteenth century (Debevoise 1999: 137ff), the popular racial theories of

the German general Friedrich von Bernhardi (1914; Höres 2004: 38ff), and the phenomenally popular *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* across the continent were read by thousands, in some cases millions, running into multiple editions. Newspapers and periodical publications played an instrumental role in bringing their increasing readership into contact with the mere echo of new theories—an echo already filtered through the political and social beliefs of the editors and journalists (Brustein 2003: 346–54). At the dawn of mass populist politics, professional politicians addressed large audiences from a position of authority, often grounding their diagnoses or prescriptions on borrowed ‘racial’ territory. On their part, scientists saw in the powerful institution of the state the vessel for realising their counterutopia of a scientifically determined new order for their nations (Todorov 2001: 36–38; see also following, Ch 5). This was the beginning of a critical synthesis that produced a ‘hybrid modernity’, obsessed with notions of ‘decadence’ but mystified by the promise of healing and the discovery of a new, more profound meaning for the nation’s role in macrohistory.

The opportunities for this wide synthesis between nation and race, science and myth, and reason and faith unfolded amidst a crisis of meaning and direction for which the rapid advance of Western modernity itself was the main culprit. Such opportunities were located, indeed became intelligible, in a transitory space of shifting old certainties and still imprecise new prospects. Out of this profound sense of crisis came the conviction that the world was entering an unprecedented history-making phase, where new radical possibilities could be explored, imagined, and enacted (Griffin 2007). These were neither fully evident to most nor realised in the pre-1914 period. But the magnetic pull of the ‘race’ imagery in its numerous permutations at the turn of the twentieth century found a powerful outlet in the acute insecurities and sweeping fantasies bred by nation-statism. The emerging notion of the ‘racial nation’ encapsulated the dynamic permeability between its two constituent ideas, but also between nationalism, state, science, and politics. Without the discourse of ‘race’ the mythic power of nationalism and the utopian ambitions invested in nation-statism would have appeared far less consequential, convincing, historically urgent, and inflexible. The specter of the ‘*death of the nation*’ was needed in order to articulate the countersolution of the ‘*death of the [racialised] other*’ as a necessary, inevitable strategy to ensure the nation’s life. This was a simple, even naïve and crude proposition, but one that proved fascinating and eminently popular in the literal sense of the word as ethnocentric nationalism and nation-statism were moving to the forefront of European politics in the first four decades of the twentieth century. And it was through ‘race’ that the future was portrayed in terms of a stark dilemma: death and oblivion versus rebirth and greatness of the nation. Either way someone had to die, to be eradicated or eliminated.

Part II

‘Rebirth’ and ‘Cleansing’

Fascist Ideology and the ‘Licence to Hate’

Part II turns to the ideological dimensions of fascism, both as a generic intellectual phenomenon with ‘core’ beliefs and in its various national permutations across interwar Europe. As an ideology fascism was the product of its epoch—a period of rapid but crisis-ridden modernisation, of ambitious but frustrated and insecure nationalisms, of antagonisms amongst nation-state, of growing fears about ‘degeneration’ and longing for a ‘new beginning’ (Roberts 2005; Griffin 2007). In this respect, it stood at the receiving end of discourses that had developed their own momentum in the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth centuries. As a particular, revolutionary form of ultranationalism (Griffin 1993) fascism inherited a conception of ‘nation’ that oscillated between, on the one hand, a desired utopian state of wholeness and purity and, on the other hand, a profound sense of crisis, threat, and decay (see Part I). These discourses, floating around at the time when fascism was making its appearance in the intellectual and political stage of Europe, shaped its core message of ‘rebirth’ as a form of revolutionary assault on national/racial degeneration.

The following two chapters explore the ingredients, contours, and consequences of the fascist ideological synthesis between national *rebirth* and *cleansing*. The former pointed to an ideal state for the individual (the ‘new man’), the national community, and the nation-state as its historic-political vessel—the three bound together into a single utopian vision. The latter was both the precondition and the consequence of the vision of ‘rebirth’, purging the national community from allegedly threatening and/or harmful ‘others’ and thus preparing it for the future state of a full sovereign existence. It is this latter element of ‘cleansing’—and its incorporation into the core message of ‘rebirth’—that is of particular interest to this book, for it helped shape a redemptive *licence to hate* directed at particular ‘others’ and render the prospect of their elimination more desirable, more intelligible, and less morally troubling. Through this ‘licence to hate’, fascism produced a discourse of permissible hatred against them that helped nurture and later unleash suppressed eliminationist tendencies, first on the level of collective

consciousness, and later in terms of violent action. It also legitimised the use of *violence* against them—as a formative experience for the ‘new man’ and the reborn national community, as the expression of the nation’s full sovereignty, and as the necessary vehicle for the production of an ideal ‘new order’.

Chapter 3 deals with generic fascist ideology, discussing the linkages between ‘rebirth’ and violent ‘cleansing’ in broad intellectual terms. However, the hypernationalist nature of fascist ideology meant that the meaning of ‘rebirth’, the choice of ‘others’, and the degree of their victimisation varied from nation to nation and from country to country. This is why Chapter 4 examines the fascist ‘rebirth-through-cleansing’ synthesis in particular national contexts with regard to particular ‘others’—whether generic ones (Jews, Sinti/Roma) or unique to a national group (e.g., Serbs in Croatia).

3 The Fascist Synthesis 'Rebirth', 'Cleansing', and the 'Ideal Nation-State'

Almost every aspect of interwar fascism has generated strong historiographical interest—and, invariably, controversy. War and territorial expansion, the establishment of a 'totalitarian' system, patterns of leadership, and above all the eliminationist policies of the 1930s/1940s have raised fundamental questions about the nature of fascism that researchers have tried to address for decades. Did these decisions and actions derive from unwavering ideological intentions, clear and consistently pursued from the very beginning, or were they the outcome of unprogrammatically improvised, ad hoc compromises, or even opportunistic ventures? Did they tell us something about fascism in general, about fascism in its particular national context, or about the impact of wider factors, such as memory, 'ancient hatred' (Mirkovic 1993, 1996, 2000) or particular national traditions? Ever since the 1950s historiography has debated whether an autonomous, original, and coherent *fascist ideology* ever existed; and, if so, to what extent it underpinned or influenced the decision-making process of fascist movements and regimes (Kershaw 2000b). It was only from the mid-1970s onwards that increasingly sophisticated conceptual analyses of generic 'fascism' started making increasingly bold claims about fascist ideology's originality, intellectual cohesion, and even genuine revolutionary character (Bauerkämper 2006; Kallis 2003c).

It is not surprising that the origins of this debate lay in the historiography of National Socialism. Far more than any other permutation of fascism, the policies of the NS regime demonstrated *in retrospect* an alarming degree of consistency and a pattern of radicalisation that defied conventional categories of political conduct. Given the early postwar emphasis on the personality and supreme role of Hitler in the ideological orientation and political record of his movement/regime (Lasswell 1933; Bracher 1976), the temptation to detect a crucial link between his early fanatical declared intentions and his regime's subsequent extreme actions was too strong to resist (Dawidowicz 1975). No other fascist leader produced a detailed programmatic statement of his far-reaching intentions so long before exercising power, and registered in (published!) writing such a horrifying prophesy that he appeared to pursue with exponential brutality as state policy later. Race, anti-Semitism, and 'living space' (*Lebensraum*) expansion featured prominently in *Mein Kampf*, in

Hitler's speeches in the 1920s and early 1930s (Stoakes 1978), long before becoming the official doctrine of the Third Reich, long before being translated into the guiding principles of an aspiring 'totalitarian' regime in the 1930s, and long before unfolding with escalating intensity in the context of the NS 'new order' (*Neuordnung*) in the early 1940s. As Jeffrey Herf (1984) has shown, the NS regime epitomised a fundamental contradiction between (ultramodern) means and (atavistic) ends in a context of a profound crisis of modernity. Thus, the role of ideology became relevant to the analysis of NS policy in two interrelated ways: as a possible or even crucial determinant of policy itself, which set about translating intentions into actions; and as a putative driving force of radicalisation in the late 1930s and particularly during WW II.

With regard to racist—primarily, though not exclusively, anti-Semitic—policies implemented in 1930s and early-1940s Europe, such questions undoubtedly have far more sombre ramifications. For their outcome—the ruthless persecution and elimination of Jews and various groups of 'others' by the NS authorities and their associates in the fascist 'new order'—constituted a qualitative leap from segregation, discrimination, and expulsion to *total* physical elimination through systematic mass murder (Melson 1992). The terrifying ability to contemplate and subsequently commit a form of bureaucratised, pseudoscientifically sanctioned mass murder in the context of a total project of elimination cannot be taken for granted as a simple culmination of previous policies (see Introduction). This is why the lethal extremes of the NS racist project remain both morally troublesome and heuristically problematic. They raise two fundamental questions about causality that are central to this study: first, whether the decision to persecute specific population groups because of their alleged racial-anthropological and/or racial-hygienic perceived defects was motivated by specific ideological considerations; and, second, to what extent we can ascertain a *fascist ideological agency* behind the forces that led to the escalation of eliminationist policies within the Reich and to their extension across the NS European 'new order' after 1939 (Browning 1993).

This chapter aims to locate the intellectual foundations of this 'fascist' agency both in wide historical developments that had already been underway before the advent of fascism in the aftermath of WW I and in core attributes of a generic 'fascist ideology' per se. From the viewpoint of the immediate postwar era, a direct link between National Socialist leadership, the 'plan' or 'conspiracy' for aggression/extermination, and the 'corruption' of the German people appeared indisputable (Bloxham 2001: 12ff). This was the rationale for the trial of leading members of the regime at Nuremberg, for the 'denazification' policies implemented for a short time by the Allied occupying forces in Germany (Vollnhals 1991; Olick 2005: Chs 4–6), and for some of the subsequent trials initiated by West German authorities (Haberer 2005). Indeed, what Donald Bloxham (2001: Ch 5) has called "Nuremberg historiography" has exercised a tight grip on postwar understandings of

the atrocities committed under the aegis of National Socialism, in Germany and elsewhere. As a result, genocide was widely seen as the outcome of the perverse fascination of a group of leaders heading a particular movement/regime, who single-handedly plunged the continent into a paroxysm of murderous violence against millions of people. The ambiguities, however, of this interpretation could not be disguised, as more research on national variants of fascism and local cases of genocide brought to the fore a series of further agencies and contributing factors. The experience of aggressive, intensifying eliminationism and eventually genocide in interwar/wartime Europe was not just a matter of an allegedly 'unique' NS agency—or a particularly German phenomenon, for that matter. In fact, it was not the primary product of any single ideology, political regime, or 'national character'. Thus, the following analysis attempts to place fascism (as an ideological phenomenon) in the context of long-term trends that emphasised belonging and exclusion, defined communities, and ostracised particular 'others' in different national settings. This chapter examines how the formative influences of organic, ethno-exclusive nationalism and biological racism (see earlier, Chs 1–2) influenced fascism's own ideological vision and worldview in the direction of eliminationism. In particular, three main points will be addressed: first, how important the fusion between 'nation' and 'race' was for fascist ideology; second, to what degree German National Socialism was a 'unique' (in nature and intensity) example of this fusion; and, third, in what ways and to what extent 'cleansing' was linked to the central fascist goal of national rebirth.

'FASCISM': DEFINITIONS AND THE PROBLEM OF 'RACE'

To define a concept is to determine its 'ineliminable core' (Freeden 1994; Griffin 2003b) but also to place it into a specific context of historical causality and draw lines that distinguish it from other kindred or preexisting concepts. The plethora of definitions of 'fascism' ever since the first (primarily Marxist) attempts to analyse it in the 1920s reflected the wish to understand not just its ideological essence but also its roots, preconditions, and goals (De Felice 1977: 30–54; Beetham 1983; Kallis 2003: 220ff). This tendency gathered momentum after 1945, understandably, in the aftermath of WW II, the 'final solution', and the other atrocities committed in the 1930s/1940s. The search for a possible 'fascist agency' in all these developments can be meaningful and fruitful only on the basis of three conditions: first, that there is something distinctive about 'fascism' and its ideology; second, that we can talk in generic terms about 'fascism' in interwar Europe; and, third, that this 'fascism' produced or nurtured a mindset that somehow facilitated and/or radicalised elimination. Neither of these premises has been uncontroversial. 'Fascism' has often been analysed in terms of unprincipled activism or nihilism (Mack Smith 1969 & 1981; Rauschnig 1939), as an unoriginal

potpourri of inherited traditions and borrowed elements or as a concept that defies generalisation altogether (Allardyce 1979; M Knox 2000: 53–56). Then, even where there is agreement that ‘fascist ideology’ was both coherent and distinctive, a generic concept of ‘fascism’ does not always refer to the same features or case-studies. Finally, the role of a generic *fascist agency* can easily be confused with the influence of indigenous national traditions and tendencies or intersect with the discussion of other generic developments (e.g., modernity, totalitarianism) that may easily obscure the nature and limits of fascism’s own intellectual input.

In the two chapters of Part I we reviewed the processes through which nationalism (particularly in its ‘nation-statist’ form) and ‘scientific’ racialism had contributed to a mindset that rendered eliminationism in general (and elimination of specific ‘contestant other(s)’ in particular) more desirable, intelligible, and justifiable. The path leading to a ‘potential for elimination’ had already been broadly charted in the context of a racialised nationalism as an extreme utopia shared by some, openly admitted by few, and considered feasible by even fewer. Ethno-exclusive nationalism had envisioned the organic, holistic unity of a national community cleansed by allegedly alien elements and influences. Nation-statism had strengthened the identification of this community with the state, determining the inclusion-exclusion boundaries in increasingly more rigid social, political, and territorial terms. Racialism had bolstered the nature of inclusion and at the same time radicalised perceptions of ‘otherness’ by presenting them as immutable anthropological and biological reality. The overlap and convergence between radical theories of nationalism, nation-statism, and race (‘racial nation’—Ch 2) had been in motion in nation-states or among aspiring stateless national communities long before the rise of fascism.

One of the pioneers of fascist studies, Ernst Nolte (1965), was adamant about the crucial formative role of these earlier ideas and processes on ‘fascist ideology’ and about the radicalising effect on it. Thus, he incorporated fascism as a generic intellectual phenomenon into a wider interpretive scheme that somehow steered the ‘era of fascism’ into the fences of the ghettos, into the walls of the Hadamar ‘ethanasia’ centre, into the inhospitable ravine of Babi Yar in Ukraine, and finally into the gas chambers of Auschwitz and the chilling camp laboratory of Dr Josef Mengele. Notwithstanding the sophistication of his early work, however, Nolte did not explain convincingly how the evident excesses of National Socialism could be negotiated in the framework of generic fascism. Instead, the idea that there was something exceptional about National Socialism and/or the ‘course of German history’ (Taylor 2001) proved extremely hard to shake off, even until our day. The notion of German/NS ‘exceptionalism’ assumed four main forms: a generic intellectual, political, and social deviation from widespread ‘norms’ and historical processes followed in the rest of modern Europe (the *Sonderweg* or ‘special path’ theory; Kocka 1988; Puhle 1981); a particularly virulent anti-Semitic hatred that reached its climax in the post-1918 period and

was effectively manipulated ad extremis by National Socialism (Goldhagen 1996); a notion of National Socialist ‘singularity’ derived from the latter’s obsessive interest in biological racism (Sternhell 1994); and an allegedly unique political endorsement of aggressive and ‘total’ genocidal devices (Parsons, Charny, & Totten 1995). This last point, concerning primarily the degree of commitment to the pursuit of a brutal mass-eliminationist project, had generated the largest consensus until the 1980s. Even generic interpretations of interwar eliminationism that had attempted to link the events of the 1930s and 1940s with more general causes of cultural, social, and political pathology in Europe did not question the excessive and unprecedented character of NS racialist policies. The elaboration of scholarly work in the field of ‘genocide’ seemed to uphold such a perception too. As John Connelly (1999: 33) argued, the Nazi ‘final solution’ of the ‘Jewish question’ was unique in its totality of intention *and* execution.

However, by the 1980s the world had already been exposed to the experience or knowledge of other, potentially comparable, instances of genocidal behaviour. Questions were raised about the conventional portrayal of the Holocaust as ‘unique’ in the history of genocide. This *appeared* to be the motive behind the publication of Nolte’s essay that sparked off the so-called ‘Historikerstreit’ controversy in Germany in the mid-1980s. Nolte attempted to present the crimes perpetrated by the Nazis as a link, however gruesome and extreme, in a genocidal chain that had commenced in 1915 (against the Armenians) and resurfaced in the 1970s under Pol Pot’s regime. In fact, Nolte detected elements of a similar mind-set in the policies of the Stalinist system in the Soviet Union in the 1930s—that is, *prior* to the launching of the NS horror (Knowlton & Cates 1993: 18–23). Nolte’s essay appeared almost concurrently with another work, this time by Andreas Hillgruber, which examined the behaviour of the retreating Wehrmacht soldiers on the eastern front. Hillgruber asserted that the brutality of the NS troops could partly be construed as a reaction to the crimes committed by the advancing Red Army in areas that had seen centuries of German presence (Knowlton & Cates 1993: 155). Taken together, these two arguments were supposed to offer a model for the ‘historicisation’ of the Holocaust by integrating it into a generic framework of eliminationist violence and genocide. In reality, however, they also served as more or less apologetic accounts in the direction of relativising it. The fact that this bitter debate took place within the context of a wider discussion about the ‘re-nationalisation of historical memory’ and the construction of a more positive sense of identification with aspects of the past attested to its more pernicious ulterior motives. In hindsight, this debate was a squandered opportunity. When it eventually petered out in the late 1980s, it had produced very little in terms of either new historical knowledge or interpretive breakthrough. Even more ominously, it had also resuscitated the discourse of ‘responsibility’—a theme that was taken up with mono-causal acerbity by Goldhagen only a few years later (cf. Wippermann 1997).

Clearly, debates about ‘exceptionality’ and ‘uniqueness’—whether of National Socialism, of Germany, or both—erected methodological and conceptual barriers to comparative analysis. Nolte’s earlier suggestion that, when defined in sophisticated conceptual terms, generic ‘fascism’ could encourage a fruitful comparison of such varied case-studies as National Socialism, Italian Fascism, and even a movement that reached its peak before WW I and never came anywhere close to exercising power (such as the French *Action Française*) appeared more and more unconvincing. The main stumbling block continued to be National Socialism’s apparent intellectual *and* political ‘exceptionalism’—especially its obsessive and fanatical focus on ‘race’ on the ideological level and the unparalleled cold-blooded, systematic pursuit of physical elimination. By the 1970s the conventional assumption that there was something called ‘fascism’ in generic terms had started to crumble in the absence of a conceptually sophisticated template that could render it useful in analysing the different experiences of the various European countries. The disaffection with generic theories of ‘fascism’ reached its climax with the publication of Gilbert Allardyce’s article on this subject. Under the eloquent title “What Fascism Is Not”, the author called for the concept to be “de-flated . . . de-modelled, de-ideologized, de-mystified”. The unique dynamism of Hitler’s regime, he argued, could no longer be analysed in the same intellectual and political context with Italian Fascism or any other interwar radical phenomenon. Put simply, racial extremism and genocidal barbarism set the NS regime way apart from any other political ideology and interwar dictatorship, throwing at the same time the whole postwar edifice of generic ‘fascism’ in disarray.

The disintegration of the relationship between ‘race’ and ‘fascism’ continued throughout the 1980s. In the conclusions to their authoritative analysis of the NS regime as a primarily ‘racial state’, Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann asserted that

[i]n the eyes of the regime’s racial politicians, the Second World War was above all a racial war. [This] points to the *specific* and *singular character of the Third Reich*. . . . The Third Reich was intended to be a racial rather than a class society. This fact in itself makes existing theories, whether based upon modernisation, totalitarianism, or global theories of Fascism, poor heuristic devices for a greater understanding of what was *a singular regime without precedent or parallel*. (Burleigh & Wippermann 1991: 306–7; emphasis added)

The statement was unequivocal: race was the crucial ideological lens through which the NS leadership viewed the world; thus, NS racialism was unique and historically unprecedented. On this basis, any theory that aimed to integrate the experience of National Socialism with ‘generic’ fascism was of no analytical value. However, there was a further twist in this seemingly orderly separation. Starting with the publication of a work on Maurice

Barres and continuing with two further volumes on the French 'revolutionary right' under the French Third Republic, Zeev Sternhell had caused a sensation in France with his bold challenge to the notion that French fascism was an 'alien', imported product (Sternhell 1972, 1978, & 1983). In presenting fascism as an idiosyncratic and dissident synthesis of both left and right, he detected unmistakable continuities in the intellectual development of radical nationalism in the country from the late-nineteenth century to the Vichy period. Then, in 1989 Sternhell published an account of the long-term evolution of what he perceived as 'generic fascist ideology'. A mere two pages into the book the author stated audaciously that "[f]ascism can in no way be identified with Nazism". And he continued:

The basis of Nazism was racism in its most extreme sense, and the fight against the Jews, against 'inferior' races, played a more preponderant role in it than the struggle against communism. . . . Where they [the Jews] were concerned, the only possible 'arrangement' with them was their destruction. Certainly, racism was not limited to Germany. . . . [B]ut if it was a factor in the development of the revolutionary Right, racism in its French variant never became the whole purpose of an ideology, a movement, and a regime. (Sternhell 1994: 6–7)

So, Sternhell's 'fascism' was intelligible as a generic ideological system, encompassing an array of interwar movements and regimes, but it emphatically excluded the NS experience as incongruous and irrelevant. Could it be, therefore, possible to continue talking about generic 'fascism', include National Socialism in the model, *and* do justice to the significance of race in the ideology of Hitler's movement/regime? In his commanding history of interwar fascism Stanley G Payne (1997: 487–95) identified the "existence of a Jewish minority" as one amongst many factors that, albeit neither sufficient nor necessary, explain the emergence of a fascist potential in some European countries. Payne stressed that the presence or lack of such a minority was not linked directly to the success of fascism. Juan J Linz's (1979, 1980) classic tripartite definition of fascism introduced a valuable distinction between antitheses, genuine ideological goals, and stylistic/organisational elements without, however, including anti-Semitism, race, or eliminationism in his fascist 'ideal type'. Payne built on Linz's model but admitted that many of the identified 'fascist' traits manifested themselves in only some states and broad regions (Payne 1980: 19). Alan Cassels (1975) suggested an understanding of the various permutations of fascism as resulting from the influence of either National Socialism *or* Italian fascism (the two 'paradigmatic' cases) on eager disciples in different parts of the continent. This produced a geographic divide between northern/Nordic and southern/Mediterranean types of 'fascism'. Eugen Weber (1964), on the other hand, systematised the 'varieties' of interwar fascism into a number of ideal subtypes. Payne used these internal dichotomies as evidence of diverse

long-term intellectual and cultural influences in each country, which would in turn help us understand national variations within the template of generic fascism. Thus, race was explained away as a manifestation of the more fanatical and ideologically rigid National Socialist phenomenon, but was not acknowledged as a definitional prerequisite of ‘fascism’ itself. Another historian of generic fascism, Noel O’Sullivan, endeavoured to incorporate the strength of racial doctrines in some case studies, and the absence thereof in others, into a generic discussion of what he called the “messianic mission” of fascism (1983:167ff). He stressed that belief in missionary destiny was essentially inherent in European civilisation, associated with notions of cultural or even racial elitism. Thus, O’Sullivan asserted, even NS fanatical anti-Semitism was neither unique nor particularly original in intellectual terms.

Since the 1990s Roger Griffin (1993: 38ff; 2002, 2003b, 2006) has advanced the idea that a ‘new consensus’ in fascist studies is gradually emerging. This consensus (or, perhaps more accurately, convergence) has, according to Griffin, been based on a definition of generic ‘fascist (ideological) minimum’ as an intellectual phenomenon fusing ultranationalism, rebirth (‘palingenesis’), and populism. He responded to the troublesome singularity of National Socialism’s emphasis on race (and racial anti-Semitism in particular) by defining fascism as ‘essentially racist, but not necessarily anti-Semitic’ (Griffin 1993: 48–49). As he put it, “[t]o mix a ‘static’ ideological definition of fascism with an abstract scheme of how it manifests itself historically, solely on the basis of interwar Europe, is methodologically illegitimate” (Griffin 2002). In this distinction he was reflecting the idea that race and anti-Semitism were absorbed into some fascist discourses within the wider narratives of national ‘rebirth’ and superiority. Such an interpretation provided the conceptual basis for a crucial compromise. It could now be argued that fascism as ideology possessed a generic intellectual core, as well as different historic articulations and national permutations. Although the latter were contingent upon country-specific, long-term traits, they could still be broadly congruous to broader, generic ‘ideal-typical’ features of the fascist intellectual ‘core’ (Griffin 1993).

A similar conclusion was reached by Roger Eatwell (1996), who detected a clear link between nation and race as the model for an organic, “holistic” community. He also associated the NS goal of defending an “objectively” defined national and/or racial community with geopolitical concerns about security, territorial expansion, and protection of the ‘European’ civilisation. Once again, the exceptional significance of race in the NS case was perceived as symptomatic of country-specific circumstances and trends. If fascism, Eatwell argued, wanted to fulfil its revolutionary holistic utopian project, then it needed the full mobilisation of the nation—and the effective blending of race and nation held a particular attraction for German society in the interwar period (Eatwell 1992: 182–4). But for Eatwell a meaningful theory of ‘generic fascism’ should include both the notion of a core ‘fascist

minimum' (cf. Griffin) and a broader "fascist matrix" that could accommodate diverse national responses to it. This broader 'matrix'

was made up of three main themes: 'new man'; 'nation'; and 'state'. Within each, it was possible to come to notably different syntheses. Thus new man could refer to just elite revitalisation, or to reprogramming the mind of the masses; the nation could be based on either biological race or culture (and Europe could be re-imagined as a nation); the strong state could be justified as a means to initiate radical redistribution towards the poor or to defend a more conservative vision income and wealth differentials; and so on. (Eatwell 2006b: 264–6)

In a similar vein, Marc Neocleous strove to demonstrate that the integration of anti-Semitism, and racialism in general, in fascist ideology is not equivalent to squaring the circle. Reacting to the historiographical discourses of NS singularity and anti-Semitic exceptionalism, he stressed that

claims which point to the biological racism and anti-Semitism of the National Socialists as the ground of a fundamental difference between Italian fascism (as 'fascism proper') and National Socialism fail to register the fact that the biological racism and anti-Semitism of National Socialism emerges from the xenophobic nature of nationalism. However one characterizes the distinctive feature of the kind of nationalism found in fascism . . . it is the logic of nationalism and the logic of racism which share fundamental features; nationalism is *necessarily xenophobic*—that is, xenophobia is part of the logic of nationalism—and thus always remains an invitation to anti-Semitism and racism. (Neocleous 1997: 29–37)

The 'singularity' of the NS racial project, Neocleous asserted, was not the product of a long-term historical *Sonderweg*. Instead, 'nation', 'race', and 'universal state' were "different ideological mechanisms for substantiating nationalist claims" (Neocleous 1997: 36–37). The removal of 'alien' groups from the community served the superlative task of nationalisation, of forging what Mussolini called "racial solidarity" amongst the members of the nation:

[f]or fascism the concepts of race and the universal state perform the same function. That is, the state and race in fascism work alongside the idea of the nation, combining with the nation to link the individual to a higher, spiritual and universal force. Like the nation, the race and state are imagined ethical communities in fascist thought, growing from the nation, sustaining national power against its enemies and contributing to the ideology of state power by disguising that power as a manifestation of both our 'natural' collective identity and our unity with a 'spiritual' force (Neocleous 1997: 36–37)

Thus, for disciples of 'generic' fascism (with the exception of Sternhell) National Socialism used biological racism more as a device for national integration, identity-building, and homogeneity than as an autonomous, self-referential value. In this respect, the highly diversified attitudes of the fascist movements/regimes to various categories of 'others' can be understood as country-specific strategies for the defence and strengthening of the national community in the direction of fulfilling a 'nation-statist' utopia. Race was only one of these strategies—and biological racism one of the latter's most extreme variants. The strength and popularity of these elements in different national contexts owed a lot to preexisting, long-term trends particular to them. Yet, the significance of fascist agency lay precisely in facilitating the fusion of these inheritances from the past and in articulating them in a novel, racialised, coherent, and convincing manner, suited to the particular national and Europe-wide circumstances of the post-WW I period.

Enter 'fascism' as a generic intellectual concept. In such a heavily populated terrain of ideas at the dawn of the twentieth century the emergence of fascism had all the qualities of a negative critique of established doctrines—a veritable *anti-ideology*. Its fundamental rejection of the intellectual premises of liberalism, socialism, and traditional conservatism (Linz 1979, 1980; O'Sullivan 1983) had already been precipitated by various intellectual strands from the late nineteenth century. Equally its calls for a more organic and holistic form of national unity echoed the particular concerns of radical nationalism, which had made its appearance in many European societies around the turn of the century (De Grand 1978; Adamson 1992, 1993, 1993b; Sternhell 1994), associated with the quest for a regenerative transformation of national life and the aggressive pursuit of national interest. The fascist vision of a 'third way' (beyond socialism and liberalism), distinctly ethnocentric and tailored to the special needs of its indigenous audiences, implied a rejection of the particular type of modernity associated with 'Western' emulation that had produced conditions (or perceptions) of acute social dislocation in many European societies (Payne 1997: 485–6; Roberts 2005: 200ff). The search for a new spiritual order that would restore the equilibrium of modern society and anchor a disoriented populace in the reassuringly calm waters of faith or myth had manifested itself long before the rise of fascism in a series of radical discourses that criticised modernity, liberalism, cosmopolitanism, internationalism, and so on (Conway 1997; Buchanan & Conway 1996; Burleigh 2005). This was precisely the point that Sternhell attempted to make: that 'fascism' was a particular intellectual synthesis, accomplished in the first two decades of the twentieth century but with ideological materials already in ample circulation since the last quarter of the previous century. In all, then, the appearance of fascism in the domain of interwar ideas and politics represented a novelty whose inherent dynamism many derided and, above all, misjudged; but in intellectual terms fascist ideas exuded a distinct air of *déjà vu*.

However, the ideological negativity of fascism was largely a product of the wider atmosphere of rejection and search for new alternatives that pervaded many European societies at the turn of the twentieth century. A strong perception of 'crisis' that was raging in Europe since the late 1800s was exacerbated through the impact of WW I, the ensuing socioeconomic dislocation, and the crumbling of the positivist confidence in the forward march of civilisation (e.g., Eley 1992; Griffin 1993: 4–8; Lyttelton 1996; Mann 2004). Like any ideology conceptualised in the context of profound crisis, fascism based its prescriptions for future action on the unqualified denunciation of recent past. This, according to Juan J Linz, explains why fascism constructed its vision of revolutionary transformation on its fundamental opposition to those forces that had driven the modern deployment to the nightmarish cul-de-sac of 'degeneration' (Linz 1979, 1980). In fact, the crystallisation of fascist ideology, and its shift from the fringes of the European political discourse to the mainstream, marked the pinnacle of the long-incubated revolt. Fascist ideology provided the intellectual platform for legitimising an ultranationalist, antiliberal, antisocialist revolt and recasting it as a truly revolutionary and regenerative alternative vision for the future (Sternhell 1978).

Thus, fascism was generally more extreme, more populist, more action-oriented, more revolutionary, and far less predictable; but it was neither the exclusive ideological sponsor of the aggressive exclusion of 'others' nor a pioneer in this respect. The psychological architecture of eliminationism had been drawn up by others long before, occasionally enacted at different times (e.g., discriminatory laws and pogroms), and shared by many beyond the strict fascist constituency in the interwar period. The terms 'proto-fascists' and 'pre-fascists' have been used to indicate those who had contemplated before WW I a similar perspective to the one that became the trademark of the fascists in the interwar period (cf. Rees 1984). However uncharitable to their recipients and heuristically problematic, these terms nevertheless betrayed a fundamental truth—that most of the ideological ingredients of the fascist discourse were already in place long before the Noltean "era of fascism".

This said, the fascist ideological agency amounted to far more than a pure catalyst for an already existing eliminationist potential. Its contribution lay not just in releasing active tendencies but also in *animating, synthesising, radicalising*, and eventually *legitimising* them. By using already shared ingredients, by escalating and linking them in a novel radical vision for the future, fascist ideology was a crucial link in the twisted historical process that rendered genocide far more likely and possible—a critical interface between the cultural construction of 'others', the legitimisation of hating them, and the authorisation of action to the effect of eliminating them. It combined familiarity and simplicity with an unmistakable suggestion of national empowerment. Revolutionary ultranationalism involved the transfer of the responsibility for the community's destiny back to its members—all of them

and *only* them. ‘National rebirth’ (a traditional pursuit of nationalism ever since the nineteenth century) depended not just on a rejection of universal ideologies but also on the production of *ideal national* alternatives for the future, in a way corresponding to the specific qualities, traditions, problems, and expectations of each national community. Thus, fascism preached a fundamental renationalisation that empowered the nation to conceptualise its ‘crisis’ and seek its solutions within its own unique domain, ideas, qualities, and traditions. Since any form of pathology could now be explained as the result of the disrupting intervention of ‘alien’ forces and their detrimental impact on the national community’s spirit, there was a clearly optimistic assumption that a fundamentally (even violently) redefined framework for national life would supply the long-awaited ‘solutions’ and fulfil a radical utopia of national rebirth.

The content and ramifications of ‘rebirth’, dependent as they were on country- or nation-specific circumstances (Kallis 2004b), have indeed troubled historians of generic fascism in their attempts to produce a widely applicable model of explanation. The specificity of each national group’s identity, perception of decline, and yearning for regeneration translated into a diversity of ideological traits that often render generalisations problematic. As Robert Paxton noted, “[p]articular national variants of fascism differ far more profoundly one from another in themes and symbols than do the national variants of the true ‘isms’” (Paxton 1998: 2–7). This distinction between ‘fascism’ as a generic concept and ‘fascism’ as a kaleidoscope of comparable historical and national permutations reflects a crucial tension between the national and the international/generic nature of ‘fascism’. It suggests that, due to its nationalist origins and character, fascism was rooted in particular conditions of time and place. This does not mean, however, that the fascism did not find its own distinct ideological niche or that it did not develop a distinct generic value system that negotiated in a unique way the legacies of the past, generic and particular to each nation. Fascism fashioned itself as the undisputed heir to the radical nationalist cause that had already veered dangerously towards an extreme ‘nation-statism’ by the 1920s (Mann 2004). Its conceptual affinity to (ultra-)nationalism meant that it inherited specific powerful models of negative integration and resentment of special ‘others’ who had been presented as the negation of all values inherent in national identity. Fascism recognised their potential for fostering national integration and popular mobilisation (Eatwell 1992: 178–80). It articulated a vision of an ideal nation-state that depicted history as a life-or-death struggle between the national community and its perceived foes, redrawing the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion, and prefiguring a future ideal state of organic unity and purity. In this future state the place of specific foes was considered as a dangerous anomaly that had to be ‘solved’ in an uncompromising manner before fully realising the vision of national rebirth.

Therefore, the intellectual link between fascism and eliminationism was circuitous and conditional on an array of context-specific factors; but the

fascist agency in transforming preexisting forms of ‘contestant enmity’ into prerequisites of the (radically redefined) goal of national rebirth was undisputed and fundamental. In order to ascertain the ideological mechanisms and consequences of this agency, we shall now turn to the generic attributes of the fascist regenerative vision. The following section analyses how fascist ideology rendered the prospect of eliminating ‘others’ far more intelligible, desirable, and defensible to its audience than ever before by deploying it as a strategy for attaining the goal of national rebirth and as a precondition for a future ‘ideal nation-state’ (Eatwell 2006). The notion of ‘cleansing’ was implicit in the fascist quest for a ‘new man’, a regenerated (superior) nation, and a powerful nation-state; but it was also more pronounced and explicit in the worldview of those national permutations of fascism that had inherited powerful native imageries of incompatible ‘otherness’ (ethnic, cultural, and/or racial) directed at specific out-groups.

‘IDEAL NATION-STATE’ AND ‘REBIRTH-THROUGH-CLEANSING’

As a radical, revolutionary form of ultranationalism, fascism placed ‘the nation’ at the heart of its ideological universe. In the ‘Doctrine of Fascism’ (coauthored with the philosopher Giovanni Gentile), Mussolini declared that

[we] have created our myth. The myth is a faith, it is passion. It is not necessary that it shall be a reality. It is a reality by the fact that it is a good, a hope, a faith, that it is courage. Our myth is the Nation, our myth is the greatness of the Nation! And to this myth, to this grandeur, that we wish to translate into a complete reality, we subordinate all the rest. (Mussolini 1932)

Hitler emphasised the organic link between ‘race’, nation (*Volk*), and land (*Blut und Boden*, blood and soil). For him these three concepts formed the foundations of the ideological architecture of the National Socialist regenerative project. The *Volk* was indeed the external, historical manifestation of the ‘race’, embodying a mystical union between the biological, cultural, spiritual, and territorial essence of the German people (Hitler 1971: 382ff). In France, the leader of the *Parti Populaire Français* (PPF), Jacques Doriot, claimed that “our *credo* is *la patrie*” (Soucy 1966: 45). In Romania the leader of the Iron Guard movement, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, identified the three main components of the Romanian nation as “a physical/biological, a material (territorial) and a spiritual heritage”, all of which had to be addressed equally in the context of the movement’s regenerative project (in Codreanu 1938: 35ff ; Griffin 1995: 221–2). The goal, as Codreanu defined it, would be “to build from the ground the new, ethno-national state” (Sandulescu

2004: 355), in which the spiritual regeneration of the Romanian nation could be pursued and fulfilled (Codreanu 1938: 99–101). Legionary ideologues, such as Nichifor Crainic, Mircea Eliade, and Mihail Polihroniade, stressed the primary role of spiritual regeneration in their brand of nationalism, which was “new” in its total embrace of the “Romanian way” and the rejection of previous ‘Western’ models of nationalism (Heinen 1986: 171–87; Davidescu 2000). The nation—indivisible, rooted in history, united in blood and territory under the aegis of the nation state—consumed fascists across interwar Europe. It became the basis for a new faith and the social-spiritual vessel through which the ‘national revolution’ would create the fascist ‘new man’.

Fascism’s emphasis on ethnocentric nationalism made it particularly receptive to preexisting ideas of national-racial superiority rooted in the past and projected into an ideal future (see earlier, Chs 1–2). Its vision of ‘rebirth’ rested on preexisting diagnoses of pathology and on the determination to address them for the sole benefit of the national community. The idealised ‘nation’ was at once the quintessential mythical core of fascist ideology and the basis for a new ‘political religion’ that promised a superior condition for the individual, the nation, and mankind as a whole. The fascist concept of ‘nation’ was, as Emilio Gentile (2004: 329) defined it, a “homogenous organic community, hierarchically organised . . . with a belligerent mission to achieve grandeur, power and conquest with the ultimate aim of creating a new order and a new civilisation”. In this respect, fascist ideology did not so much pioneer a new ideal vision of national regeneration as it synthesised an array of inherited utopian ideas into a revolutionary vision of total conquest and domination (E Gentile 2000: 19), and of a landmark ‘new beginning’ (Griffin 2007b). Its religious character was manifested in its attempt to fully subsume individual and collective energy into the nation in a way that was considered axiomatic, unbending, and intolerant of any alternatives.

For fascist ideology the central notion of ‘national rebirth’ entailed the regeneration of both the individual member of the national community and of the community as a whole—in an eminently dialectical relation. The fascist ‘new man’ would be (re-)born through an ‘anthropological revolution’ that would generate the building blocks of the ideal future national community (Mosse 1966; Sandulescu 2004: 350–1). This ‘new man’ would embody all the allegedly superior national qualities, freed or cleansed from any harmful influence, and totally subordinate to the highest creed—the nation (Paxton 2004: 141–7). It was this regenerated ‘new man’ that would spearhead the rebirth of the nation and at the same time flourish into the reborn national community—the one was unintelligible without the other. And the fascist vision of regeneration often went a step further, envisioning the creation of a new universal order spearheaded by fascism. This involved the integration of the nation into some higher category (‘Aryan race’, ‘Europe’, ‘West’), in which it would lead a much more fundamental battle against universal

forces of degeneration (Zunino 1985: 131–58; Kallis 2000: Ch 2). Many interwar fascist movements preached a peculiar ‘Europeanism’, linking their own task of national regeneration to a wider process of revival of national cultures across the continent (Griffin 1994; Eatwell 2003: 110). The idea of ‘mission’ was indeed central to the worldview of National Socialism—and Hitler personally. It was also evident in the attempts of the Italian Fascist regime to organise the ‘Action Committees for the Universality of Rome’ network (*Comitati d’Azione per l’Universalità di Roma*, CAUR) in the 1930s (Cuzzi 2005) or Mussolini’s intention to create a ‘fascist international’, in spite of the eventual failure of the project (Sabatini 1997). But this ‘missionary’ element can be found also beyond the two core fascist regimes. The example of Vidkun Quisling in Norway encapsulated this dualism between the national and the universal mission of fascism. On the one hand, Quisling put forward a discourse of generic ‘Nordic’ resurgence that would steer “our civilisation” clear from the asphyxiating destructive embrace of “inferior races”. On the other hand, there was an emphasis on the mission of a ‘new Norway’ in laying the foundations of a novel, revived higher European order (in Griffin 1995: 208–11). Similarly, the ‘new Hungary’, according to the leader of the fascist Arrow Cross Ferenc Szálasi, would lead the process of revival of the “Carpatho-Danubian” peoples but only under the guidance of the ‘superior’ Hungarian nation that had historically fulfilled a crucial cultural mediation between East and West (in Szöllösi-Janze 1989; Griffin 1995: 223–5). In France, the fascist intellectual and politician Pierre Drieu La Rochelle embraced a peculiar vision of European federalism as an antidote to the perceived mediocrity of liberal parliamentarianism, Soviet communism, and American capitalism (Soucy 1966: 43–44). In the early 1930s a group of young intellectuals from the ranks of the AF (*Jeune Droite*) subscribed fully to the notion of a pan-European ‘civil war’ of ideologies (communism versus fascism) and expressed themselves fully in favour of a revolutionary reordering of the continent on the basis of a fascist ‘new order’ (Mazgaj 2002).

Thus, the fascist vision of rebirth pointed to a particular kind of utopia that linked the regenerated ‘new man’ not just with the idea of collective national superiority, but also with the notion of a broader new, history-making beginning. This all-embracing fascist utopia amounted to a resolute ‘quest for an ideal Fatherland’ (Kallis 2003b: 244–7) or an ‘ideal *nation-state*’, encompassing a parallel pursuit of an ideal ‘new man’, an ideal community, an ideal territorial living space for it, and an ideal political entity at its full service (Zunino 1985: Ch 3). These four components constituted the nucleus of any fascist utopian vision but their interaction was believed to result in an ideal condition that was far more significant than the mere sum of its parts. For the fascist ‘ideal nation-state’ was much more than a geographic, administrative or political unit; it was also the vessel of an ideal national community made up of healthy and worthy individuals motivated by the same overriding loyalty to the nation.

However, this fascist utopia of the ‘ideal nation-state’ also contained a strong redemptive subtext. The ‘new man’ had to be reclaimed from the corrupting influences of the past and present, healed or liberated, brought back from a state of exile into the forefront of history. The national community too had to be redeemed, both externally and internally. The *external* aspect of *redemption*, associated with uniting the whole nation and accumulating its perceived historic territory, had a particular resonance in interwar Europe, especially after the redrawing of boundaries in 1919–20 had caused widespread feelings of “intense and protracted national humiliation” or disaffection in many European countries (Gregor 1999: 21ff). The dispersal of national/ethnic minorities across many, usually neighbouring, states and their imposed exile from their political metropolis (the territorial and political nation-state) underlined the incompleteness of the nation-state in both population and territorial terms. As the ‘soil’ and its inhabitants (current or historic) were bound with mystical ties, the creation of the ideal national community presupposed the integration of ‘*blood*’ and ‘*soil*’ into the national core. Thus, the territorial ‘fatherland’ was an integral part of the nation. It represented not simply a material possession but a vital constituent element of a nation’s identity and a crucial building block of its future ideal architecture. Discrepancies between the current territorial state of the fatherland and the projected ‘ideal’ vision had to be resolved through expansion, ‘redemption’, and integration of those lands into the nation’s political incarnation—the national state (Kallis 2003b).

External redemption was expansive and inclusive; by contrast, *internal redemption* was exclusive, aggressive, and potentially destructive. The redemption of the individual from the ills of past and present was only part of the process of redeeming the nation itself. For it was also the whole national community as an organic entity that was allegedly threatened by disease, deviance, and dilution. External redemption was about uniting and creating ‘the whole nation’; internal redemption gravitated towards the idea of ‘nothing but the nation’, and the attainment of an ideal condition of homogeneity. At exactly this point an extreme notion of purity and wholeness inherent in organic nationalism intersected with the biological metaphors of ‘cleansing’, ‘gardening’, and ‘healing’. Rebirth became synonymous with a diagnosis of disease and a vision of collective healing that could involve ‘cleansing’ as a redemptive process. The more fascism spoke of the unqualified unity and purity of the (superior) national community, the more it embraced a utopian vision of holistic national integration as the fundamental prerequisite of its ideal regenerative vision, and the more it accentuated ‘difference’ and ‘otherness’. This had significant ramifications for the in-group as well as for its perceived ‘others’. Not only did it justify an aggressive discourse of superiority and domination vis-à-vis alleged external foes, but it further denigrated those internal ‘others’ who had been excluded from the national community. The latter were now more than ‘internal outsiders’ (see earlier, Ch 1), deprived of the privileged membership of the community;

they were delegitimised and inferior ‘others’, threatening the very project of national rebirth. Therefore, internal redemption had a Janus-faced quality: on the one hand, it upheld the utopia of organic national unity that was much more than the sum of its individual parts; on the other hand, it *could* also point to the direction of aggressive ‘cleansing’ against internal foes, where they existed and had been identified as ‘contestant others’ of the national community.

In practice, there was an essential contradiction between the external and the internal facets of this quest for ‘redemption’—a contradiction that the NS regime experienced after 1939 to an extent analogous to the immensity of its expansionist project (see following, Ch 6). In the particular circumstances of postimperial Europe, the territorial aggrandisement of the nation-state and its chimeric quest for purity were often working in opposite directions. The more the national state accumulated territories that were either inhabited by members of the community (but not exclusively by them!) or historically linked to the nation’s historical/cultural ‘cradle’, the more the goal of internal homogeneity was eluding the architects of nation-statism and the more the fear of ‘dilution’ into an amorphous interethnic/racial pool was becoming more pronounced. The price to pay for impressive territorial gains was the acquisition of further minority populations within their expanded borders and the insecurity generated from it. Yet the experience of managing a self-proclaimed nation-state with an increasing number of minority groups accentuated the perceived ‘deviance’ of ‘the other(s)’ and added currency to ultranationalist arguments in favour of pursuing internal redemption. It served as a further powerful incentive for tightening the process of inclusion and for radicalising the devices of exclusion in the name of national self-defence. The discourse of integration, with its numerous ‘objective’ qualifications and its integralist rationale, made nonconformism of whatever sort (ethnic, linguistic, religious, even ‘racial’) more visible, more troublesome, and more menacing. The position of ‘alien’ communities in the territory of the aspiring nation-state constituted an unacceptable repudiation of the process of total national self-fulfilment. Their freedom would be coterminous with the creation of a “state within the state” (Macmaster 2001: 15)—a prospect that contravened the logic of ethnocentric, integral nationalism that fascism embraced and pursued with unprecedented fanaticism.

The case of Romania provides an example of how the fulfilment of a nationalist dream could have rather unpalatable repercussions for the nation and the nation-state. There, the unprecedented expansion of the state’s territory sanctioned by the post-WW I treaties (with the incorporation of Transylvania, Bessarabia, Banat, Bukovina, and Dobrudja) resulted in the realisation of ‘Greater Romania’ (*România Mare*). Yet it also entailed an automatic proliferation of minority groups within the boundaries of the new kingdom (nearly 30%) of the total population (Livezeanu 1995: 9ff). In the urban centres of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Moldova, Jewish communities were often in the majority, reaching up to 60 percent in some

cities and towns.¹ Therefore, internal homogeneity and organic national unity suddenly became infinitely more elusive—and desired for that matter. In hindsight, Romanian nationalism was ill-prepared to stomach such a gigantic change in the territorial fortunes of the nation. Victory brought an ephemeral mood of enthusiasm that was soon overshadowed by concerns about the ethnic physiognomy of the new state and its survival amidst an array of disaffected neighbours. A “victim of its own success” (Barbu 1968: 146–8), Romania experienced a siege mentality caused by outside revisionist powers (e.g., Hungary, from which Romania had received most of its new territories; and Bulgaria), by its geographical proximity to the newly established Soviet Union, and by the existence of so many minority groups within the ‘national’ territory (Voicu 2004). This particular kind of xenophobic nationalism was reinforced in the aftermath of the Treaty of Trianon, ushering in a much more aggressive process of internal boundary-drawing that affected adversely all ‘alien’ communities to varying degrees (Chirot 1997; see also Ch 7).

It was then a combination of utopian ambition, hypernationalist obsession, and insecurity/fear that defined and nurtured the fascist vision of an ‘ideal nation-state’. The latter’s totality and rigidity often involved the violent obliteration of space in which ‘the contestant other’ could meaningfully exist in territorial, political, and (increasingly) biological terms. The redemptive aspect of fascist ideology constituted a revolutionary act of refusing to accept reality and of believing in the possibility of a new internal order through a process of ‘creative destruction’ (Neocleous 2005: 31, 41–42). In this ‘new order’, norms of belonging would be steadfast, and anything deviating from them would have to be purged, cleansed, or eliminated (Bauman 1991: 28–29). As Griffin noted,

destruction of enemies is thus neither nihilistic nor inhuman, but an integral aspect of a permanent revolution. The principle which logically follows from the mythic premises of this world view is one of destroying to build, or what one fascist thinker has called ‘creative nihilism’. The fascist transforms or (in the case of Nazism) surgically removes the ‘unhealthy’ elements of the nation so that it can be regenerated, prunes the national tree of its dead branches and excess foliage so that it can grow better, preserves at least his segment of humanity from the ravages of decadence and the threat of being swamped by ‘inferior’ cultures and races so that civilization can be saved. (Griffin 2002: 192ff)

As we saw in Chapter 2, this ‘gardening’ metaphor had developed its own impressive pedigree long before the rise of fascism (cf. Weiner 2003). But fascism went substantially further by conflating the various imageries of exclusion already developed in its national context. Placing the ‘national community’ (however narrowly and rigidly defined) at the heart of political action and elevating nationalism to the status of the primary guiding

principle of state policy were steps that many nationalist ideologists had at least pondered, if not advocated. Ruminating, however, on the mere possibility of the physical exclusion of 'others' and aligning elimination with a positive image of national rebirth involved a gigantic leap into uncharted territory. From the moment that fascist ideology endorsed internal redemption as a critical prerequisite of national rebirth, 'cleansing' (even violent) became a conceivable alternative, far more attuned to the perception of the 'racial nation' as a closed, objective community threatened by dilution and contamination. In contrast to previous mechanisms of negative integration through evoking the troubling existence of the 'contestant other(s)', fascism focused on the allegedly lethal menace derived from them and underlined the alleged benefits of their removal as the ultimate vehicle for national self-fulfilment (Traverso 2003: 129–36). This was a synthesis that was achieved in its fullest form in the ideology of National Socialism, where national 'aliens', racial 'others', and carriers of 'bad genes' became objects of ruthless 'cleansing'; and where cultural difference, racial incompatibility, and biological deviance were blended into a single imagery of life-or-death battle with the German/Aryan Volk (Traverso 1999: 118–21). But other permutations of fascism too promoted different types of fusion between ethnic, racial, and sometimes biological arguments in order to recast particular 'others' in ways that could suggest and legitimise their removal from the community's living space (see following, Ch 5).

Thus, whilst emphasis on 'cleansing' was a necessary feature of the fascist ideological core, it did not belong to its regenerative utopia but was regarded as its precondition. Rebirth was self-referential; 'cleansing' was a device for clearing the way for it, for preparing the individual and the community for the future ideal state, and for allegedly ensuring an optimal framework for national regeneration. A target common to all fascist ideologies was political opponents—communist and socialist activists, left-wing and liberal parties, and generally any dissident political and social force that appeared to fascists to contest their absolute claim to truth. National and racial 'others' *could* form part of this contestation if they had already been identified as dangerous opponents or harmful influences. This was where 'cleansing' could prefigure a genuine *potential for elimination* as part of fascism's regenerative vision—and become causally linked to it. This potential for elimination of 'others' existed only in the much broader 'fascist matrix' (Eatwell 2003), as a possibility and a strategy—one amongst many. But it could also become central to fascism's ideological vision where particular national trends and developments pointed to a form of fundamental contestation of the national community by particular 'others'. In those cases fascism sought to demonstrate that the existence of allegedly threatening 'others' inside the nation was not just *a* 'problem' but a fundamental cause of *the* problem and the main obstacle to an ideal future. Removing them was not just abstract wishful thinking pointing to a vague utopian state but the key to the enhancement of national life in a tangible regenerative

direction. Thus, fascism successfully mediated the distance between decline in the present tense and utopian rebirth in the future, linking the two causally and presenting the project of rebirth as a concrete, intelligible course of redemptive action motivated by the utopia of a 'life without others'.

FASCISM, VIOLENCE, AND THE 'LICENCE TO HATE'

Thinking 'elimination' as a particularly extreme scenario of internal redemption and 'cleansing', even in utopian terms, was of course very different from *acting* along these lines. Violence—and violent elimination of human beings in particular—was and continued to be taboo. An array of disincentives, whether institutional, cultural, or personal, maintained a gap between (desired) utopia and (feasible or justifiable) action. Traditional ethical inhibitions continued to determine to a large extent what was desirable or at least defensible in moral terms for the majority of the population and the policy of the state. Legal norms, the threat of coercive penalties for unlawful behaviour, and the fear of retaliation from minorities or their protectors rendered the mere option of aggressive eliminationist action practically inaccessible. At the same time, the modern discourses of individual rights and tolerance had become much more pronounced in the post-Versailles world of minority protection, of 'national self-determination', and of liberal guarantees for minority protection. However grudgingly states and their citizens tolerated the existence of minorities in their midst, however strong cultural or racial prejudices were in some national contexts, however intense the desire for ethnic homogeneity and the hatred towards 'contestant others' was becoming, a series of deterrents kept the lid on the extreme possibilities inherent in radical nation-statism and racialism.

Nevertheless, once again core generic fascist values were crucial in legitimising aggressive forms of 'cleansing' that could point to a veritable potential for elimination. Fascism put forward a generic framework of ideas and prescriptions that nurtured and radicalised one (in hindsight) crucial process: to accept 'cleansing' as part of a utopian and highly attractive regenerative project of envisioning the 'ideal nation-state', even in the most extreme form of total physical elimination. It claimed that the defence and advancement of the national community constituted the compass of individual and collective action, regardless of the relative morality of the steps deemed necessary in the process. As a result, where a threat from the community's 'others' was perceived, hatred towards those 'others' was no longer a wicked vice but an increasingly *legitimate duty* derived from the very privilege of belonging to the community itself. This, in conjunction with the revolutionary notion of establishing a new historical order, unbound by either legacies of the past or notions of conventional morality, resulted in a novel language of violent hatred that fascists presented as a legitimate discourse.

It was in the fascist attitude to violence that Sternhell's interpretation of fascism as a synthesis between dissident revolutionary leftist rhetoric and ultranationalist fixations (see earlier) becomes evident. In this context, violence and terror were the midwives of a revolutionary potential for a 'new man', a new community, and a new ideal reality for both. Hannah Arendt noted the similarities between the Bolshevik language of 'class enemies' and the fascist equivalent of 'national/racial foes' (Arendt 1951: Chs 10–11; Kershaw & Lewin 1997: 1–25). However tentative the analogy, it underlines the special significance of violence in the fascist regenerative vision. This kind of violence, serving the overriding goal of promoting the paramount interests of the national community, was situated in a novel 'revolutionary' morality. It was by no means nihilistic or simply instrumental but grounded in the superlatively ethical vision of the 'ideal nation-state' as an act of quintessential historical transcendence. The imagery of hatred and destruction were thus imbued with a vital sense of historic significance; and violence was established as the legitimate, highly creative vehicle of historical change that would unite utopia with reality (Kallis 2000: Ch 2).

The fascist discourse of 'violence' has been discussed in a variety of conceptual frameworks. Theories of 'totalitarianism' located the extreme use of violence, surveillance, and coercive power in the novel circumstances of a perverted modernity. *Total terror* constituted a qualitative radicalisation of previous models of dictatorship, made possible through the concentration of full power by the modern state and by technological advances in the twentieth century (Friedrich & Brzezinski 1965: 21–26). Some saw the fascist discourse of violence in the context of fascism's self-perception as a 'political religion', aggressively intolerant of any challenge to the validity of its own vision. Violence thus served a function of real and symbolic transcendence in a legitimate trajectory that led to the revolutionary founding of a new holistic order (Weisbrod 2002). The pioneering work of Emilio Gentile offered a fruitful synthesis of the two interpretations, recasting fascism as "a sacralised form of totalitarianism, which legitimised violence in defence of the nation and regeneration of a fascist 'new man'" (E Gentile 2000). Others pointed to the connection between the European experience of deploying extraordinary violence in their colonial domains and the gradual import of such practices into the domain of intra-European conflict (Arendt 1951: Ch 12; Traverso 1999: 47–68). Recent work by scholars of fascist studies underlined the *revolutionary* core of fascist ideology and suggested an understanding of fascist violence as the inevitable convulsion that marks the foundation of a "new (revolutionary) order" (both domestically and internationally) through the 'creative destruction' of its predecessor—and of all forces that appeared to stand in the way of the new beginning (Robin 2004).

The discourse of violence in fascist ideology had two separate aspects (Galli 1994: 231ff; Neocleous 1996: 1–18). The internal, spiritual aspect of

violence was perceived as a force of national renovation, as an imperative step in the reeducation of the individual in order to “remake his content” and transform him into a genuine “new fascist man” (*uomo fascista*; Mussolini 1932: 164–79; OO, I, 124ff). But the fascist discourse of violence was particularly meaningful in the context of the binary opposition between (national) friends and foes. The external aspect of fascist violence, that is, its use *against* ‘others’ and its destructive potential, was regarded by fascist ideology as less fortunate, but no less inevitable or legitimate. This view of violence was rooted in fascism’s social Darwinist perception of history as a constant struggle between incompatible, fiercely antagonistic opposites. Violent confrontation and struggle were historical necessities that determined the “whole progress of humanity” (Simonini 1978: 138–40). In this respect, the use of violence by an elite was moral and legitimate, not only in a natural sense (the strongest had to prevail—cf. Eatwell 1992: 175), but also politically (in order to bring the necessary readjustments to the ‘new order’; OO, XXI, 193). This was an argument consistent with the “dogmatic, violent negation of the present”, as Mussolini described it in the ‘Doctrine of Fascism’ (Mussolini 1932).

Such fundamental fascist ideas produced a *tendency towards* violence that was regarded as an integral part of the history-making fascist national and universal ‘mission’. But there was a further crucial link between the ideological propensity for violence and its actual discharge by the fascist movements/regimes. For fascism-as-political religion predicated its own utopian vision for an ideal, regenerated nation-state on a combination of *decontestation* and *uncompromising activism*. The former removed any doubt about the validity of the fascist vision, nurtured a fundamental intolerance towards any alternative, and facilitated the discharge of violence against its opponents. The latter pointed to a specifically *fascist* resolve to take its vision at face value and promote it in its totality through constant action (E Gentile 1975: 229; O’Sullivan 1983: 113–30). In the fascist worldview activism was not simply the vehicle for the implementation of ideas and programmes. It was also an ideological goal in itself, the political externalisation of national élan, of the will to power and prominence, as well as the necessary precondition for the spiritual mobilisation of the nation and the foundation of an ideal ‘new order’. The consequent unity of thought and action in the fascist worldview was a reflection of the equal significance given to both elements as complementing each other in serving the long-term aspirations of the nation. It was also a sign of fascism’s determination not simply to mediate between the real and the utopian, but to use the latter as the sole guiding principle and benchmark of national rebirth, liberating action from conventional moral inhibitions and aligning it to the attainment of a supremely ethical collective goal (Kallis 2007).

The suggestion that the fascist use of violence may be construed as a supremely revolutionary device for the foundation of a new national and universal order has been extremely controversial and troubling to many. In

hindsight, this kind of fascist violence was responsible not just for the genocidal campaigns of the early 1940s across NS-occupied Europe but also for the chilling ‘bloodless’ violence of the extermination camps in Poland (Derrida 2002; Sinnerbrink 2006). Writing in the 1920s the German philosopher Walter Benjamin (1992) posited the complexity of a situation where there is a conflict between ‘just’ ends and ‘just’ means. By rejecting the conventional distinction between legal (that is, sanctioned by law and legitimately exercised by the state) and illicit violence, Benjamin attempted to delineate modes of violent action that were revolutionary and ‘uncontaminated’ by law. In describing the latter, Benjamin used a rather ambiguous term (‘divine violence’), which he juxtaposed to the even more obscure alternative of ‘mythic violence’ (Caygill 1998: 28–29). His elucidation of ‘divine violence’ borrowed heavily from revolutionary left-wing sources, including the notion of ‘general strike’ outlined by Georges Sorel (1908/1972). Interestingly, Sorel was also singled out by Sternhell as one of the central intellectual formative influences on fascist ideology and a crucial ingredient of his understanding of fascism as a “dissident revision of Marxism” (Sternhell 1994: 36–91). But Benjamin’s suggestion that ‘divine violence’ is essentially both revolutionary and “expiatory”, ethical and creating a new order came intriguingly (and unintendedly) close to subsequent fascist perceptions of violence as an experience of redemption and a form of fundamentally ethical conduct. This kind of ‘absolute’ violence would free the regenerated ‘new man’ from the weight of the past, demolish and purify before erecting the masterpiece of a ‘new order’. Griffin also underlined a further (related) revolutionary function of violence in the discourse of interwar fascist movements, whereby the individual transcends reality through destruction and self-sacrifice, and seeks redemption in a different sphere of time and place (Griffin 2003d).

The immediate, ‘uncontaminated’ and (self)-‘redemptive’ violence constitutes a realm of unbound sovereignty. This sovereignty is both individual and collective, reaching its apotheosis in the right to either take life or give up one’s own (Bataille 1991; Hansen & Stepputat 2005). It is precisely here that the fascist unity of utopia and action intersected with the vision of the ‘ideal nation-state’. The sacralised nation occupied its indisputably central position in the fascist worldview as the realm of uncontested, unbound sovereignty, where any means could be justified if it served the supreme cause of national rebirth. It was the collective, diachronical nation—rather than the individual member of the national community—that emerged as the ultimate embodiment of sovereign life in fascist ideology. The apotheosis of this belief can be found in the ideology of the Romanian Iron Guard (Ioanid 2004). Its leader, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, stressed that

[t]he Legionary [member of the movement] . . . will be sent into the world: to live, in order to learn how to behave properly; to fight, in order to learn how to be brave and strong; . . . to suffer, in order to steel

himself; to sacrifice, in order to get used to transcending his own person in the service of his people. (in Weber 1964: 167)

The reborn fascist ‘new man’, then, operated in a constant “state of exception” (C Schmitt 1985; Poulantzas 1974: 11), not simply beyond law but in a history-making moment that redefined law and morality. Recourse to violence and death—whether of others or of the self—was no longer ‘unjust’ because it was the manifestation of the boundless, total sovereignty of the nation to which every individual had subsumed their existence. The internal aspect of fascist violence—a formative experience in itself for the *uomo fascista*—would also prepare the individual for the perennial fight for the rebirth of the nation and for the legitimation of the use of violence against ‘others’. The discrepancy between the ‘just’ goal of national rebirth and the putative ‘unjust’ violent conduct would thus be resolved and reconciled within a wholly new revolutionary morality.

The limitless sovereignty of the fascist ‘nation’ was externally hostile and would find its apotheosis in total conflict and death. It legitimised and glorified access to violence by using a redemptive vocabulary of national wholeness predicated on the absence of ‘the other’. The exercise of this superlative form of sovereignty presupposed both the ‘oneiric exaltation’ of this utopia (Foucault 1990: 150) and recourse to the prerogative of sovereign violence. This prospect constituted a crucial component of the fascist vision of continuous ‘creative destruction’ as a revolutionary process of liberation from the political, moral, cultural, and social constraints of the past. It is no coincidence that the taboo of violence and death—whether inflicted on opponents and foes or experienced by the self—was deliberately breached from a very early stage through the collective action of the fascist paramilitary formations (Italian *squadri*, German SA, Romanian Legionaries, etc). Such organisations provided the first experience of what Susan Sontag called “ecstatic communal belonging” (Sontag 1975/1980). Their members defied conventional law, transcended moral and cultural inhibitions, engaged in patterns of psychological and political experience that were traditionally inaccessible or ethically troublesome. From the first moment, the fascist paramilitary squads empowered themselves (and were subsequently empowered by their leaders) with a form of permission to think and act in ways that transcended the conventional realm of morality and conduct. This permission was liberating for the members of the movement and open-ended enough to place them in a vortex of continuous radicalisation that suited the fascist belief in ‘permanent revolution’ (O’Sullivan 1983: 149–50). But it was at the same time an open exhortation to the rest of the national community to fathom the new possibilities created by fascist activism and thus tease the traditional boundaries of moral behaviour.

Hence, the importance of *licence*. Licence is not positive freedom but a form of special dispensation—exceptional in its devices, goals, and particular targets. In this case, it involved the conditional suspension of those

hindrances that usually kept the exercise of 'sovereign violence' at bay and prevented full decontestation. This licence can take up different forms: a direct order from a source of authority that relieves individuals from their responsibility or accountability; an indirect exhortation for action with the promise of impunity or reward; a powerful and legitimising precedent; conformity to a kind of behaviour already displayed by others; an overriding consideration of common interest, security, or self-defence, regardless of how justifiable or real it may be; or even withdrawal of any form of authority and process of accountability. Yet, this is only the final form of licence, geared towards violent action against a specific 'other'. Its power and devastating potential are conditional upon the kind of long-term cultural and psychological preparation that tests boundaries and provides a space for the psychological enactment of the nation's full sovereignty, with what this may entail. 'The other' must be established in the collective consciousness of the community as a 'contestant enemy' over a period of time. Abstract stereotypes and prejudices can only maintain their power if they are fuelled continuously by 'fresh' cues of alleged culpability and danger. But, more importantly, this specific 'other' must have been subjected to a process of *delegitimation* in the eyes of a given community. Delegitimation involves a degree of dehumanisation—by either denying any worth to the group of 'others' or by ascribing to them extraordinary qualities that render them lethally dangerous to the community (Bar-Tal 1990, 2004). Thus, before the dispensation to deploy violence against a target comes the 'licence to hate', to exile, to deny intimacy or even humanity altogether (Waller 2002: 184–5, 244–9; Petersen 2002). It is precisely this form of licence—to think of the mere existence of 'the other' as problematic, dangerous, or harmful—that increases the desirability and moral permissibility of violent, eliminationist action against them (Bar-Tal 1989). And it was this 'licence' that fascist ideology made available—first to its own adherents and then to the entire national community (see also following, Ch 10).

Therefore, the most crucial form of fascist ideological agency with regard to elimination derived from the sacralisation of the 'nation' as the ultimate, fully sovereign historic entity with the right to operate in a specific (expanded) domain of time and space without 'others'. The first step in that direction was the extension of a 'licence to hate' and contemplate a future without 'others' as both part and precondition of a positive regenerative ideal condition. In creating a psychological space where the removal of 'the other' could be entertained as a highly desirable and legitimate topos of national sovereignty without the burden of moral accountability, fascism tampered with the consciousness and reflexes of interwar societies. Before it came to authorising and implementing policies to that effect, the taboo had already been breached on the psychological level. What had previously been perceived as a utopia that, however desirable, remained beyond moral and practical reach, had become intelligible and fathomable—a genuine and psychologically potent 'legitimate discourse' of the wider project of national

regeneration. The fascist revolutionary vision of a new national order was conceived on the basis of total decontestation that precluded any form of accommodation with the forces that appeared to oppose or contradict it. The trajectory from desiring a homogenous and 'cleansed' national community to endorsing violent scenarios of physical elimination was also facilitated by the particular fascist approach to violence, as both a formative regenerative experience and the expression of an ideal condition of full national sovereignty. Violence, then, was the vehicle that led from rebirth to aggressive 'cleansing' and potentially elimination, all in the context of a legitimate utopia for the nation. This kind of redemptive, 'creative' violence was predicated on a special psychological dispensation that deprived particular 'others' from a place in the moral universe of the community and legitimised the prospect of their elimination from its living space.

Nevertheless, the fascist 'licence to hate' *particular* 'others' would be meaningless without a preexisting, potent but latent substratum of 'contestant enmity' directed at them. Through both the rigid utopia of organic nation-statism and the biological conception of the 'racial nation', particular 'others' were transformed from a more-or-less tolerable perceived anomaly into an allegedly immutable and dangerous 'threat' that would thwart the project of rebirth, so dear to fascists and their audiences. Here lay the crucial fascist 'licence' to envision elimination as feasible, to construe it as desirable, and then to legitimise it as a (still theoretical) possibility. By articulating a series of radical, previously marginal, or suppressed ideas as part of an eminently appealing populist ethnocentric discourse, fascism proved instrumental in subverting the moral, social, and cultural checks to the extreme scenario of physical elimination. The following chapter examines aspects of this fascist 'licence to hate' in a more specific manner, by focusing on how generic fascist values pointed to elimination in each national context, how and why they identified particular 'others', and in what particular ways (and cases) they succeeded in associating the goal of creating an 'ideal nation-state' with the aggressive 'cleansing' and elimination of 'the other'.

4 Imagining Elimination

Fascist Ideologies, the Construction of the 'Other', and the 'Licence to Hate'

IDEOLOGY, 'COGNITIVE DISSONANCE', AND THE 'LICENCE' TO IMAGINE ELIMINATION

Physical elimination of an out-group presupposes a qualitative escalation that leads from a psychological estrangement from 'the other' to the decision to remove them and act on that mandate. Such an escalation has occurred only on a number of occasions in the past century; it is neither predetermined nor the most likely scenario because of the extreme ramifications and stark transgressions that it requires. But the existence of such a long-nurtured 'potential for elimination', particularly if supported by continuous and recent aggravating developments, constitutes an open-ended scenario that hosts a number of future possible outcomes, including physical elimination at the most brutal end of the spectrum. When this escalation did take place, it highlighted in retrospect the crucial significance of its rhetorical, ideological, and psychological precedents. It was for this reason that the 1951 'United Nations Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide' underlined the crucial connection between *intent* and subsequent *action*, even if the experience of dealing with genocides has demonstrated how difficult it is to diagnose the 'potential for elimination' in its earlier stages (Chalk & Jonassohn 1990; Chalk 1994; Brugnola, Fein, & Spirer 1999). The sad privilege of having accumulated a considerable empirical capital of genocidal instances (and of continuing to do so) has sharpened our awareness of causal links and contributing factors or processes. It has helped dispel the illusion that aggressive and intolerant ideological discourses, linguistic violence, and cultural prejudices are relatively innocuous when compared to the event of violence itself (Bosmajian 1983). It has also demonstrated how a crime of such magnitude as mass elimination needs to be first entertained as abstract desire before been considered as a feasible, justifiable, or inevitable course of action by the perpetrators.

In this respect, the experience of genocide is an *enactment* of envisioned intention. Intention is nurtured over time, aggravated by recent developments, and manipulated by sources of power; but it must have been entertained first as a desirable possibility before it can be considered as a valid course of action by the individual and the group. And even this is not enough

to explain fully the escalation from desired intention to action. Very, very few people would take any direct pride or pleasure in the fact that they became murderers for the sake of it, even against devalued ‘others’ (Kuper 1981: 84–5). The intention to forcibly deal with a ‘contestant enemy’ usually involves inner tensions and depends on moral transgressions that have proved hard to reconcile with personal and cultural ethical principles. Even if such inhibitions are overcome and tensions resolved, logistical and practical obstacles may prevent the formulation of an action-plan or impede its implementation. In addition, empowering situational circumstances and forces are crucial ingredients of the chain reaction that, once initiated, *may* catalyse the transition from desire to concrete intention to the enactment of genocide (Roberts 2005: 43–4).

The leap from abstract intention or desire to concrete action presupposes a convincing resolution of this inner personal tension, which has been described as *cognitive dissonance* (Festinger 1957; Aronson 1969 & 1997). Dissonance refers to a clash between particular desires (in this case, to live without ‘contestant other’ or even to take revenge on them) and cultural or universal ethical principles (e.g., ethical opposition to, or abhorrence of, violence, murder, etc). For genocide to take place and for ‘ordinary’ individuals to become active participants, this dissonance has to be first escalated by rendering the option of elimination more desirable or accessible. Then, it has to be resolved one way or another by making the individual feel that his or her actions are broadly consistent with their overall worldview—hence, the restoration of the condition of *consonance*. Cognitive dissonance may result either in the abandonment of the proposed action as irreconcilable with one’s ethical outlook or in the endorsement of the action through a process of changing the parameters of the dissonance itself—by endorsing new definitions of what is acceptable in the given circumstances, by relativising the problematic nature of the action in the light of expected outcomes, or by altogether evading the dissonant mindset (Fried & Aronson 1995).

Cognitive dissonance, therefore, revolves around a tension between three main considerations in the context of eliminationist violence: of *desirability*, *feasibility*, and moral *admissibility* of the action. Only a minority of people do not experience such tensions, either because they reject axiomatically any form of violence or because they do not see violence itself as problematic. The majority usually find themselves pulled in different directions by each of these three considerations. They may distrust, fear, or even despise ‘others’ but have fatalistically accepted the condition of coexistence, unable to conceive of a different scenario. They may long for a life without particular (or all) ‘others’ but perceive this condition as utopian, choosing instead to adapt to the awkward realities of living side-by-side. Alternatively, they may strongly desire the prospect of somehow ridding themselves of ‘others’ but nevertheless refrain from any violent action against them, either because they fear sanctions/reprisals or because they consider this course of action inadmissible, in spite of the ostensible desirability of its effects.

In negotiating such tensions the notion of external, authoritative *licence* is crucial in turning dissonance from an impediment into an incentive to action. This 'licence' is a mechanism for psychological adaptation, using the kudos of authority or the power of precedent to redefine what is acceptable and justifiable in the given circumstances, and thus allow the individual to take sides. As we saw (Ch 3), it consists in an ad hoc justified exception, an authorised suspension of conventional morality that is finite and targets a specific problem. By removing, cancelling out, or weakening constraints it enables individuals and groups to accept the desirability of a violent scenario even if the latter contradicts generic cultural understandings of defensible or 'just' behaviour. Licence may facilitate the acceptance of a particular course of violent action against a particular 'other' in a particular setting by strengthening the scenario's relative desirability and/or by reducing the force of inhibiting factors. And, little by little, through precedent and repetition, it may also redefine the moral universe of an individual or community by rendering previously taboo feelings and actions less troubling and more admissible.

What I am proposing here is an analysis of eliminationist/genocidal violence as the (conditional and nondeterministic) result of a process that involves three discrete but eventually interrelated components: first, long-term cultural conditioning that underlines the difference of 'the other' and encourages psychological distance; second, subscription to a particular ideological vision that gives specific meaning to this distance and nurtures it; and, finally, empowerment to act in the direction of eliminating the (by then radicalised) 'problem'. Viewed from this point, genocide may occur as the cumulative effect of two different 'licences': on the one hand, a long-term *licence to hate* a particular out-group and desire its elimination (see earlier, Ch 3); on the other hand, a short-term *licence to kill* that authorises the group to adopt violent practices of elimination against this very particular 'other' by suspending individual accountability and by overriding inhibiting factors. The importance of 'licence' in the continuum of radicalisation that leads from heterophobia to 'contestant other-ness' to hatred and to sustained violence lies in the fact that all the previous conditions and processes are de facto dissonant with allegedly universal principles of human 'civilisation' and conventional morality. Thus, the stages of radicalisation of attitudes leading to genocide presuppose a renegotiation and resolution (however ephemeral or even temporary) of cognitive dissonance.

The role of ideology in this continuum of radicalisation is crucial. Ideology is a central component of the 'licence to hate' as well as a decisive step in generating the 'licence to kill'. It performs a dual role that is of central significance to the mechanisms of 'licence'. On the one hand, it arranges the mass of information about the world in a coherent, easy-to-relate way that allows the individual to organise and categorise phenomena in meaningful and simplifying but cogent terms (what is known as 'cognitive economy'). On the other hand, it motivates the individual to think and act in a particular way

with a view to attaining a specific desired future condition. Ideology is most effective and convincing when it provides a narrative that links past and present, de-contexts ‘truth’, and invokes an imagery that resonates with its audience’s attitudes and beliefs. It, therefore, performs a function of *synthesis* and *clarification*. Synthesis refers to the integration of particular, deeply ingrained inherited beliefs into a new narrative that resonates with present perceptions and points decisively to a different, desirable future condition. Clarification involves a battle against ambivalence and an offer of certainty by de-contesting the meaning of fundamental concepts and then presenting them as the ultimate, the only truth (Bauman 1991).

Fascism was such an ideology of synthesis and clarification (or, more befitting its character of ‘political religion’, de-contestation)—two functions that it performed admirably in the interwar period judging by the spectacular appeal and diffusion of fascism across Europe. In performing these functions, fascist ideology radicalised particular (inherited) perceptions of ‘otherness’ and legitimised the vision of an ideal homogeneous society, ‘cleansed’ of its alleged internal foes and triumphant against its external rivals. Many of these images of ‘otherness’ had already acquired the character of ‘chimeria’—an irrational imagination that attributes to the group as a whole a gamut of qualities never empirically proven but accepted without any desire for validation (Langmuir 1990: 326ff). ‘Chimerias’ create an imagery of demonisation that recasts the struggle between the in-group and its ‘other’ as a matter of life or death. Fascist ideologies inherited such ‘chimeric prejudices’, contributed some new elements to them but, above all, synthesised disparate attributes of ‘otherness’ into a systematic vision of national ‘rebirth-through-cleansing’ that resonated with its interwar national audiences (see Ch 3). In hindsight, fascist ideology succeeded not just in radicalising preexisting hostile sentiment against particular ‘others’ but also in justifying the more extreme and aggressive discourse of a constant ‘war’ against alleged ‘enemies’ as a necessary and laudable step towards attaining wholly ‘positive’ goals for the whole national community. In so doing, it proved instrumental both in intensifying passion against ‘others’ and, on specific occasions, in turning this initially shapeless psychological hatred into a commitment to elimination.

FASCIST IDEOLOGY AND ANTI-SEMITISM

Anti-Semitism had for long assumed the character of the ‘chimeric prejudice’ par excellence, accommodating irrational ideas about the Jews’ alleged theological, cultural, and moral deviance, as well as modern ones about putative conspiracies, antinational feelings, and biological threats (Perry & Schweitzer 2002: Chs 2–4). It was undoubtedly the most diachronic and diatopic form of prejudice in Christian Europe, culturally pervasive and psychologically significant, transcending cultural, denominational, and

historical boundaries. As Jean-Paul Sartre noted, it was the Christian projection of negativity and fear on the Jews that constructed the demonic image of ‘the Jew’ and then made it uncritically applicable to all Jewish populations across the continent (Sartre 1995; Traverso 1999: Ch 2). In addition, however, anti-Jewish prejudice also found outlets in modern socioeconomic, aesthetic, cultural, political, and racial discourses. Thus, anti-Semitism was by far the most complex of the various chimeric prejudices in modern Europe (Langmuir 1990). What is even more striking is the fact that anti-Semitism continued to grow, embracing new manifestations and linked to different ‘problems’, without losing any of the allure of its more conventional, older forms (see earlier, Ch 1). For example, although race was regarded by many as the most crucial facet of anti-Semitic sentiment in the early twentieth century and socioeconomic conditions had changed dramatically resulting in even more extensive diversification within the Jewish communities, the stereotypical images of ‘the Jew’ engaging in ‘blood rituals’ and infanticide, involved in sleazy money-lending, flooding Europe and stubbornly resisting any form of acculturation remained psychologically impregnable until well into the twentieth century (Angel 1980: 37–39; Oişteanu 1999). The fact that ‘blood libel’ cases continued to appear in many European countries throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and were accompanied by widespread anti-Jewish agitation showed how older forms of anti-Jewish feeling continued to exist alongside—and nurture—more modern arguments used against the Jews.

Fascist movements responded differently to anti-Semitism. National Socialism did not conceal the centrality of its anti-Jewish character ever since the 1920 ‘Twenty-Five-Point Programme’. The document stated unequivocally that Jews had no position in the German nation and living space (ND 1708-PS). Even if the NSDAP somewhat toned down its anti-Semitic ideas in the last five years before Hitler’s appointment, it was evident to everyone that racial anti-Semitism was a fundamental component of the promised NS revolution (Hauner 1984; Burleigh & Wippermann 1991). In Romania, different strands of native fascism integrated a powerful and invasive tradition of indigenous anti-Semitism into a core of regenerative, “providential” Christian mysticism (Oldson 1991; Payne 1997: 277ff). From the early 1920s onwards the more traditional anti-Semitism of nationalist intellectuals like Nicolae Iorga (Ioanid 1992) intersected with the more aggressive discourses of Alexandru C Cuza’s ‘League of National Christian Defence’ (LANC) and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu’s ‘League of Archangel Michael’ (later, Iron Guard—*Garda de Fier*). In Hungary, the leader of the fascist ‘Arrow Cross-Hungarist Movement’, Ferenc Szálasi, pioneered an idiosyncratic eliminationist formula for the country’s Jews. He called it ‘a-Semitism’, outlining the prospect of emigration or expulsion of all Jews from the country as a crucial component of his broad vision of *Hungarizmus* for a future resurgent Hungary dominating the ‘Carpatho-Danubian Fatherland’ (Weber 1964: 157–60; Király 2001: 154–9). In Britain, Oswald Mosley’s

'British Union of Fascists' (BUF) moved to an increasingly aggressive form of anti-Semitism in the late 1930s that, in hindsight, proved a bad move that cost the movement electoral, social, and financial support (Cullen 1993). In Belgium, the two main currents of indigenous fascism—Léon Degrelle's Rex and Joris van Severen's Verdinaso (acronym for Union of Flemish National Solidarists)—displayed bafflingly different attitudes to Jews and racism. Whilst the Verdinaso, devoted to the pursuit of a megalomaniacal historic-irredentist vision of re-creating medieval Burgundy (Caprinelli 1981: 291–2; Creve 1998), remained openly anti-Semitic and willing to embrace biological theories originating east of the Rhine, the Rex became more hostile to the Jews only after Degrelle's failure to force a showdown with the Belgian political establishment in 1937 and his increasing fascination with NS Germany (Schepens 1980; Conway 1993). A similar combination of hardening anti-Semitic views and admiration for National Socialism characterised the ideological evolution of some other radical movements across Europe, from the Dutch 'National Socialist Movement' (NSB) after 1935 (van der Wusten & Smith 1980) to Vidkun Quisling's 'National Unity' in Norway after 1936 (Hayes 1966 & 1972). By contrast, neither the 'Estonian Veterans' League' nor the Lapua movement in Finland—both considered to have had strong fascist leanings (Kasekamp 1993: 263–68; Kasekamp 2000: Ch 6)—displayed anything more than a secondary interest in anti-Semitism.

The case of interwar France is far more complicated. Postwar (Gaullist) historiographical orthodoxy had put forward a cosy view of the recent past, based on the notions of French noninvolvement in the 'fascist' project and of the allegedly 'alien' character of fascism itself to the traditions of French nationalism (Rémond 1982). It was Nolte who made the first allusion to the existence of a distinctly French intellectual variant of 'fascism', in the form of the *Action Française* (AF), headed by Charles Maurras. The roots of this organisation lay in a wider reaction to the French Third Republic from the monarchist right that went back to the turn of the century but gathered momentum in the period after the end of WW I. The AF's anti-Semitism was unequivocal, although Maurras himself did not share the pseudobiological theories that came to be associated with National Socialism. Still, his ultranationalist and profoundly religious (Catholic) vision for a regenerated France made him include Jews and other 'internal foreigners' (*métèques*) into his 'four confederated estates', alongside Freemasons and Protestant Huguenots (Weber 1962; Nolte 1965: 29–141).

Robert Soucy (1986, 1995) explored in detail the relation between the politics of the Third Republic, French fascism, and indigenous anti-Semitism. For him, strong native strands of both fascism and anti-Semitism unequivocally existed in interwar France, though not fully overlapping. For Soucy (1995: 26–28), French fascism started as a radical ultranationalist movement that had remained intellectually autonomous but extremely limited in terms of support until the mid-1920s, when a radical section of the French right, under the threat of a victorious left, abandoned democracy in

favour of authoritarianism and ultranationalism. The dynamics and limits of an ideological synthesis between *indigenous* French fascism, conservative nationalism, and anti-Semitism had been rehearsed in the 1920s (during what Soucy [1986] called ‘first wave’ of French fascism) and revived, albeit in a short-lived and different form, in the second half of the 1930s (‘second wave’—Soucy 1995). Both ‘waves’ owed a lot to Maurras’s AF, which—albeit steadily declining in the post-WWI period—supplied intellectual and political leadership to subsequent permutation of French fascism (Mazgaj 1979; Davies 2002: Ch 3). The largest movement of the 1920s, the *Faisceau*, was led by an ex-AF man, Georges Valois, and mobilised many members of the older organisation. Yet, unlike the open anti-Semitism of Maurras, Valois displayed an inconsistent attitude to the Jews, shifting his focus from religious to political and economic patterns of anti-Semitism but diluting his message within the context of a wider xenophobic nationalism (Kalman 2002). In the 1930s the same ambiguities regarding the relation between ‘fascism’ and anti-Semitism continued to underpin the attitude of the various ‘second-wave’ movements and parties—the *Croix de Feu* (CF) that turned into the *Parti Social Français* (PSF), the *Parti Populaire Française* (PPF), and the *Francistes*. The first two organisations appeared to reject biological anti-Semitism as a ‘Hitlerian’ whim. The notorious PPF started with nothing more than a “residual antisemitism” but after 1937 adopted a more aggressive and racialised rhetoric vis-à-vis the Jews, first in Algeria and then across France (Irvine 1991; Soucy 1991; Kestel 2005). The third—and, according to Stanley Payne, the “only one categorically fascist party [that] emerged in France during the decade” (Payne 1997: 296–7)—looked towards Italian Fascism for inspiration and rejected both anti-Semitism and the National Socialist racialist paradigm (Deniel 1979; Milza 1987: 147ff).

This inconsistency led Soucy to reject the notion that anti-Semitism was a crucial component of French (and generic) fascism. After all, the revival of anti-Jewish feeling in 1930s France had been largely driven by a xenophobic reaction to Jewish immigration from the Third Reich and from other states with anti-Jewish legislation, bringing to the fore economic tensions about employment and wealth distribution (Caron 1998). Soucy did, however, detect a survival and radicalisation of long-term anti-Semitic beliefs and prejudices in some groupings of the broad family of interwar French fascism that were to resurface strongly—alongside more conventional forms of anti-Jewish attitudes shared by the conservative opponents of the Third Republic—during the years of WW II. The fact that many of the leading figures of interwar French fascist movements and parties ended up as ardent supporters of the NS ‘new order’ and as active collaborators in eliminationist anti-Jewish policies, condemning the Jews as a detrimental force inside France and holding them retrospectively responsible for a plethora of national calamities (see following, Ch 9), casts their earlier rebuff of anti-Semitism in a very different light. In fact, the ambivalent and often fluid attitude of the interwar French right—old and new—to ‘fascism’ and anti-Semitism owed a lot to its

leaders' individual viewpoints on NS Germany and to political opportunism. Particularly in the mid/late-1930s, any direct reference to either term could render personalities and political movements instantly unpopular, as 'fascism' and anti-Semitism had been largely associated with the NS regime, which was viewed as a growing threat to France (Rodogno 2006: 37). The decidedly anti-German patriotism of pre-WW I more conservative-minded nationalists like AF's Charles Maurras had given way to a revolutionary regenerative vision of the interwar 'new' right that viewed the resurgent NS Germany with very mixed feelings. Drieu La Rochelle and other leading figures of the PPF left the party in the aftermath of the Munich agreement in 1938, reacting to Jacques Doriot's continuing support for German appeasement (Soucy 1966: 45). François La Rocque, leader of the CF and later the PSF, started his political career as a strong opponent of German (and Nazi) militarism, but towards the end of the 1930s adopted an ambivalent stance, commending the NS regime for some aspects and criticising it for others. After the French defeat in 1940, La Rocque emerged as a supporter of collaboration with the NS 'new order' and declared himself in favour of the persecution of the Jews (in itself a change of course compared with his more moderate stance in the late 1930s). But by 1942 he had reverted to a strong anti-German position. As a result, he was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to Germany in 1943 (Nobecourt 1996).

What emerges from this brief overview of fascist attitudes to anti-Semitism during the interwar period is a realisation that an ideological equation of the two is untenable (Payne 1997: 11). Anti-Semitism had a far longer cultural pedigree in European history, as well as a far more extensive social and cultural base in various interwar societies, than fascism, nationalism, or racism. Whilst fascist movements such as National Socialism in Germany and the Romanian Iron Guard transformed anti-Semitism into a central theme of their regenerative discourse, the (archetypical) Fascist movement and regime in Italy shied away from anti-Jewish ideas until 1936–38; and many other organisations across the continent treated anti-Semitism as a marginal issue—either insignificant in itself or overshadowed by more tangible 'threats' (Lyttelton 1996; Toscano 2005). In addition—and with the exception of the NSDAP, whose biological racism outstripped any other indigenous form of anti-Semitism—fascist anti-Semites operated in the context of a wider anti-Jewish milieu that was also nurtured or supported by nationalists, some religious organisations, conservative parties, as well as by military and veteran groups. 'The Jew' continued to mean very different things to different sections of each society, but the result in each case was easily converted into a single, cumulative anti-Semitic momentum, with one prejudice reinforcing the other and turning into a credo impervious to any empirical enquiry (Cohn 1970: 25). In contrast, where such a tradition of anti-Jewish sentiment had not existed in any particularly strong form in the past (e.g., Italy), indigenous fascism ignored it, paid vague and unconvincing lip service to it, or failed to force a viable anti-Jewish paradigm on society.

It is therefore misleading to describe fascism as essentially anti-Semitic or to suggest that fascist anti-Semitism was fundamentally different from preexisting articulations of anti-Jewish prejudice. Even the incorporation of the biological dimension in the worldview of National Socialism did not in itself constitute a fascist innovation, as racial-anthropological and biological theories that denigrated Jews had been in wide circulation since the mid-nineteenth century. Jews were by any standards generic, ubiquitous, and permanent 'others' (see earlier, Ch 1) but not 'contestant others' in all countries and national societies. When particular national permutations of fascism did embrace anti-Semitism, they were performing a standard ideological function of synthesis, inheriting a powerful psychological momentum shaped by a variety of other agents, both past and present. However, the particular way in which certain permutations of fascism embraced anti-Semitism did make a specific contribution to this momentum. Their brand of anti-Semitism was integrated in fascism's overall populist discourse in a language and style of mass communication that related to the prejudices of the population far better than that of intellectuals or patrician-style politicians (O'Sullivan 1983: 131). Discourses were also backed by the radical activism of its squads and paramilitary formations. The violent precedent set by these groups was in itself a 'licence': as the rest of the society watched fascists defy the legal and political order and discharge wanton violence against their alleged foes (leftists, Jews, and others), often with impunity, a powerful precedent for future similar or even more violent actions gradually emerged (see also earlier, Ch 3). But, perhaps more importantly, these anti-Semitic fascist movements absorbed the various conventional stereotypical images and the frustrations that sustained them, transforming them into a single 'chimeric' assertion that was far more potent than the sum of its constituent parts. In so doing, they pushed populist anti-Semitism to the mainstream of political debates and forced other political forces to respond to it—usually by also radicalising their own attitudes vis-à-vis the Jews.

Later, as a form of international solidarity developed amongst the constituency of fascists across the continent, a process of borrowing and mutual radicalisation took shape, radiating from Rome and Berlin outwards. With the advent of National Socialism and the impressive dynamism of Hitler's regime in Germany anti-Semitism came to be seen by fascists elsewhere as the hard currency of the fascist 'new order'. Thus, even if originally anti-Semitism did not constitute a core conceptual element of every fascist ideological discourse, the growing perception of a 'European civil war' between left and right, communism and nationalism, fascism and Bolshevism, convinced many fellow travellers that Italian Fascism and, particularly, National Socialism constituted the only hope for the future. Support for National Socialism meant in most cases adoption of a similar anti-Semitic and generally racial-biological language, even if such elements were conspicuously absent from their earlier value-system and had limited relevance to indigenous traditions. This kind of transnational 'fascist loyalty' explains the

extraordinary conversion of people like Mosley and Degrelle to anti-Semitism well into the 1930s. But the magnetic pull of fascism did not exhaust itself in the constituency of ideologically akin followers; it also effected a wider transformation of attitudes in the wider field of interwar European right. Whilst until the 1920s the distinction between the two variants of the European right was clearer in ideologico-political terms, in the following two decades the field became gradually colonised by aspects of the more radical fascist discourse and praxis (Blinkhorn 2000). This process resulted in a growing *fascistisation* of large sectors of the European conservative-authoritarian and nationalist-minded right. More and more rightist groups started appearing, sounding, and acting like fascists. More and more dictatorial regimes paid tribute to Mussolini and Hitler, borrowing from their movements/regimes selectively but vigorously (Kallis 2003). There was also a marked increase in anti-Semitic agitation across the continent during the 1920s and especially after 1933, as more and more discourses borrowed heavily from the imagery of a 'Judeo-Bolshevik' conspiracy, from the anti-Jewish interpretation of the 1929 financial crisis, and from the new racial-biological idiom of NS Germany.

The result was a cumulative popularisation and ideological radicalisation of the anti-Semitic paradigm. It was driven by sectors of the old right (nationalists, conservatives, religious organisations) and many of the new fascist—or increasingly 'fascistised'—movements; but it also found much wider audiences amongst societies that had long lived with Jewish communities and had experienced a profound, prejudice-ridden psychological estrangement towards them. The case of Poland is instructive in this respect. The newly established country's Jewish communities represented 10 per cent of the entire population, largely concentrated in urban areas, mainly speaking Yiddish or Hebrew, with a substantial representation in specific economic and professional activities, such as commerce, law, medicine, and financial professions (Rothschild 1981/82; Engel 1987: Ch 1; Tomaszewski 1991: 147ff)—all of which were conducive to their higher social visibility. Anti-Jewish sentiment was pervasive there from the first moments of Polish independence, having developed solid roots during the nineteenth century (Michlic 2006: Chs 1–5). During the interregnum that followed the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1918 and resulted in bloody wars with Poland's eastern neighbours lasting until the early 1920s, Polish troops and paramilitary forces committed a series of pogroms against the Jewish populations residing in Polish or contested areas to such an extent that the Allied peacemakers had to intervene in order to contain the violence (Katz 1980: 245–300; McCagg 1989: 105; Fink 1994: Chs 4, 6–7). At the same time, anti-Semitism became one of the fundamental components in the ideology of the National Democratic (*Endek/Endecja*) movement, headed by the conservative Roman Dmowski. Formed in 1897, the movement's intellectual origins lay in the fin-de-siècle Polish nationalist revival. But the *Endecja* acquired a more concrete social profile during WW I and

its immediate aftermath. Its anti-Semitism was woven into the perception of ‘national egoism’ (*egoizm narodowy*; Porter 2000: Ch 8) which stipulated a battle against Poland’s perceived ‘enemies’ and erstwhile oppressors but also a maximalist territorial solution for the new state coupled with an adherence to ethnocentric ‘nation-statism’. This became evident in the negotiations for the territorial reorganisation of Central-Eastern Europe at Versailles, where the Polish delegation (headed by Dmowski himself) agitated consistently for such a maximalist solution but also tried to precipitate events through the parallel action of the country’s military forces (Lundgreen-Nielsen 1979; Stachura 2004: Ch 1). For Dmowski, the ‘cleansing’ of the Jews became a necessary precondition for Poland’s national revival that induced him to suggest the “crushing of the Jews” and the “end to the Jewish chapter of history”—not only in Poland but across Europe (in Hagen 1996: 368–70).

The Endek’s embrace of virulent anti-Semitism lay at the intersection of three currents. The first was rooted in traditional religious anti-Judaism, tied to strong Catholic feelings amongst the Polish population. The second was symptomatic of a growing distrust of all minorities seeking equal rights and resisting assimilation within the aspiring Polish nation-state. As for the third anti-Semitic current, it emanated from a combination of traditional anti-Russian sentiments, fear of Bolshevism post-1917, and the diffusion of the ‘Judeo-Bolshevik’ prejudice (see earlier, Ch 1). Russian Bolshevism was seen as both the generic agent of corruptive internationalism and a specific menace to the existence of the Polish state, given that the latter shared a border with the Soviet Union that was fiercely contested during the 1919–20 war (Davies 2003). Each of these currents entailed different diagnoses and called for diverse forms of alleged self-defence—spiritual protection of Polish society, national homogeneity, exclusive Polish control over national resources, fight against communism both inside Poland and through removing the Soviet ‘threat’. However, ‘the Jew’ came to be perceived as the symbolic cumulative embodiment of all three perceived problems. Their alleged deviation from the country’s religious norm (Catholicism), their perceived resistance to cultural assimilation, their visible social status and economic activity, their seemingly tepid attitude to Polish independence (Stachura 2004: 85), and their stereotypical identification with Bolshevism/communism transformed them into the most potent and composite symbol of negative integration in post-WWI Poland. Once again, the demonological image of ‘the Jew’ in Poland was deeply ingrained in religious prejudices but was nurtured by more modern/secular concerns and stereotypes from the cultural, socioeconomic, and political spheres (Levine 1991; Modras 1994). But the escalation of both official and popular anti-Semitism in 1930s Poland had a dual significance—as a goal in itself and as a rehearsal of a far more aggressively eliminationist attitude to minorities that stood in the way of an ideal ‘nation-statism’. The ‘Jewish problem’ constituted both an autonomous concern and part of a wider question that related to the exclusive

'nation-statist' aspirations of indigenous nationalism and thus implicated the position of the Jews into a wider pathology of (Polish) majority-minority relations. The specific targeting of the Jewish community during the inter-war period was an eminently symbolic act, both as a campaign of 'liberation' from 'the Jew' and as the starting point of a wider crusade against *all* minorities. Thus, Jews in Poland were forced into an unenviable position of being at the same time the conventional 'other', the seemingly most troublesome of 'others', and the local Trojan horse of a formidable, 'chimeric' international 'other' (Bolshevism).

The first half of the 1920s was dominated by the National Democrats (Endeks). After protracted and often ill-tempered negotiations with the peacemakers, Poland grudgingly accepted a minority protection treaty in June 1919 as condition for independent statehood. The agreement contained legal guarantees for the protection of the new state's minority groups (Fink 2006). In addition, the Treaty of Riga (1921) that concluded the Soviet-Polish war by dividing the contested territories between the two sides and the 1922 German-Polish convention for Upper Silesia contained further provisions for mutual respect for minorities (E D Wynot 1999: 34). These agreements notwithstanding, the Endeks initially showed little interest in honouring international obligations with regard to minority protection and remained uncompromisingly anti-Semitic, introducing a series of anti-Jewish measures in the early 1920s (boycott of Jewish stores, identification of Jewish interests, etc). Yet, the potential adverse economic repercussions of their early anti-Jewish policies played a role in the subsequent opportunistic softening of the Endeks' attitudes to the Jewish minority. In 1925 Zionists and the Prime Minister Władysław Grabski signed a compromise agreement that promised better conditions for the country's Jewish population in return for securing an American loan to help revive the economy of the fledgling state (Mendelsohn 1974: 208). Criticised by both Polish nationalists and Jewish organisations, the compromise agreement came to nothing; but it demonstrated how the ideological and political parameters of Polish anti-Semitism had to be negotiated against the far more pressing needs of international respectability and economic aid in the difficult first postindependence years.

A dramatic change of Poland's political landscape came during the 1926–30 period and resulted in noticeable improvements in the status of the Jews and the other minorities in Poland. Marshal Józef Piłsudski, the hero of the great military offensives of 1920 against the Soviet Union and erstwhile leader of the Polish Socialist Party, seized power in 1926 through a military coup d'état and promised to put an end to the politics of corruption that had plagued the first years of Polish independence (one of his main slogans was 'sanitation', hence the name 'Sanacja' for Piłsudski's coalition). Once established in power, he abandoned the aggressive assimilationist policies of the Endeks and encouraged a degree of minority self-determination, both by granting special cultural rights and by keeping the extreme nationalists at

bay (Holzer 1977: 403–4). But the second phase (1930–35) of the Sanacja rule was marked by a hardening of Piłsudski's stance, both with regard to the last vestiges of the parliamentary system and the rights of minorities. The parliament was officially abolished in 1930, whilst from 1933 onwards the marshal introduced 'Polonisation' reforms and cancelled the minority-protection treaties that Poland had agreed to a decade earlier (Melzer 1977: 193–94; Crampton 1997: 54–55). An alarming indication of things to come was the fact that even Piłsudski turned against the Ukrainian nationalists in the early 1930s, suppressing their organisational and political basis and arresting its leadership (Groth 1968: 574ff).

The death of Piłsudski in 1935 heralded a period of increasingly violent encounters between Polish (increasingly 'fascistised') ultrarightists and Jews. Starting from the mid-1920s, a battle had been raging inside the ranks of the National Democratic movement that did not just involve ideological outlooks (liberal versus authoritarian orientation) but also a generational conflict (Beyrau 1982). In contrast to the more conservative outlook of the generation that had dominated the Endek during the 1920s, younger hypernationalist activists had no problem in pursuing a 'fascistisation' of their movement, in both substance and style. The emergence of the National Radical Camp (ONR) was symptomatic of a broader radicalisation of the Polish right and of a growing trend towards 'fascistisation' (Wynot 1974). The movement featured much stronger fascist ideological and stylistic elements, coupled with a vehement strand of anti-Semitism and a manifest eliminationist outlook. The ONR favoured an ethno-exclusive vision for Poland, advocated aggressive eliminationist action against the minorities, and upheld the myth of the 'Jewish-Bolshevik-plutocratic conspiracy' (Landau-Czajka 1989: 169–203). Members of the ONR supported the idea of aggressive 'Polonisation' and were largely behind the wave of anti-Semitic violence after 1935. Although Piłsudski attempted to ban the movement as a response to its increasingly aggressive anti-Jewish and -minority agitation, the ONR continued to attract new members, particularly in universities. In 1935 it split into two new movements, the (even more radical) ONR-Falanga and the ONR-ABC (Melzer 1989: 132ff).

The radicalisation of the Polish stance vis-à-vis minorities and related international obligations towards them was also mirrored in the field of foreign policy. With Josef Beck at the helm of foreign policy since 1932, Poland abandoned its standard postwar alignment with France and edged closer to Germany (Roberts 1953). The rapprochement culminated in the signing of the 1934 nonaggression pact with the NS regime. The new alliance appeared to have released the Polish rulers from their previous obligation of international respectability that had dictated a more moderate approach to minority issues (Weinberg 1971: 63ff; Melzer 1977). It is not a coincidence that the ONR was founded only a few months after the signing of the Polish-German pact. Without necessarily organising or directly encouraging the pogroms of the post-1935 period, Piłsudski's successors proved far

more politically sympathetic to them and less determined to suppress them (Melzer 1989: 129).

The Sanacja bloc too slid further into the path of eliminationism from February 1937 onwards, with the creation of the Camp of National Unity (OZN or Ozon). Although the official founding declaration of the new organisation stressed its respect for the Jews and the rejection of violent measures against them, it also noted unanimously that “national self-preservation” and “economic self-sufficiency” would constitute more fundamental concerns (in E E Wynot 1971: 1039–40; Gutman 1989: 105). Not only were Jews banned from joining the movement but the last years before WW II witnessed an intensification of eliminationist measures in the economy (‘Polonisation’ of industry and commerce) and a growing call for a radical ‘solution’ to the Jewish question through mass emigration. The government allied itself more closely both with the Catholic church and with other anti-Semitic circles of the right. Radical movements that had been banned during Piłsudski’s rule returned with different names and more radical programmes. Steeped in a mixture of traditional religious and modern socioeconomic anti-Semitism, large sections of the Polish society—with the active support of the ruling parties—embarked upon a series of informal measures of intimidation, such as ad hoc ‘*numerus clausus*’ (quota) restrictions and boycotts of Jewish business. The latter turned into increasingly violent encounters and often resulted in a series of localised pogroms, in 1935–36 and even more violently during 1937 (Mendelsohn 1983: 73–74; Polonsky & Tomaszewski 1994). Anti-Jewish measures were often directly borrowed by NS Germany. From 1936 onwards Jewish businesses were obliged to display the name of the owners on their sign, thus making Jewish shops and professional practices even more visible and vulnerable to attacks. Between 1937 and 1939 professional associations took the initiative to purge their membership lists from Jewish practitioners (Melzer 1965: 90–121). When Hitler confessed to the Polish ambassador in Berlin, Jan Lipski, that he was determined to remove Jews from Europe, the latter could not hide his approval for such a policy (Lipski 1968: 411). Even if the Polish government refrained from adopting the eliminationist model pioneered by the NS “Aryan paragraph” (first used in April 1933 and embedded into German law in 1935) or from subscribing to racial definitions, it promoted economic ‘Polonisation’ with renewed vigour, actively encouraged organisations to make their lists *judenfrei*, and did nothing to arrest anti-Jewish feeling across the country (Mendelsohn 1986: 130–40; Hagen 1996: 370–2).

The radicalisation of anti-Semitic attitudes in Poland in the 1936–39 period reflected both the profound roots of anti-Jewish prejudice in Polish society and the ‘licence’ afforded to political and economic anti-Semitism by developments in Germany and elsewhere in Europe as the legitimacy of the ‘Versailles system’ was starting to crumble. In late 1938 and early 1939, radical backbench members of parliament for the Ozon and other ultra-rightist groups (but with some support amongst the two main parties and

the Peasant party) prepared law proposals for the introduction of Nuremberg-style citizenship legislation in Poland in addition to formal and informal measures in favour of an even more aggressive ‘Polonisation’ (Holzer 1994).¹ Although nothing came out of this initiative—and the whole discussion was terminated with the outbreak of the war and occupation—it appears that the ‘fascistisation’ of the Polish political discourse in the second half of the 1930s was accompanied by a growing embrace of eliminationist anti-Semitism and an emulation of NS discourses and policies. In spite of some opposition within the two main parties, the political context in Poland after the death of Piłsudski did not rule out the emergence of a genuine, fully fledged ‘fascist’ political movement (Hagen 1996: 373ff). It also galvanised and encouraged the more extreme sections of the anti-Semitic right in the direction of pressing for more radical eliminationist measures and launching an increasingly virulent anti-Jewish propaganda across the country. In making concessions to the ultranationalist right, the two main political parties extended a ‘licence to hate’ the Jews and thus contributed to the freefall into the sort of aggressive eliminationism pursued by the activists of the ONR. Yet also the bold, aggressive anti-Jewish discourse used by the NSDAP and post-1933 by the NS regime set a powerful precedent that was internalised by many inside Poland as a further ‘licence’ to step up the process of anti-Jewish violent persecution. This aggressive stance, largely inaccessible or even taboo during most of the 1920s, would not have been possible without the liberating precedent of National Socialism and the diffusion of a general ‘fascist’ paradigm across Europe.

FASCIST IDEOLOGIES AND SPECIFIC ‘CONTESTANT OTHERS’

The composite and international nature of anti-Jewish prejudice outlined above explains to a large extent why ‘the Jew’ became the main antithesis of both many fascist and nonfascist ideological discourses in the interwar period. But the fascist ideological ‘licence to hate’ also extended to specific ‘others’ in each case, reflecting stark continuities between previous nationalist and interwar fascist discourses of exclusion. In 1920s Finland the Academic Karelian Society combined its aggressive anticommunist and anti-Bolshevik stance with calls for the elimination of Swedish influence in Finnish society (‘Finnification’)—a theme that was taken up by the fascist Lapua Movement and the Patriotic People’s Movement in the 1930s (Payne 1997: 311). Similarly, the broad antiminority platform of the fascist *Pērkonkrusts* (Thunder Cross) in Latvia identified the country’s German minority as a particular threat to the goal of “Latvia for the Latvians” (Kasekamp 1999: 592–4),² whilst the Estonian Veterans’ League came to the same conclusion by highlighting native German minority’s historically strong economic, social, and cultural influence over the Baltic lands (Hiden & Salmon 1994:

16ff, 51–52; Kasekamp 2000: 73). All three movements shared a further ideological antithesis: they were also strongly anti-Russian and, after 1917, vehemently anti-Bolshevik/communist. They all operated under a complex combination of historic, geopolitical, ethnic, and ideological factors that only in the case of the Pērkonkrusts developed into a strong anti-Jewish eliminationist platform (Kasekamp 1999).

But it was interwar Croatia that witnessed the emergence of a small but exceptionally virulent fascist movement with an ideology geared decisively towards eliminationism that targeted viciously two ‘contestant others’. The ideology of the *Ustaša* (‘Insurgent’) movement identified first and foremostly Serbs and then Jews as the fundamental obstacles to an independent Croat nation-state, building on a long traditional of aggressive hypernationalism that went back to the late nineteenth century (see earlier Ch 2). The post-WW I territorial and political reorganisation of the region with the creation of the kingdom of Yugoslavia transformed an already troubled Serbo-Croat relation based on geographic proximity, religious difference (Orthodox-Catholic), and historic/cultural conflict into one of veritable ‘contestant enmity’ within the bounds of the same state. Whilst before 1919 Croats perceived Hungarian nation-statism as the main obstacle to their independent statehood—and at least a part of the Croat intelligentsia embraced Yugoslavism as a viable exit-strategy from this situation—after the creation of Yugoslavia the Serbs came to epitomise both extreme deviousness and degeneration in the Croat eyes (Yeomans 2007). As we saw, the process of dehumanising (‘speciating’) the Serbs as an allegedly inferior group in historic, cultural, and increasingly racial terms had already begun during the second half of the nineteenth century. The so-called father of modern Croat nationalism, Ante Starčević, who spearheaded the demand for independent statehood from the 1860s onwards as the leader of the Party of Rights (Bartlett 2002: 11–12), envisioned this state in ethno-exclusive terms, identifying the Serbs as culturally and racially ‘inferior Vlachs’ and branding them as morally degenerate and politically devious (see Ch 2). This argument was in sharp contrast to the intellectual foundations of ‘Illyrianism’, which had preached the unity of all ‘southern Slav’ peoples into a single territory (the historic ‘Illyria’ or its contemporary rendition as *Jugoslavija*) and had entertained wider intellectual support in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Jelavich 1983, I: 304–8; Tanner 1997b: 47–48).

Starčević was pivotal in constructing an ideological paradigm of ethno-exclusive ‘nation-statism’ as a legitimate discourse of Croat nationalism. By drawing historic legitimacy from the medieval kingdom of King Tomislav, he envisioned an all-Croat state extending from Dalmatia over Bosnia to Bulgaria, in which the allegedly inferior Serbs would quite literally have no place. Also, starting from his initial conception of the ‘Slavoserbi’ (see earlier, Ch 2) as a category of political consciousness that allegedly subverted Croat self-interest, Starčević ended up castigating “the intrusion of any other national consciousness on the territory of his imagined Croatia

[as] the result of treason, corruption, racial inferiority or a mixture of the three". He was thus instrumental in marrying the regenerative discourse of Croat nationalism with intolerant eliminationist policies against the Serb 'other' that would become the horrifying trademark of the ideology and, later, praxis of the Ustaša. As Djilas put it,

with [Starčević] there entered permanently into Croatian politics the idea that all those who have a different national consciousness or those whose political ideas are a hindrance to the realisation of complete Croatian sovereignty, expansion or homogeneity are racially inferior and fundamentally evil beings. . . . Starčević's ideology contained all the important elements of the ideology of extreme Croatian nationalism in the twentieth century. (Djilas 1991: Ch 4)

By the time of WW I, Croat nationalism was divided between two main competing strands: a more moderate component directed towards 'Yugoslavism', whether for ideological or purely practical reasons; and a more radical alternative based on the vision of an exclusive and pure Croat 'nation-statism'. The earlier Croat figures of Starčević and his successor in the SP, Josip Frank, became contested resources for the two wings of interwar Croat nationalism. Whilst pro-Yugoslavist politicians and intellectuals had selectively focused on Starčević's earlier declarations in favour of a 'civic' form of Croat nationalism in order to claim him for the 'Yugoslavist' cause and thus drive a wedge between him and the far more radical Frank (see earlier, Ch 2), the proponents of Croat nation-statism could also find a lot in Starčević's political-racial denigration of Serbs in order to deploy him as a rallying emblem against the Serbs and the prospect of a union of 'southern Slavs'. The 'Yugoslav' solution that was pursued and sanctioned after the war appeared as a reasonable compromise or a lesser evil to most but it left neither Serbs nor Croats satisfied. The former saw in the union of the 'southern Slavs' the repudiation of the Entente promises during the war and a halt to their territorial expansionist designs in the wider region. The Croats found the alleged 'union' of the kingdoms a euphemism for Serb centralisation, perceiving it only as a lesser evil and a transitional arrangement (Jelavich 1983, II: 134–43). Thus, the idea of Croat independence gathered momentum in the immediate postwar years. The Croat Peasant Party (HSS, later Croat Republican Peasant Party), led by Stjepan Radić until his assassination in 1928, constituted the respectable, more moderate and pragmatic expression of Croat nation-statism in the 1920s. Initially, Radić campaigned for complete independence, refused to grant legitimacy to the Yugoslav state, boycotted the central parliament, and was even arrested by the Yugoslav authorities. But in 1925 he recognised the monarchy and joined a coalition government. It was a short-lived compromise that ended in early 1927 but was enough to brand him and his party as 'traitors' by the far more extreme Croat ultranationalist opposition (Croat Federalist Peasants Party and the Croat Party of Rights, or HSP, forming a

unitary Croat Bloc in 1925) that continued to see the kingdom as an obstacle to be obliterated (Goldstein 1999: 119–20).

It was from the ranks of the Party of Rights/Croat Bloc that Ante Pavelić, the future leader of the Ustaša movement, started his political career, as the leading figure of the most extreme, ultranationalist ‘Frankist’ (*frankovci*) faction. An uncompromising opponent of anything related to the Yugoslav solution, he took up the aggressive anti-Serb legacy of Starčević and Frank’s extreme nationalism, and developed links with underground organisations fighting against the Yugoslav state, such as the Macedonian separatists (VMRO). In 1929 the Yugoslav monarch Alexander declared a royalist dictatorship and abrogated the constitution—a coup de grâce to the remaining vestiges of a legitimate, plural ‘Yugoslavism’ and to hopes of state reform in the direction of ethnic power-sharing. Croat ultranationalist opposition was driven underground, with Pavelić fleeing the country and condemned to death in absentia by the Yugoslav authorities. Shortly afterwards he founded the Ustaša movement in exile whilst maintaining his links with clandestine organisations operating within Yugoslavia. Mussolini provided both political and financial help to the banished movement (Sadkovich 1987). It was in Italy that the first training camps for the Ustaše were opened (near Brescia and Siena), with more created in Hungary (Janka Pusztá and Nagyzkanizsa; Perica 2002: 52–55), where the Ustaša’s cofounder, Gustav Percec, had settled. Pavelić was also implicated in the VMRO-led assassination of King Alexander and of the French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou in Marseilles (1934; Pitamitz 1990: 46–51; Rivelli 1998: 27–28). The Ustaša terrorist actions inside Yugoslavia continued unabated and escalated towards the late 1930s, particularly in the aftermath of the compromise agreement (*Sporazum*) that gave Croatia autonomy within the Yugoslav state and extended the new autonomous region’s (*Banovina*) borders to include the ‘historic’ lands of medieval Croatia in return for abandoning calls for secession (Vrbanić 1991; Bieber 2003: 49).

Whilst the Ustaša’s social base in Croatia remained extremely small throughout the 1930s (Jelinek 1980b), under the effective sponsorship of Italy and then the Axis alliance its ideology underwent a dramatic ‘fascistisation’ in the years leading up to WW II (Payne 1997: 404–9, 468). With Italian Fascist sponsorship guaranteed during most of the 1930s, the rise of National Socialism in Germany established a further source of inspiration for the members of the Ustaša organisation. In fact, the movement was soon divided with regard to which of the two regimes should constitute the model for a future independent Croat nation-state (Yeomans 2005: 692). But following Italian efforts to improve relations with Yugoslavia orchestrated by the new Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano in the late 1930s, the links between Pavelić and the NS regime became increasingly closer, both in ideological and in political terms (Hoptner 1961: Ch 3).

Nevertheless, the basic ideological ingredients for an aggressive, ultranationalist political orientation, infused with anti-Serb racial connotations,

had already been part of the Ustaša's ideological bequest from the most extreme strand of Croat nationalism. In the 1929 ideological 'principles' of the movement it was explicitly stated that "all classes of the Croatian people constitute one unified whole, defined by their Croatian blood". By implication, anyone who did not belong to this "blood community" would be treated as an alien body. Starčević was referred to as "our blessed late teacher" (Tanner 1997: 148). It was telling that Pavelić and other leading figures of the Ustaša regime acknowledged on numerous occasions that the successful emancipation of Croat nationalism would have been unimaginable without Starčević's intellectual groundwork and teachings. He and Ivo Pilar had been instrumental in constructing a virulent anti-Serb paradigm, based on historic, cultural, and racial 'speciation' that the Ustaša movement turned into an aggressive ideology of anti-Serb eliminationist hatred. As the links with NS Germany intensified in the second half of the 1930s, Pavelić's conception of the Croat 'nation' became increasingly race-oriented and infused with a 'blood and soil' rhetoric (Hory & Broszat 1964: 71; Armstrong 1968). Given that language could not serve as the basis for a categorical distinction between Croats and Serbs (in fact, language had historically been one of the main intellectual weapons of 'Yugoslavism'), Ustaša ideology resorted more and more to a blend of racial imageries and religious specificities in order to found its historico-political claim to independence and justify the organic nationalist demand for the elimination of the 'contestant others' from the 'pure' Croat national 'living space'.

In many ways, the caricature of 'the Serb' in the Ustaše ideology was a mirror image of 'the Jew' in the NS *Weltanschauung*. Anti-Serb stereotypes and prejudices, updated through the experience of living in the state of Yugoslavia since 1919 in continuity with earlier stereotypes, acquired an exceptional 'chimeric' dimension that set the Ustaša movement apart from other permutations of fascism (Trifkovic 1992, 2000). In a perfect analogy to the 'rebirth-through-cleansing' scheme discussed earlier (Ch 3), the "resurrection" of the "holy" Croat nation (in Armstrong 1968: 405; Djilas 1977: 223) was organically linked with the territorial reconstitution of an ideal 'Croat' homeland. This encompassed all the members of the blood community 'cleansed' from any 'alien' influence, and the 'historic' territories of the Croat medieval kingdom. The Serbs were portrayed as the most harmful influence on the Croat nation in every possible way: politically, as chauvinist plotters behind the scenes of the Yugoslav state apparatus; religiously, as adherents to the allegedly "byzantine" and heretical Orthodox creed (Ramet 1985); culturally, as descendants of an 'uncivilised' tribe of nomads; and racially, as belonging to 'Vlach' or 'Cincar' group. Therefore, the only conceivable future for Croatia was a land "for Croats and nobody else"—a utopia to be achieved with any means.³ Such arguments were given further legitimacy in the interwar period by sectors of the nascent eugenics movement that served the Croat nationalist ideal (Yeomans 2007). Prominent scientists, such as Ćiro Truhelka and Mladen Lorković, assiduously

served the discourse of 'speciation', associating the Serbs with an imagery of immutable racial inferiority and degeneration (Yeomans 2007: 102). Pavelić himself (like Starčević) appeared divided between the notion of a *de facto* racial inferiority of all Serbs and the suggestion that many Serbs residing in Croat lands were actually Croats forcefully converted to the Orthodox creed (Sundhaussen 1995: 528; Ognyanova 2000). This explains the infamous quote by the Ustaša regime's Minister of Education Mile Budak in June 1941, which stated that the eliminationist policy of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) *vis-à-vis* Serbs would be based on the equal combination of forceful conversion, expulsion, and annihilation (Manhattan 1953: 60). Subsequent developments in the 1941–44 period were to prove that his comment reflected literal intentions (see following, Ch 8).

With regard to the Jews, the ideology of the Ustaša reflected many of the antinomies that had become evident within Croat nationalism as far back as the 1860s. It was Starčević who had attacked the Jews, both in a strict political sense (in his opinion, they supported the interests of the Dual Monarchy against the emancipation of nationalities) and in a broader critique of their alleged attachment to materialism that he considered a distinguishing characteristic of their 'race'. This said, the number of Jews in the ranks of the SP—particularly its 'Frankish' wing—was disproportionately high; and it was amongst them that some of the most vehement critics of Serbs could be found, including Josip Frank himself (Yeomans 2009). This, and the emergence of a strong paradigm of Serb anti-Semitism towards the end of the nineteenth century, resulted in a situation whereby the Jews were attacked more by the proponents of Yugoslavism than by the supporters of extreme Croat nation-statism. Anti-Jewish discourses gathered momentum in the interwar period amongst the supporters of the Yugoslav state, as well as amongst the more moderate sections of Croat nationalism. In the 1930s, Mijo Radošević compiled a massive study of the peoples, ideas, and politics that shaped the Yugoslav state, in which he not only heralded Starčević as a prophet of 'Yugoslavism' but also restated his anti-Jewish views as weapon against Croat radical nation-statism. By emphasising Frank's Jewish origins, Radošević saw in the country's Jews the most dangerous opponents of Yugoslavia (Radošević 1935; Yeomans 2009). The leader of the HSS, Stjepan Radic, used a similar anti-Jewish discourse, accusing the Jews of being agents of the Hungarians and emphasising the contradiction between Frank's Jewish origins and his subsequent embrace of virulent nation-statism (Biondich 2000: 110), although he emphatically rejected theories of biological anti-Semitism. However, with the growing rapprochement between the Ustaša and NS Germany in the late 1930s, ideologues of extreme Croat nationalism expended considerable efforts to prove their anti-Semitic credentials too. Once again Starčević came in handy: one of the most prominent leaders of the movement—and subsequent Minister of Justice in the NDH, Mirko Puk—claimed in 1938 that Starčević was no less than a prophet of National Socialism:

Ante Starčević considered the Jews to be foreigners who could be endured in a nation and take part in private-legal business activities as long as their work was not opposed to the interests of the Croatian nation and while their work in fact honoured the interests of that same nation and the region in which they lived. When this was no longer the case, then they were to be expelled from the national community like all other foreigners. In Croatian national work and public life there is no place for them. . . . Ante Starčević as a genius had long foreseen the consequences of the entrance of the Jews into public life and therefore placed a demand for their isolation from the national community and his attitude and thoughts about this question were completely identical to the modern and contemporary ideology. (Yeomans 2009)⁴

Thus, the Jews entered the realm of Ustaša ideology as a ‘contestant other’ but only in a secondary position to that of the Serbs. Emboldened by the rise of the NS extreme anti-Jewish paradigm in the 1930s, and drawn to the prospect of an ideological-political alliance with Hitler’s movement/regime, Pavelić and other Ustaša leaders radicalised discourses of Croat purity and homogeneity that implicated both Serbs and Jews in increasingly ‘racial’ terms. With the political situation in Yugoslavia becoming increasingly tense and poisonous in the late 1930s, the previously marginal Ustaša discourse made inroads into mainstream Croat nationalism, even if Ustaša itself continued to be a socially unpopular fringe movement. Even Radić’s successor in the leadership of the Croat Peasant Party, Vladko Maček, endorsed the main premise of Serb alleged racial inferiority and the need to ‘reclaim’ the Croat lands (including Bosnia) from their influence, although in the end he chose to work within the framework of the 1939 *Sporazum* agreement and turned down the offer of heading the independent state of Croatia after the Axis invasion of 1941. The rapidly fading popularity of the ‘Yugoslav’ formula was both one of the causes and the main consequence of the radicalisation of Croat nation-statism along the lines envisioned by the Ustaša worldview, and of the legitimisation of a blatantly eliminationist discourse primarily directed at the Serbs.

This discourse was further legitimised and emboldened by the ideological ‘licence’ that NS Germany epitomised in its treatment of alleged racial *Untermenschen*. The language of racial ‘speciation’ that the Nazis used as part of their ‘Aryan’ racialist ideology was in many ways unsuitable for Pavelić and his supporters—above all due to its inherent anti-Slav ramifications (TWC IV: 33; Rummel 1993: Ch 1; Browning 2004: 184). Yet, without subscribing to the systematic NS approach to racial hygiene, the Ustaša movement adopted its racial-anthropological implications and prescriptions with regard to its own ‘contestant other’, and provided an outlet for indigenous scientists who were willing to adapt modern theories to the requirements of Croat aggressive nation-statism. In so doing, it set the tone for a far more aggressive discourse of ‘cleansing’ that forced even the more

moderate wing of nationalists to make substantial concessions to it. The events that followed the establishment of the NDH in the aftermath of the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941 cannot be understood without this ‘licence to hate’ that the Ustaše radicalised and popularised throughout the 1930s. And if the movement’s professed hatred towards the Jews was partly reflective of a more conventional anti-Semitism (associated with the cultural influence of Catholicism on Croat society and the grudge against Jews as alleged agents of Austrians and Hungarians) and partly the price for NS backing in realising the dream of independent statehood, the anti-Serb dimension of Ustaša eliminationism was the primary product of its very own ideological evolution, radicalisation, and ‘fascistisation’ in the interwar period (see following, Ch 8).

THE GENERIC NATURE OF THE FASCIST ‘LICENCE TO HATE’

Along with Serbs and Jews, a large portion (one-third or around 26,000) of the local Romani population that remained in Croatia after the spring of 1941 perished between 1941 and 1944 (Reinhartz 1991: 84ff). A similar pattern occurred in many parts of the NS ‘new order’ in Europe during WW II, whether as a result of NS initiative or through the policies of ideologically kindred regimes. The Nazis were unique amongst all fascist movements because they developed an elaborate ideological apparatus of Romani ‘racial speciation’, based on both racial-anthropological and racial-hygienic preconceptions, and made extensive use of pseudoscientific research in order to lend a veneer of respectability and validity to their anti-Romani ideas and policies. Thus, the persecution of the Romani populations was both an autonomous goal of NS racialist ideology and an integral part of the much more comprehensive NS utopian ‘cleansing’ vision (see following, Ch 6). Other fascist movements across interwar Europe paid scant attention to the ‘scientific’ parameters of the *Zigeunerfrage*, showing little interest in adopting NS racial arguments about the alleged dangers posed by the Gypsies’ racially ‘degenerate’ or ‘asocial’ status. Yet, as the case of the NDH demonstrates, this did not stop many of them from persecuting and eventually killing or deporting their indigenous Sinti/Roma populations in the margins of wider ‘cleansing’ operations primarily directed against other groups.

As we saw in Chapter 1, there was already a large reservoir of cultural prejudice against Sinti/Roma communities, which for centuries had been seen as ‘alien’ social and anthropological elements by local or national communities. But the popularity of modern racialist ideologies in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries—particularly their concern with collective ‘health’, ‘deviance’, and ‘degeneration’—added dramatically to the already strong prejudices against the Gypsies. In Wilhelminian and Weimar Germany a series of legislative and political measures were introduced in order

to identify, register, restrict, and persecute the country's Gypsy population. From the turn of the twentieth century onwards it was Bavaria that had consistently led the way in this respect. The establishment of the information centre for Gypsy affairs (*Nachrichtendienst für die Sicherheitspolizei in Bezug auf Zigeuner*, known as *Zigeunerzentrale*) in 1899, developing into a *Zentrum der deutschen 'Zigeunerbekämpfung'*, initiated a two-pronged process: 'scientific' definition of who was a 'Gypsy' and assiduous registration of all individuals under the two racial categories of 'pure-blood' and 'hybrid' (*Mischlinge*). This was soon to be emulated in other parts of Germany (e.g., Baden and Prussia) during the period of the Second Reich and even the Weimar Republic (Hehemann 1987). In 1928 a centralised legislative initiative against Sinti/Roma was put into effect, placing them under constant police surveillance. This sort of initiative, however, was the exception to a process of radicalisation driven by specific regional schemes and restrictions, such as the 1926 Bavarian law against 'Gypsies', vagrants and work-shy (Eiber, Strauss, & Krausnick 1993: 45) or the 1927 initiative in Prussia for the fingerprinting of every wandering Romani over the age of six (H Friedlander 1995: 248). Although the perception of 'the Gypsy' did not change dramatically through fascist ideological agency outside NS Germany, the fascist ideological vision of 'rebirth-through-cleansing' also implicated the 'alien' status of the Sinti/Roma in a far more lethal way, building on preexisting institutions and norms.

Because of its elaborate racialist ideology and the appropriation of pseudoscientific discourses, National Socialism confronted the *Zigeunerfrage* as part of the wider project of racial improvement and large-scale population policy. NS ideology presented Gypsies as both *fremdrassig* (of alien race) and *fremdartig* (of strange qualities; Trubeta 2003: 498–9). The NSDAP's racial ideologues developed a particular interest in racial-anthropological research on the Sinti/Roma (*Zigeunerforschung*) that often took on rather bizarre forms (Fings, Heuß, & Sparing 1995). Various agencies that operated within the realm of Heinrich Himmler's empire within the NS state, such as the *Kriminalbiologisches Institut der Sicherheitspolizei* of the RSHA, the *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit* (IDO), and Dr Robert Ritter's *Rassenhygienische und Bevölkerungsbiologische Forschungsstelle des Reichsgesundheitsamtes*, engaged in different research projects and battled for jurisdiction over the 'Gypsy question' (Heuss 1992). Himmler's fascination with the possibility of ascertaining the alleged Aryan origins of 'pure' Gypsies made him the sponsor par excellence of *Zigeunerforschung* in anthropology, genetics, archaeology, and folklore (Lewy 1999). He had always been fascinated by the idea that the 'Aryan race' possessed unique historic and mystical qualities, and had been eminently active in patronising research in this field. In 1935 he co-founded the Society for the Study of Intellectual Ancient History 'German Ancestral Heritage', known as *Ahnenerbe* (*Studiengesellschaft für Geistesurgeschichte 'Deutsches Ahnenerbe'*), as a research organisation intended to lend legitimacy to his bizarre and fanciful obsession with

Germanic/‘Aryan’ racial descent (Kanter 1974; Schleiermacher 1988). He was also not alone in his pursuit but rather the most prominent and powerful of a group of NS leading figures (including the co-founder of the society, Walther Darré, as well as many involved in the activities of bodies like the IDO) who shared a strong interest in the ‘scientific’ study of the origins of the ‘Aryan race’.

Inevitably, the primary emphasis of NS ideology on the *Judenfrage* eclipsed any other racial consideration, including the status of the Gypsies. Only WW II set the NS eliminationist industry in full motion (see Ch 6). Yet elsewhere eliminationist measures against the Sinti/Roma were implemented as an appendix to, or offshoot of, operations targeting other groups—mainly Jews, Slavs, communists/Bolsheviks, ‘partisans’, and ‘spies’. Simply put, whilst Gypsies were a near-universal ‘other’ in interwar Europe alongside the Jews, they were rarely perceived or treated as a fundamental ‘*contestant* other’. Their marginal status in European societies—the result of both choice and necessity—could not generate the powerful perceptions of ‘fear’ and ‘danger’ that were so instrumental in causing a serious escalation of hatred and played such a central role in the subsequent elimination of many Jewish communities. Even in the case of NS ideology the status of ‘the Gypsy’ was predominantly determined by conventional inherited social stereotypes to which racial considerations were appended to the process, often in a rather unsystematic and ambiguous manner. Elsewhere, one is hard-pressed to find specific references to the Gypsies in fascist ideological discourses, let alone to detect any particular novelty in their portrayal (Barany 2002: 110).

Perhaps then the most radical generic contribution of fascist ideology with regard to eliminationism lay in psychologically facilitating the connection between conceptualising ‘other-ness’ as a problem or menace, in providing legitimacy to discourses of fear or hatred against ‘others’, and *in acting* to eliminate them. The radicalism of fascist ideology did not cause genocide; it did, however, make the collective contemplation of a future without ‘others’ more pertinent and intelligible, more desirable, more feasible, and less inadmissible to its audience. It was instrumental in breaking the taboo of violence—partly by preaching violence for its own sake but mostly by subjecting the morality of the method to the allegedly higher ethics of supreme national sovereignty or to the expected benefits of the action itself. In so doing, it lowered the threshold of what could be considered as morally defensible violence against specific ‘others’ well below what was previously considered permissible behaviour against fellow humans. Whilst the taboo of violent eliminationism had long been breached in the colonial field—against ‘non-European’ peoples and ‘races’—such measures were still considered unacceptable in the European context, whether for religious or cultural reasons. This had not prevented sporadic outbursts of pogrom-style violence in the past or systematic policies of persecution against ‘others’; yet in- and out-groups (even ‘*contestant*’ ones) continued to live with each

other in a state of more or less manageable estrangement. Repeatedly the former had persecuted the latter or tried to forcibly assimilate some of them into the national core. They had contemplated the (utopian) prospect of a life without them and might have relished it psychologically or linguistically but they had not made collectively the crucial transition to a *paradigm of physical removal*. The bulk of the European populations operated in the context of a fundamental 'cognitive dissonance': desirous of specific patterns of elimination but aware of either the moral unacceptability or legal/political nonpermissibility of further action.

Fascist ideology targeted this state of cognitive dissonance effectively in all its dimensions: by raising the 'value' of the national community through the discourses of superiority, elitism, and 'mission'; by exaggerating the alleged threat of the mere existence of specific 'others'; and by lessening their human 'value', often to the point of excision from the moral universe of humanity. NS ideology offered the most comprehensive and systematic such amalgamation of cultural and racial models of 'speciation'. It took the discussion to new levels by presenting the total eradication of racial-anthropological and racial-hygienic 'threats' as a crucial part of a 'gardening' project indispensable for creating the 'ideal nation-state' (Bauman 1989: 13). In so doing it evoked the prospect of their removal and thus extended a 'licence' to enact psychologically a utopia of racial purity and wholeness that involved aggressive elimination. Other fascist movements, though less far-reaching in their eliminationist contemplations, provided a similar collective space for imagining a life without 'others' and for breaking the psychological taboos of group violence against particular 'others' inside their country.

But the fascist 'licence to hate' had a further, more perilous and empowering effect. By demonising particular 'contestant others' in their own national context, fascists provided a justification not just for the profound 'speciation' and elimination of specific groups but for the very mandate of eliminating 'others' in general. The all-embracing scope and chilling fanaticism of NS ideology legitimised intolerance towards every form of perceived 'nonconformist' behaviour. Although many fascist movements had developed eliminationist discourses before the rise of National Socialism to prominence and the establishment of Hitler's regime in 1933, the extreme language used by the Nazis reverberated across the continent and was interpreted by many fellow travellers across the continent as a further 'licence' to radicalise the discourses, the imageries, and, later, the policies of persecution. Every new pseudoscientific theory, every new idiom of elimination, every electoral success, and every implemented measure against a particular group emboldened other discourses of exclusion, broke old taboos, and removed barriers to action. The moral was similar in each case: if such language, idea, or policy were acceptable in one country, it would be equally acceptable elsewhere; if the elimination of one group was seriously entertained there, it could also be legitimised elsewhere; if one nonconformist, allegedly threatening group was identified as a legitimate target for elimination, then *any* such group

could. It was this eminently generic and cumulative nature of the fascist 'licence to hate' that legitimised and radicalised so many latent discourses of 'contestant other-ness' in so many European countries during the 1920s and particularly the 1930s. The almost concurrent radicalisation of very different eliminationist discourses across the continent at a time when 'fascism' was at its apex was not just an unfortunate coincidence. In legitimising particular discourses of 'cleansing' against specific national 'others', fascist movements (and, later, regimes) provided invaluable moral currency and historical importance to the prospect of 'cleansing' itself. This, much more than any particular form of eliminationism (anti-Semitism included), constituted the core of the fascist 'licence to hate'. As more and more movements gravitated towards the fascist radical creed or felt compelled to accommodate it in their own intellectual worldview, a sense of commonality of purpose, shared destiny, and quasi-religious loyalty developed, liberating language from conventional political norms, ideas from taboo topics, and visions from compromises. The fascist 'licence to hate' was as exportable and adaptable as the fascist 'style of politics', its symbols, uniforms, and rituals. The 'internationalisation' of fascism, the increasing admiration and deference shown by many fascist and 'fascistised' groups towards the two established regimes in Italy and Germany, as well as the growing sense of common destiny and 'mission', facilitated the circulation of ideas and, later, policies in a more and more radical direction (Rodogno 2006). By the late 1930s the sense that the NS regime in Germany was about to embark on a unique history-making project generated a further gravitational field that many fascists, as well as others who shared some of its goals, found hard to resist. With the outbreak of WW II and the forging of the NS 'new order' in Europe, the impression of a revolutionary reordering would become frighteningly apparent—and real.

Part III

National Socialism

The ‘Uniqueness’ of Synthesis and Implementation

Almost every debate on National Socialist movement/regime and the policies that it implemented after 1933 touch upon the issue of its alleged *uniqueness*. It is true that the NS regime gradually emerged as the ultimate manifestation of the fascist regenerative vision, eclipsing Mussolini’s Fascist Italy and gradually becoming the most influential template for what an allegedly ideal, fully sovereign national community involved across the authoritarian/fascist half of Europe (Mann 2004). The perception of ‘uniqueness’ related to the uncompromising ambition and scope of its vision, to its extreme ‘totalitarian’ political framework, to the peerless fanaticism with which it sought to turn utopia into reality, and to the brutal devices that it employed to that effect. For the NS regime was not just more extreme in its ideological synthesis between national-racial ‘rebirth’ and ‘cleansing’, but also unscrupulous and fanatical in its praxis. The air of permissibility generated by the extreme NS ideological discourses of ‘cleansing’, as well as by the eliminationist political record of the NS regime in the 1930s, had a crucial effect on other fascist discourses of ‘other-ness’. By providing an extreme and authoritative template and precedent, National Socialism functioned (more unwittingly than consciously) as a catalyst of radicalism beyond the boundaries of Germany. Through its radical initiatives it supplied an empowering licence to act, a blueprint for such action, and a legitimising precedent for both. More and more fascist movements and ideologically kindred regimes looked towards Berlin for inspiration and invoked NS Germany as the cradle of a revolution that would lead to a ‘new order’ across the continent. Without this radicalising and legitimising agency, it would be so hard to imagine the parallel escalation of so many (fascist/ultranationalist) discourses against different national ‘others’ in the 1930s/1940s, let alone the systematic campaign of genocide itself during WW II (Mann 2005: 311–17).

The two chapters of Part III focus exclusively on National Socialist Germany, probing into the nature and causes of this apparent ‘uniqueness’ that proved so decisive to the escalation of the brutal eliminationist projects of the 1930s and early 1940s across Europe. Chapter 5 deals with the ‘total’

scope of the NS ‘rebirth-through-cleansing’ vision as the result of the intersection and fusion of two different ‘totalitarian’ visions under the auspices of the NS regime: one centred on the NS utopia of a regenerated, fully sovereign national-racial Volk under the aegis of a ‘total’ biopolitical state; and the other based on a scientific model of ‘total’ biological management of society that promised a future of collective ‘health’ through victory over biological degeneration. In this chapter I argue that the notion of NS ‘uniqueness’ should be understood in two complementary ways: first, as an extreme synthesis of cultic and scientific visions of regeneration that had already been in circulation across the continent but somehow found a particularly hospitable terrain in Wilhelminian and particularly Weimar Germany; and, second, as the result of the neutralisation of social, political, and moral counterbalances that had kept these radical ideas at bay—in Germany and elsewhere—until the rise of the NS regime. Chapter 5 examines the reasons as to why this fusion was fully realised in Germany under National Socialism but was arrested in different ways and to different degrees in the rest of Europe, in spite of the fact that many fascist movements and regimes hosted similar cultic and scientific visions of regeneration. It also examines how the two ‘totalitarian’ visions shaped NS policy until the outbreak of WW II. Chapter 6 focuses on the war years that witnessed the unleashing of the most extreme and chillingly ambitious aspects of the NS vision across Europe and steered the project of ‘cleansing’ into mass physical extermination. Together, these two chapters chronicle the radicalisation of NS policy from the ‘licence to hate’ to a real and tangible ‘*licence to kill*’ that became the empowering model for a series of similar undertakings in other parts of Europe in the late 1930s onwards and particularly in the early 1940s (discussed in Part IV).

5 The 'Unique' German Case

Long-Term Trends and NS Agency

THE PARTICULARITIES OF THE 'NATIONAL SOCIALIST AGENCY'

Although Hitler's movement was not the first one of its kind to appear on the political stage of interwar Europe, it proved the most successful in electoral terms, the most aggressive in its expansionist designs, the most radical and wholesale in its eliminationist ambitions, the most 'totalitarian' in its organisation and grip on society, as well as the most uncompromising in turning its regenerative utopia into action (Arendt 1951; Steinmetz 1999). The electoral victories of the NSDAP in 1932 sent shock-waves across Europe, as did the appointment of its leader to the position of chancellor in January 1933 (Falter 1991: 44ff; Bessel 1992). Within less than two years Hitler was omnipotent, having crushed any form of internal opposition and organised domestic resistance. Although it is generally acknowledged that the prior experience of Fascist Italy—with its 'charismatisation' of Mussolini (E Gentile 1993; Kallis 2001), the declaration of dictatorship, and the construction of the *stato totalitario* (Aquarone 1995/1965; De Felice 1968)—exercised a crucial formative influence on the NSDAP and the NS regime, from 1933 onwards Berlin replaced Rome as the source of radical innovation in European politics. NS Germany quickly emerged as the indisputable centre of a new radical creed and system of rule, exerting in turn a powerful pull on kindred forces in 1930s Europe (Kallis 2003).

There is no more compelling evidence of the totalitarian aspirations of the NS regime than its wholesale intervention in the facts of life and death. This was a project of biopolitical engineering of the most extreme and uncompromising form, a revolutionary utopia (however abhorrent to us today) in full, open-ended motion (Griffin 2006b: 433–6; Kallis 2006c: 389–90). In NS Germany the scientific, administrative, and political vocabulary of violence and murder constituted an integral part of the regime's redemptive and regenerative imagery. It became a crucial component of the vision that initially advocated and finally embarked upon a murderous 'racial revolution' inside the Third Reich and, after 1938–39, in every corner of the NS 'new order'. A chilling vernacular of human 'gardening' distorted, perverted,

and camouflaged the meaning of words and the moral import of decisions associated with them. ‘Euthanasia’ became a euphemism for logistical management of overcrowding and cost-cutting; ‘special treatment’ (*Sonderbehandlung*) a circumlocution for the most immediate form of extermination; ‘evacuation’ signified a one-way trip to the most dehumanising locations of annihilation; ‘resettlement’ (*Aus-/Um-siedlung*) a macabre allegory of death. A mere symbol—a plus or a minus—jotted down in a hurry and without any prior examination over a standardised medical questionnaire equalled an actual decision of life or death—literally.

In Chapter 3 I discussed the alleged ‘singularity’ of National Socialism as movement and regime, arguing that it was indeed unique and idiosyncratic but not paradigmatically different from fascism’s ‘ineliminable core’. The NS fixation with ‘race’ was peerless amongst all interwar fascist case studies. It developed in directions that were not envisaged, let alone explored, in any other permutation of European fascism. The NS vision of ‘racial cleansing’ encompassed both the racial-anthropological war against particular ‘others’ (e.g., Jews, Sinti/Roma, Slavs), but also featured a unique obsession with a war against ‘racial-hygienic’ decadence that cast the eliminationist net even wider, this time also over ‘deviant’ or ‘unworthy’ members of the national community itself. The conjunction of extreme nation-statism and racial hygiene in the NS worldview coalesced into a vision of such rigidity, scope, and ruthlessness that far exceeded the sum of its individual components. But what was truly peerless in the case of National Socialism was not just its wholesale ideological synthesis but the way in which it became the sole guiding principle of state policy and was translated into reality in the most wholesale, devastating manner. Therefore, in order to analyse the reasons behind the extreme radicalism and fanatical determination of NS Germany, ideology is only the starting point. When it comes to questions of *political agency*, both the decisions of the NS regime and the context in which they were made and then pursued to their extreme need to be carefully addressed.

In his closing address to the Nuremberg Military Tribunal, Albert Speer—the figure that had epitomised more than any other Nazi leader the excessive, cold-blooded modernity of Hitler’s regime—used the following words:

Hitler’s dictatorship differed in one fundamental point from all its predecessors in history. His was the first dictatorship in the present period of modern technical development, a dictatorship which made complete use of all technical means in a perfect manner for the domination of its own nation. . . . The totalitarian system in the period of modern technical development can dispense with them; the means of communication alone make it possible to mechanize the subordinate leadership. (in Marrus 1997: 224–6)

Speer’s aphorism placed ‘totalitarianism’ at the heart of any understanding of the devastating power and brutality of NS Germany. In the 1950s and

1960s the so-called 'totalitarianist' interpretation advanced a similar revision of the conventional equation of genocide with fascism. The publication of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) marked the emergence of a new genre of analysing twentieth-century 'exceptional' regimes—not just National Socialism and, to some extent, Italian Fascism but also Soviet Stalinism. According to her, these regimes constituted examples of a novel form of political power and ambition, resting on the systematic, amoral use of violence/terror and the attainment of 'total' social control. Arendt endorsed the notion that the ideological and political origins of such regimes lay in a process of accumulated and aggravated contradictions in the model of modern civilisation. She saw the possibility of widespread, methodical violence as the result of the totalitarian system's monopoly of an elaborate apparatus of coercion, its ability to mobilise the masses and remove the ability of the individual to make reasoned judgements about the relation between ends and means. For her, as well as for subsequent theorists of 'totalitarianism', NS Germany represented a near-ideal type of this modern phenomenon (Arendt 1951: 250).

I will argue that the murderous extremism of Hitler's regime had to do with a unique 'totalitarian' synthesis—namely, the conjunction of two separate brands of 'totalitarianism', each with its own distinctive history, moral (if this is the appropriate word . . .) subtext, and vision. On the one hand, the NS worldview pursued with peerless fanaticism internal 'cleansing' and external (territorial) redemption in order to promote the rebirth of the nation and thus realise the chimera of an 'ideal nation-state (see earlier, Ch 3). To that effect the NS regime made full use of a 'total' modern state apparatus in order to intervene in all spheres of individual and collective life. On the other hand, experts—from biomedicine to demographics, from anthropology to engineering, from academics to social workers to administrators—intoxicated by an eminently modern illusion of omnipotence (*Allmachtswahn*) embraced the scientific vision of a 'total' technocracy relieved from the burdens of conventional moral and political accountability. Specific branches of scientific thought that made their appearance in late nineteenth/early twentieth century across the Western world had already developed clear blueprints for both the desirable goals and the feasibility or appropriateness of the required methodology, even if there were still fundamental disagreements between subgroups about the optimal methods, the desired scope of intervention, and the final objectives. Ambitious, all-embracing, morally revolutionary, and scientifically self-confident, these new branches of science *had* detailed plans, rationally organised priorities, and chillingly clear objectives that no political ideology, not least fascism (National Socialism included), could ever match.

All this amounted to a vision of *scientific technocratic totalitarianism* with a comprehensive plan of action (Kallis 2006c), allegedly justified through recourse to the discourse of empirical science, devoid of ethical impediments or residues from bygone eras, ruthlessly consistent and rational (Griffin 2006b: 443–50). Step by step, NS ideology became increasingly fascinated

with the premises and promises of this scientific totalitarianism, and the regime's policy tuned to the task of releasing the necessary political, social, and ethical space for its realisation. To be sure, the outcomes of this process were not predetermined—just like any aspect of the regime's racial policy. Competing jurisdictions and visions of management, fierce battles for administrative control, and the customary petty personal politics of the NS system interfered at all levels and times with the shaping and implementation of policy. The regime proved much more resourceful and efficient in generating alleged solutions on paper than in actually calculating their long-term consequences, including possible side-effects and bottlenecks. Priorities were constantly changing, not simply as a result of constant power struggles within the regime's hierarchy but also because external circumstances and developments forced the planners to reassess their position. International opinion, foreign currency, overcrowding of the penal system, economic mobilisation, the necessities of war, the exhilarating mirage of 'total' victory, and the pressure on resources caused by defeats, all effected deep changes in the way the NS leadership gazed at its horizon of opportunity. But unwavering power of conviction and action-oriented determination were never in short supply in the NS system. As Karl Schleunes (1970) has shown, different factions within the party/regime held competing visions of what the optimal model of management would be, ranging from the fanatical obstinacy of the Gauleiters and 'old fighters' to the ruthless 'rationality' of the SS and of the Four-Year Plan apparatus, the propaganda-oriented rationale of Dr Josef Goebbels, and the technocratic priorities of Albert Speer and Alfred Todt. Simply put, many people in the regime's hierarchy were convinced that they held the elusive answer. They worked independently, seized opportunities offered by the poly-cratic structure of the NS system of rule, competed with each other for Hitler's favour, and often outdid their competitors in scope and ruthlessness.

Above all, however, the 'totalitarian' nature of each vision (and of their fusion) depended on jettisoning deep-seated moral convictions, on overcoming the strength of instinctive conventional practice, and on removing previous safeguards or inhibitions. Each vision had already suggested a radically different relation between the individual, society, and the state, between rights and duties, between morality and action, between modernity and human life. Taken together, they conceived of the possibility of a revolutionary reconfiguration of state power *and* formulated blueprints for all-embracing intervention in the life of the community, unobstructed by conventional ethical, political, and social barriers. This was the crucial step towards transforming a vision of wholesale 'cleansing' into a legitimate discourse, steeped in highly desirable utopian promises of an 'ideal society'. And the NS authorities were not interested in simply legitimising this prospect; they were intent on recasting it as the new horizon of state action. However desirable and theoretically feasible this novel vision may have been in the 1930s and early 1940s, it was neither automatically accepted nor easy to implement. However appealing to many, the prospect of a 'life without others' clashed with conventional

ethical beliefs in the alleged sanctity of human life and with deep-seated cultural perceptions of what was morally justifiable, proper, and acceptable. Similarly, a highly desirable *and* morally acceptable course of action is not enough to overcome doubts about its feasibility. The paradigmatic value of NS Germany lay precisely in actively engaging with all these questions—by articulating a utopian vision whose realisation presupposed elimination, by aligning it with arguments and goals that made it appear desirable, by fully embracing modern techniques that rendered it feasible, *and* by generating actual conditions that facilitated its full implementation. National Socialism took the unity of thought and action literally and came chillingly close to cancelling the distinction between utopia and reality, between the optimal and the achieved (Kallis 2000: Ch 2). And even if its extreme totalitarian synthesis did not always find imitators elsewhere, its political programme featured as a blueprint for similar action, as a source of inspiration or as a legitimising, liberating precedent.

In this chapter I examine how the two totalitarian visions crystallised in 1930s Germany, how they intersected, combined, and then shaped the politics of elimination in the process. That this synthesis was both achieved and fully implemented in Germany alone raises a spate of questions about the particularity of both the national context and the movement under whose auspices elimination became a wholesale political programme in the 1933–45 period. Convinced of the alleged racial superiority of its own population, the NS regime embarked on a history-making crusade to remake the nation, the expanded national state, and eventually the entire European continent. Its dynamism and ruthless determination swept across the continent and became the sort of total, unconditional 'licence' that many proved overeager to appropriate in the process. But beyond the extreme nature of its vision and agency, a crucial factor behind NS radicalism was the spectacular failure of counterbalances in interwar Germany, in a way not witnessed anywhere else in Europe, under any regime, fascist or not. The subversion or neutralisation of these counterbalances in NS Germany was indeed unique; but the reasons as to why this happened in Germany and not elsewhere—or nowhere near that extent—had to do both with the ideology or 'agency' of fascist elements and with particular national conditions. In this respect, 'uniqueness' inhered neither in National Socialism nor in an alleged German 'exceptionalism' per se but resulted from a special combination of multiple ideological-political radicalisation *and* erosion of political, cultural, and moral reflexes in interwar German society.

TWO 'TOTALITARIAN' VISIONS: SCIENTIFIC AND POLITICAL 'REVOLUTION'

Helen Fein has claimed that all modern genocidal projects have been implemented in order to "fulfil a state's design for a new order" (Fein 1979: 11).

This 'new order'—political, social, economic, racial/biological, territorial, or a combination thereof—points to a *revolutionary* project of large-scale, fundamental reordering based on new, radical operational principles and facilitated by equally revolutionary novel devices. In his masterly study of the relation between modernity and extermination in NS Germany, Zygmunt Bauman (1989, 191) underscored how modernity conceptualised new opportunities and a new kind of ethical code for society. This, in his opinion, was what made the excesses of the 1939–45 period not just conceivable, but also practically possible and—even more importantly—psychologically (more) desirable. Anthony Giddens described modernity as a 'juggernaut', a complex sum of disparate forces that often evades the control or intentions of human agency:

The juggernaut reflects the image of a runaway engine of enormous power which, collectively as human beings, we can drive to some extent but which also threatens to rush out of our control and which could rend itself asunder . . . [It] crushes those who resist it, and while it sometimes seems to have a steady path, there are times when it veers away erratically in directions we cannot foresee. (Giddens 1990: 40)

Whatever criticisms the historiography on the Holocaust has put forward with regard to the exaggeration of the role of modernity in institutionalised killing, modernity was undoubtedly responsible for the dizzying accumulation and concentration of power under the control of a novel constellation of state power: *totalitarianism*. In presenting this 'totalitarian state' as one of the fundamental novelties of the twentieth century, two of the most influential theorists of 'totalitarianism', Friedrich Brzezinski and Carl Friedrich, stressed that

[t]otalitarian dictatorship then emerges as a system of rule for realizing totalist intentions under modern political and technical conditions, as a novel type of autocracy. The declared intention of creating a 'new man,' according to numerous reports, has had significant results. . . . [M]odern technology is mentioned as a significant condition for the invention of the totalitarian model. . . . The citizen as an individual, and indeed in larger groups, is simply defenseless against the overwhelming technological superiority of those who can centralize in their hands the means with which to wield modern weapons and thereby physically to coerce the mass of the citizenry. (Friedrich & Brzezinski 1965: 15–21)

In its generic form, totalitarianism was predicated on a series of revolutionary revisions of the relation between state, individual, and society. It challenged the liberal notion that the rights of the individual should normally take precedence over the needs of the collectivity, however defined. Furthermore, it questioned the ability of smaller social units (such as family,

community, and so on) to take the best decisions for the welfare of its members. In all, the totalitarian state sought to appropriate fully the right to make every individual and collective decision by cancelling a series of conventional distinctions: between private and public sphere; between individual and the people; and between the people—organically defined—and the *völkisch* state.

The nineteenth-century German philosopher Georg W F Hegel had already prefigured the 'total' character of the state as the ultimate arbiter of 'crisis' in modern society by stating that "the state in, and for, itself is the ethical whole" (Hegel 1991: §258). The notion of an eminently 'ethical state' was developed in philosophical terms by the Italian neo-Hegelian philosopher Giovanni Gentile in the context of his theory of 'actualism' (G Gentile 1918; Zunino 1985: Ch 3; Talbot 2007: Ch 3). For him, this new conception of the state had the supreme responsibility to educate and unite, reversing the trend of the liberal state towards agnosticism, neutrality, and mechanical arbitration of otherwise clashing egocentric individualisms (Ollsen 2003; Fogu 2006; Griffin 2007b: 191ff). Given Gentile's pivotal role in the philosophical grounding of Italian Fascism in the 1920s and his contribution to the formulation of the 'Doctrine of Fascism' in the early 1930s, the theory of the all-embracing 'ethical state' underpinned the political and ethical discourse of etatism in Mussolinian Italy. The Duce himself declared that "everything [should be] within the state, nothing against the state, nothing outside the state" (Mussolini 1932). By the time Hitler came to power, political totalitarianism was a revolutionary project in full swing, albeit pursued in fundamentally different ways and to different effects in Italy and Russia.

This unprecedented strengthening of the role of the state took place largely in continuity with broader, long-term historical developments that had already enabled the state to amass jurisdictions and powers for social intervention. At least since the nineteenth century the growth of nationalism and its formulation as 'nation-statism' had blurred the distinction between the *political* and the *national*, equating the concept of *demos* with that of the *nation* as an organically indivisible entity (Mann 2005: 3–5). In parallel, the extension of state power was made possible through a modern conception of 'life' (Foucault 1979b, 1984, 1997; Lazzarato 2002) that obscured the traditional distinction between natural or 'bare' (*zoi*) and political (*bios*) life, as well as between the private (*oikosi*) and the public/political (*polis*; Agamben 1998). 'Life' in all its forms and expressions (including its own termination, death) entered the modern realm of state management. The traditional dividing line between private and public events, between *zoi* and *bios*, shifted in favour of the group, in order to accommodate and legitimise the expanding scope of state power. The primacy of 'national interest' left wide open the possibility of translating every form of natural, private, and public life into an object of systematic management so as to maximise collective gains, reverse 'decadence', and pursue perfectibility.

Enter *biopower*. The term was pioneered by Michel Foucault (Foucault 1994: 3–20; 1990) in order to describe the power relations between state, populations, and political economy. In his classical analysis of power, Foucault charted two different types of relation between the government (state) and the individuals, as units and collectively. ‘Strategic’ relations refer to a situation whereby the freedom of the participants is exercised and thus leaves the possibility of change open to constant renegotiation. By contrast, ‘states of domination’ are made possible through the fixity of relations and consciously limited opportunities for bargaining. ‘States of domination’ that lead to the exercise of biopower are intelligible primarily in the context of modernity, where the claim to freedom was articulated, institutionally entrenched, and then restricted by various ‘governmental technologies’ of power-as-domination.

The emergence of biopower was historically congruent with a series of ‘modern’ developments: the rise of nationalism and the nation-state, the perception of individuals as collectivities—and of these collectivities as primarily *national* ones—as well as concerns about the preservation and continuation of life. Science and social welfare put forward the vision of a better, longer, healthier life; but they did not succeed in overcoming death (Peukert 1986: 128–9). In defining the object of their action in collective terms—as a national-racial one—the dialectics of health-illness were also shifted from the individual to the collective, *national body* (what in Germany was called *Volkskörper*) (Süß 2003). In this way, the remit of the state’s biopower intersected with the emphasis on preserving and regenerating the ‘racial nation’ as a whole: whilst the individual body could not but confront the prospect of death as an ineluctable fact of life itself, the eternal body could live forever, so long as the state acted in its defence by “weeding out” harmful elements and influences (Bauman 1991: Ch 1; Peukert 1994).

In its most ideal-typical form, biopower represented an open-ended call for regulating human life in its collective form, as a force of defence and optimisation attuned to the needs of large population groups. Its realisation depended on the empowerment of *political* institutions—above all, the state as the supreme guardian of individual and collective life. Through the rapid expansion of its power, efficiency, and scope, the modern state emerged as the crucial institutional manager of grand social, political, and economic projects that involved primarily the group. This responsibility was perfectly congruent with the rationale of biopolitics, in the sense that the modern state entrenched its authority vis-à-vis its citizens on the rational basis of ensuring and facilitating the continuity of (collective) life. This platform equipped state authorities with an expanding scope of intervention—from demographic and population policies to public health projects, environmental interventions, issues of productivity/efficiency, and social relations—and transformed it into a *biopolitical* institution.

However, as the principal guarantor of collective life, the biopolitical state also claimed the right to exclusion and elimination of life if an external or

internal 'threat' was perceived as detrimental to the very preservation of the collectivity's life. The contradiction between preserving life and killing in the name of the same principle could be reconciled only on the basis of defending the collectivity from such perceived threats and detrimental influences. Biopower, Foucault argued, was both about maintaining collective life and about *conditionally* killing or 'letting die' in its name (Foucault 2003: 244). Dealing with such alleged enemies, both outside the realm of the state and inside its own population, could involve various forms of disciplinary 'containment' but did not preclude a more direct form of elimination. At this point Foucault spoke of 'state racism'. This modern form of (biological) racism became meaningful only through conceiving society as a (biological) group whose collective life had to be preserved and defended at all costs. The notion of society as biological organism resulted in the perception of the enemies in a similar racially collective form. Thus, biopolitics could still claim to serve the overriding function of preserving the collectivity even through eliminating (directly or indirectly) allegedly harmful forms of life (Foucault 2000: 410; 2003: 255).

Evidently, the prospect of turning the modern state into a wholesale agent of biopower over population groups appeared to clash with an apparent reverse emphasis on individual self-determination and freedom of the private sphere. Whereas the revolutionary counterparadigm of heredity and evolutionary competition pointed to the alleged primacy of nature and biology in determining social trends and explaining various forms of social pathology, the liberal state remained aligned to discourses of nurture and progressive social intervention focusing heavily on the individual. Any form of 'totality' was in principle antithetical to the process of liberalisation, as it presupposed a reversal of the trend towards individual empowerment and self-determination. Traditional beliefs and values, but also modern ideologies, appeared to stand in the way of realising the full potential of the modern biopolitical 'revolution'. What was demanded instead was a new, open-ended field of all-pervasive action, devoid of residual tradition—a genuinely 'total' biopolitical condition in which counterparadigms would be eliminated and the full potential of the modern 'revolution' would be brought to its conclusion. The full sovereignty of science at the behest of the 'total' state constituted the key to this biopolitical revolution. The father of the German eugenics (*Rassenhygiene*) movement, Alfred Ploetz, deplored the intervention of "humanistic" and liberal principles in the "struggle for existence" (*Kampf ums Dasein*) as dysgenic and potentially catastrophic for the health of the racial community (Weiss 2004: 18ff; cf. Mazumdar 1992: 90–92). Even Bertrand Russell—a British left-wing, progressive intellectual no less—noted in the 1920s that "what stands in the way [of introducing eugenical controls] is democracy" (Russell 1929: 263).

The advance of modernity proved instrumental in facilitating the transition to the biopolitical state and in conceptualising 'strategies of domination' in totalising terms that were previously inconceivable or inaccessible.

Modernity did not simply decentre the old world by elevating the status and enhancing the scope of scientific enquiry but also redefined pathologies and attempted to claim an enhanced domain of remedial action. Yet, its revolutionary dynamics bred a potential ‘crisis’ of direction—what Roger Griffin (2006b: 428–31) called a “liminal state” in which certainties were destroyed but the future path had not as yet been charted with any degree of certainty. This liminal state manifested itself not just in the form of a nostalgic, reactionary retreat but, more importantly, as an attempt to channel, systematise, and eventually institutionalise modernity’s very own potential in a radically new direction. Science emerged as a novel source of authority in modern societies, not simply questioning traditional sources of truth but also filling the gap left by the collapse of the old certainties. As Detlev Peukert has noted:

[a]t the turn of the century, then, the gap created by the decline of religious influence on everyday life in industrial society was so great, and the conquest of the world by secularized, scientific rationality was so overwhelming, that the switch from religion to science as the source of a meaning-creating mythology for everyday life took place almost without resistance. The result, however, was that science took on itself a burden of responsibility that it would soon find a heavy one to bear. (Peukert 1994: 247–8)

All this amounted to a *sacralisation of science* (Eatwell 2003). It involved both popular perceptions of the role of science in general in the modern world (what Peukert calls the “meaning-creating mythology [of science] for everyday life”) and the self-perception of the particular scientist as harbinger of a revolutionary new social order. Of all branches of science, biomedicine was the one best-placed to formulate claims to rationally grounded biopower. The doctor as the sole arbiter of matters of life and death, as the owner of a monopoly of critical knowledge and technology, would become the symbol of a society liberated from moral and political distortions to the ‘natural’ process, unerring in his mastery of ostensibly objective scientific knowledge. The practitioners of the biomedical professions in particular perceived themselves as best placed to safeguard life by virtue of their more direct relation with natural life (*zoi*), health, and the mere event of death. Making full use of modern forms of enquiry, new advances of knowledge and of technological progress, they could enhance the scope of treatment whilst at the same time strengthening their ambitions with regard to the range of human conditions over which they could now claim jurisdiction. As more and more phenomena of pathology were rendered accessible through scientific cognition and empirical analysis, science fuelled a cultural optimism that solutions to human pathos may be obtained through exploiting the full resources of scientific enquiry and intervention.

The dynamics and scope of this trend towards a 'sacralised' science was symptomatic of the strength of the modern deployment in particular societies. Clearly, the need to sacralise a lay, "earthly" idea and thus "render it an absolute principle of collective existence, consider it the main source of values for individual and mass behaviour, and exalt it as the supreme ethical precept of public life" (E Gentile 2000: 18–19) was particularly (perhaps, only) meaningful in those contexts where the de facto influence of traditional religion had become deescalated by the modern deployment. It is precisely on this basis that Emilio Gentile's notions of 'sacralised politics' and 'political religion' meet Peukert's suggestion about the "[partial] switch from religion to science", and Griffin's notion of 'liminality' where a new direction has not yet been defined to replace the old, discredited one (see earlier). In order to fill or compensate for this lacuna, an agonising search for what Gentile called "ersatz (lay) religion(s)" ensued, which attempted to load secular universal ideas with a cultic and essentially eschatological meaning (Voegelin 2000: 295–323; E Gentile 2004; Griffin 2004). Science was one such idea that proved particularly attractive, especially in societies mesmerised with the *Allmachtswahn* of modernity, where the role of religious theology had been effectively challenged as the "supreme ethical precept" and the search for alternatives had been firmly rooted in a secular context. "The 'death of God' in the nineteenth century", Peukert (1994: 253) concluded poignantly, "gave science dominion over life".

Science formulated its own particular redemptive vision on the basis of its promise to defeat death on the terrain of natural (and not metaphysical, as religion had done in the past) life (Crew 1998: 16). In itself, this promise prefigured a totalising condition, in the sense that science *alone*, unhindered by external interventions and residual factors, could perform this function. This trend became even more apparent in the aftermath of WW I. Indeed, many different branches of science and a growing number of their disciples felt empowered enough to 'play God' with the natural and material world. Jeffrey Herf's (1984) groundbreaking study of the utopian visions formulated by engineers in interwar Germany demonstrated how science facilitated the alignment of scientific/technological modernism with the attainment of atavistic goals (such as the quest for wholeness and purity) in what he called "reactionary modernism". And, in case the discussion of this trend within the German context raised anew questions about an alleged German 'peculiarity', Mária Kovács (1994: 65) reminded us that the maverick American Society of Mechanical Engineers formulated a new 'ethical' code and vision after the end of WW I which explicitly claimed full control over industrial production in order to lead society "into the promised land of economic efficiency and social justice". As János Bársony, the Dean of the Medical faculty at the University of Budapest, proclaimed,

the medical profession can no longer confine itself to the mere implementation of scientific knowledge. It must become the midwife in the

birth of a *new political mentality* which will serve the true interests of the nation. (Kovács 1994: 67, n47, emphasis added)

The battle of disciplines for cognitive authority had also implicated the relatively newly founded domain of ‘population studies’. Around the turn of the twentieth century the idea that economic prosperity, social welfare, and spiritual prowess depended on an optimal relation between demographics, agricultural/industrial production, and quality of life gathered momentum. There were unmistakable echoes of Malthus in economist Paul Mombert’s (1929) “overpopulation” formula, in which he correlated population size, “feeding capacity”, and “standards of living”. Others went even further, identifying an ostensible “optimal population size” on the basis of existing feeding resources (Aly & Heim 2002: 60). Any deviation from this figure, it was now claimed, would result in economic and social decline, through either over- or underpopulation. Demographers, geographers, hygienists, urban planners, architects, engineers, agricultural and industrial experts drew the attention of political elites to the alleged significance of meticulous, rational planning as a panacea for a future, *ideal* society. Implicit or explicit in this discourse of scientific empowerment was the claim that nothing should be left to accident or fate in the regulation of human life; only science possessed solutions to perceived pathologies and tangible, rational prescriptions for pursuing a utopian reordering of civilisation.

It is no coincidence that many of the visionaries of this extreme scientific empowerment became purveyors of illiberal, exclusivist (including racist) ideals (Kovács 1994: xvii). Their utopias pointed to a glorified technocracy as the sacred principle for the reorganisation of society and as the blueprint of future political action. The Italian biologist (and future scientific spokesperson of Italian Fascist racialism) Nicola Pende went as far as suggesting that science (in fact, *bis* science, biology) should even dominate politics (Maiocchi 1999: 40ff)! Yet, for the majority of scientists who envisioned a new, expanded role for science it was the institution of the modern state that offered the only conceivable platform for a viable, yet far-reaching scientific empowerment. The British eugenicist and socialist Karl Pearson emphasised the need for a new type of state acting on the basis on immutable natural/scientific principles in order to regulate the life of the individual and protect the welfare of the collectivity (Kovács 1994: 36, n41). In Italy, the renowned Italian professor of medicine Umberto Gabbi identified the role of science with that of a Hegelian state, supporting the subordination of the former to the primacy of the latter in terms of political and social action (Maiocchi 1999: 39). Already in pre-WW I Hungary the professor of neurology István Apáthy had called for the “firm hand of the state” as an antidote to what he perceived as the decadent influence of liberal individualism and the insufficiency of religion in terms of solving the social (national) problems (Kovács 1994: 39ff, n27, 43; Turda 2006: 314). The state, in fact the *national* state in its biopolitical form, was perceived as the

ultimate expression of sovereignty. Therefore, it was the most appropriate and powerful platform to arrogate science to its own core of full and total 'constituted power'.

Until well into the 1920s the results of this feasibility test had been universally disappointing in Europe. The institutional role of the state had indeed expanded but it had done so in a far more 'neutral' direction than the purveyors of scientific totalitarianism would have wished for. On the one hand, the echo of nineteenth-century liberal individualism remained an axiom, however wounded or under pressure. Democracy pulled the debate towards a consideration of guarantees of freedom and away from the professed benefits of full state empowerment. The majority of politicians rejected the technocratic alternative, either because they sincerely believed that social problems were far more complex and resistant to rationality than science claimed (Maiocchi 1999: 39) or simply because they were convinced that such an extension of state power would be untimely. At the same time, religious institutions continued to hold sway over large sections of the population, even if secularisation had weakened their erstwhile grip. The official Catholic church issued a series of encyclicals in the first three decades of the twentieth century (e.g., the 1880 *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* about marriage; the 1891 *De Rerum novarum* about social questions and modernity), with which it endeavoured to defend its dominion over matters of life and death against the incursions of secular institutions, including the state itself and science (Buchanan & Conway 1996).

Taken together, liberal individualism, democratic principles, and traditional social/moral norms erected barriers to the extension of the authority of any secular source of power. Any 'totalitarian' project, whether political or scientific or combined, presupposed an ongoing attitudinal revolution that would weaken the social validity of such factors; or, as was the case in Russia after 1917, a genuine political and social revolution that would demolish traditional structures and certainties altogether (Kelly 2003: 61). In the absence of a genuine revolutionary 'new beginning', the rest of the European continent initially constituted an inhospitable terrain for the implementation of the various totalitarian projects, however well-articulated these might have been in intellectual terms. Yet, as Omer Bartov (2000: 158–9) has noted, "totalitarianism is modern utopia brought to its ultimate concrete conclusion". The totalitarian prospect was implicit in the generic 'illusion of omnipotence' that accompanied the advance of the particular Western project of modernity. The ultimate conclusion of this trend could only become possible through a revolutionary rejection of tradition or through the failure of counterbalancing forces, whether social, political, ethical, or cultural. That this eventually happened, that it happened first and foremostly in interwar Germany, but also that it happened in the wake of wider developments associated with modernity and felt across the continent, raise a number of questions about both (generic) fascist and National Socialist agencies in this process.

THE GERMAN CONTEXT AND THE PRODUCTION OF THE 'TOTALITARIAN' POTENTIAL

In his 'global' theory of fascism, Stein Larsen has argued that the "potential for fascism" arises wherever there are profound contradictions in the processes of liberalisation and modernisation. In his view, fascism was (and continues to be) possible in circumstances where there are big discrepancies between the level/rhythm of modernisation and liberalisation—namely, high modernity with weak liberalisation or vice versa (Larsen 2001). This correlation explains why the advanced modern and maturely liberal societies of Northern Europe successfully fought the rise of indigenous fascism and the most radical prescriptions of biopolitical totalitarianism even in circumstances of multiple 'crisis'; and why the weakness/belatedness of *both* modernity and liberalism in countries of southeastern Europe did not produce the fully fledged vision of aggressive population management geared towards 'racial cleansing' that was articulated in many northern European countries. Larsen's model works well in the case of Germany, where advanced modernity coupled with weaker, uneven liberalisation (one of the 'peculiarities' of German history—Blackbourn & Eley 1984; Sheehan 1978) created a space for radical modern alternative visions without the effective counterbalances that arrested them in other modern Northern European societies. This explains to a large degree why Hitler's movement embraced the most radical version of this vision from amongst a number of alternatives in the 1920s—although the significance of the direct agency of National Socialism in this respect should in no way be underestimated. Larsen also drew attention to a different space for fascism in circumstances of weak modernity, which was nevertheless considered as an ongoing project and whose disruptive effects on the traditional fibre of society were experienced or perceived in painful disorientation by large sections of the population. This, in his opinion, explained why fascism proved particularly strong and popular in peripheral European societies (Eastern, Central, and Southern Europe) that were in the midst of modernisation and had also undergone a modicum of liberalisation. The weakness of the former process certainly did not allow the possibility to conceive of a wholesale vision of 'rebirth' that assumed the 'missionary' perspective of National Socialism in seeking a wider redemption of civilisation as a whole. But the alleged 'uniqueness' of the German case did not lay in the particular nature of visions floating around in the country during the interwar period, even before the rise of National Socialism. As we have seen (Ch 2), such visions were in ample circulation across Northern Europe, as well as in the USA, where in fact they had been partly implemented. Furthermore, they were by no means uncontested or dominant discourses. What was indeed unique in the German/NS case was the effective synthesis of cultic and scientific 'totalitarian' visions made possible under the aegis of National Socialism *in combination with* the exceptional failure of sociopolitical reflexes that

would have otherwise kept them at bay or diluted them in a more plural framework.

It is in this context that we should now discuss the alleged peculiarities of the German case—not as an exceptional container of unique ideas but as the special combination of radicalising potential, on the one hand, and exceptional failure of counterbalances, on the other. This combination allowed generic excesses to enter the realm of feasibility and admissibility. The remarkable transition from the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich—the spectacular collapse of a 'liberal' political system and the equally dramatic failure of an advanced modern society to resist the descent into totalitarianism—has been a hotly debated chapter in the historiography of modern Germany. Whilst earlier approaches highlighted the apparent discontinuity between 1918–29 and 1933–45, more recent works have detected a higher degree of continuity between the two political systems and the sociocultural milieu in which they operated (Fletcher 1986; Eley 1990, 1992; Wehler 2003). It cannot be denied that a novel political experiment began in Germany in the wake of military collapse and revolution in 1918, committed to liberalisation, individual freedoms, and progressive solutions to a spate of social phenomena. Institutions of the old imperial regime collapsed or were dismantled in the short period between defeat and the formal establishment of the republic. The infamous gap between high economic modernisation and political backwardness that had plagued the Second Reich (Dahrendorf 1967; Eley 1992: 266; Larsen 2001) was addressed on the institutional level with the establishment of the Weimar constitution and the consolidation of the liberal-republican system. The changes that followed in the 1920s were by any standard momentous. From constitutional change to individual rights, from the reconfiguration of political forces to social reforms and a general culture of toleration, the Weimar Republic constituted an exciting and highly promising novel context for refounding the German state and providing a new compass for the disoriented postwar German society (W Mommsen 1981; Kershaw 1998: 109).

The years of the Weimar Republic recorded mixed results for the particular German brand of eugenics thought known as *Rassenhygiene* (see Ch 2). Ideas of both positive and negative selection were successfully diffused amongst sectors of the German population, aided by a new biomedical vernacular that was fixated on heredity. In the depressed atmosphere that followed the end of WW I and the signing of the Versailles treaty, biological regeneration was even more closely associated with the nationalist claim of national rebirth. The founding of the German League for National Regeneration and Heredity (*Deutscher Bund für Volksaufartung und Erbkunde*) in 1925 emphasised the link between the Volk's welfare and hereditary factors (Weindling 1989: 406–9). The German government—with the necessary support of the majority Social Democrats (SPD)—was also actively involved in promoting research in eugenics. In 1927 it established the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics (*Kaiser-*

Wilhelm-Institut für Anthropologie, menschliche Erblehre und Eugenik, KWIA), headed by the renowned anthropologist Eugen Fischer (Weindling 1985; Schmuhl 2003).

However, institutional expansion and popularisation of eugenics did not amount to political endorsement of its radical alternative vision. The political and cultural climate of the mid-1920s pointed to a very different direction, as the ruling Weimar coalition supported the expansion of an ambitious, state-controlled welfare system and continued to be influenced by left-leaning ideas of ‘social medicine’ (Porter & Porter 1988). If the far more conservative and nationalist atmosphere of Munich proved hospitable to the more radical proponents of racial hygiene, Berlin was certainly neither ready nor willing to endorse their radical propositions (Weindling 1985: 315). It was in Munich that the first dedicated university chair of Racial Hygiene was established in 1923; the first specialised branch of the KWIA was established there a year later (Weiss 2004: 32). Fritz Lenz was appointed in the former whilst the latter was headed by Ernst Rüdin—both scientists of international reputation but with hypernationalist leanings. In the capital, however, Fischer and his associate Otmar von Verschuer (head of the Human Heredity division of the KWIA and expert on twin research) were aware of the unreceptive attitude of the Weimar political elite and chose to tread a more cautious path that emphasised the race-neutral character of their research (E Ehrenreich 2007).

This situation changed dramatically in the wake of the economic crisis of 1929. There were increasingly vocal calls for a reassessment of the universalist Weimar welfare provision in favour of a ‘differential’ system based on a hierarchy of the human capital according to either ‘racial value’, social productivity, or a combination of both. The idea that welfare was not an unconditional citizenship right but something that had to be earned and allocated on the basis of quid pro quo dovetailed with radical eugenical ideas of hereditary worth and of a more aggressive protection of the Volk from allegedly harmful racial influences. Gradually, the awareness of high unemployment and sparse resources rendered the sort of ideas espoused by Binding and Hoche about ‘life unworthy of living’ (*lebensunwertes Leben*) in the early 1920s more acceptable and popular (see Ch 2). In 1932 the Prussian Health Council bowed to pressure from scientists and politicians, drafting the first (voluntary) eugenical sterilisation legislation in interwar Germany. Even if the law affected racial-hygienic groups and was devoid of racial-anthropological connotations, and even if it never came into effect, it constituted a portentous official nod to the more radical postulates of *Rassenhygiene* in contrast to the far more permissive culture of the 1920s (Weiss 1987: 225; Dickinson 2004: 15). It was also symptomatic of a growing support for far-reaching eugenical programmes that spanned the political spectrum—from the German National Peoples’ Party (DNVP) to the Catholic Centre Party and even sectors of the SPD. But in the polarised political atmosphere of the early 1930s *Rassenhygiene* was deployed as

an counterparadigm to the crumbling Weimar welfare system, offering the prospect of greater freedom for private practitioners and of a more radical agenda for addressing the Volk's 'health' through the empowerment of the biomedical professions. Nationalist-minded German eugenicists (for example, Lenz and Fischer were long-standing members of the DNVP—Weindling 1989: 404) rejoiced at the change of political culture in the early 1930s. Many more felt equally exhilarated with the new parameters of the debate on *Rassenhygiene*, including previously marginalised supporters of Nordicism (such as Hans Guenther) and anti-Semitism.

By the time Hitler was appointed as Chancellor in January 1933 and his regime embarked upon the 'coordination' (*Gleichschaltung*) of German state and society, the scene had been set for a radical reconceptualisation of state's role, of the principles of social organisation, and of the relation between society and political power (Will 1990: 15; Schiel 2005). National Socialism was instrumental in removing institutional and moral impediments that had prevented the adoption of specific anti-concessionary measures in the preceding decade. The socially and politically totalitarian intentions of the new regime tallied in scope and ruthlessness with the ambitions of the most radical wing of 'negative' *Rassenhygiene*. In its quest for total control over society the new regime recognised that the totalitarian reach of biomedical science was eminently congruent with its own vision of solving racial 'problems' through 'cleansing' and promoting the vision of an ideal nation-state at all costs. But, above all, it also realised the potential for a crucial extension of state power through the implementation of a radical wholesale 'biopolitical revolution' advocated by the most extreme wing of German eugenicists. In the words of Carl Schmitt (1996), the new NS state after 1933 was the epitome of the full sovereignty of the Volk. Through this novel sovereignty it possessed the power to declare a 'state of exception' that in turn would produce a 'new order'—political, socioeconomic, but also ethical. As a result, legal and political norms would be freed from conventional constraints and thus define a new concept of 'normality'. *Racial hygiene* and *racial nationalism* became the two main paths to an ideal 'racial nation', pursued in earnest by the new 'state of exception' through its total sovereignty. Race provided the common political and scientific modalities through which physical or social 'deviance', on the one hand, and biological/cultural 'other-ness', on the other, could be conceptualised as primary targets of a single war against decadence (Elden 2002; Foucault 2003). Thus, this hybrid utopia of an 'ideal racial nation' was at the very heart of the alliance between biomedicine and National Socialism in interwar Germany.

This said, neither the extreme biopolitical 'state of exception' envisaged by the NS leadership nor the utopian vision of 'gardening' technocracy held by the most extreme wing of the *Rassenhygiene* movement could *individually* explain the eliminationist dynamics of the post-1933 period in Germany. Their fusion produced a momentum that far exceeded the sum of its constituent parts. What appeared infeasible, impractical, and/or unethical

less than three decades before was now regarded as intelligible, realisable, desirable, and legitimate. Of this fundamental shift of perception the Weimar period should be regarded as a critical, if unwitting, laboratory. Once the significance of this factor is appreciated, the excesses of the post-1933 period are more intelligible as terrifying side-effect rather than as an anomaly; a partial (though not predetermined) tragic continuity rather than a seismic fissure.

SCIENCE AND POLITICS IN INTERWAR EUROPE: THE DYNAMICS AND LIMITS OF THE 'TOTALITARIAN' POTENTIAL

In order to understand what rendered interwar Germany the laboratory of an extreme totalitarian biopolitical scenario, we need to concentrate on the confluence of three trends: the escalation of the power of the modern state in conditions of advanced but crisis-ridden modernisation; the radicalisation of science (biomedicine in particular), formulating a totalising claim of absolute future health and harmony; and the erosion of the diverse counterbalances that had kept this totalising potential firmly in check until the early 1930s. Individually, neither the dynamics of radicalisation per se nor the inherent weakness of the counterbalances in Weimar Germany predetermined the brutal technologies of elimination that followed the establishment of NS rule in 1933 (Traverso 1995: 104–5). But, in order to appreciate the extreme NS experience of the 1930s/early 1940s, we need to place the NS 'agency' in the context of a wider 'crisis of modernisation' that had been brewing for decades—and *not solely* in Germany. In this respect, the NS 'totalitarian' potential, obsessed with the utopia of constructing the 'ideal racial nation' in the 'ideal state', coincided with an ongoing radicalisation of scientific ambition *and* with a critical wearing-down of social, cultural, and institutional reflexes. This coincidence permitted the synthesis of the political and the technocratic totalitarian visions into a unique hybrid model of *biopolitical totalitarianism*.

It was a coincidence that did not happen elsewhere in Europe—certainly not to the extent that it did in interwar Germany. In other societies political priorities and cultural/ideological caveats produced a multitude of disincentives and obstacles to the emergence of a similar wholesale potential, even if this potential had been conceived of and articulated. A sufficiently entrenched liberal consensus, coupled with a noninterventionist state culture, stifled radical eugenical visions in The Netherlands and Britain, where even relatively moderate prescriptions—such as voluntary sterilisation—were defeated in the political and social arenas (Macnicol 1989). A combination of growing anti-German sentiment and entrenched religious morality in interwar Poland stifled the embryonic eugenical movement detaching it from both society and political establishment in the 1930s (Kawalec 2002;

Gavin 2006). In France, a broad neo-Lamarckian and anti-Malthusian consensus amongst biomedical scientists conditioned the development of the indigenous eugenics movement. Unlike the rigid model of Mendelian heredity espoused by the *Rassenhygiene* wing of eugenicists in Germany, neo-Lamarckianism in France centred on the role of environmental factors in improving the genetic pool of the French population. Furthermore, in contrast to the neo-Malthusian concerns with overpopulation—so widespread in Northern Europe and Scandinavia—French society had been obsessed with declining fertility rates (W Schneider 1990: 69–108; Drouard 1995: 648–54; Dikotter 1998), shrinking population, and *dégénération*. It was precisely on the platform of increasing fertility and population size (pronatalism) that a set of disparate currents intersected. One was associated with a wholesale antirepublican political reaction to 1789 and to the postrevolutionary legacy of modernisation that saw in pronatalism the key to the restoration of traditional family and moral structures in society. Another was related to *le devoir patriotique* of procreation, whereby the future of France as a prosperous and strong country depended on a pronatalist drive. A final one was based on a scientific conjunction of demographics and eugenics that advocated 'positive' measures to encourage and reward large-size families—the so-called *familles nombreuses* as opposed to small ones referred to as *malthusiennes* (Talmy 1962, I: 70).

During the period of the Third Republic (1870–1940) a considerably strong and stable liberal tradition succeeded—albeit not without crises and complications—to keep a series of radical alternatives at bay. Even if large sectors of the French right and the Catholic church continued to question vehemently the direction of modernisation, advocating instead a return of sorts to traditional patterns of life (Austin 1990; Passmore 1993), the sizeable but divided pronatalist lobby failed to voice an alternative full political programme, and the French political elites legislated with caution when it came to restrictions to individual freedom. The compromise that was reached and sustained until the fall of the republic in 1940 focused on the notion of 'familism' (Quine 1996: 55), with the state providing fiscal and social incentives for large-size families but shying away from systematic 'negative' sanctions against individuals. Only in the 1920s did the French legislature introduce a form of 'celibate' taxation (also affecting childless couples), but even this measure was lifted in the wake of the world economic crisis (Tomlinson 1985). At the same time, the social influence of Catholic morality (if not necessarily church per se) on large sectors of French society contributed to the perceived inadmissibility of antinatalist measures. By the time that a new, more conservative *Code de la famille* was introduced by the Daladier government after the collapse of the Popular Front in 1939, it was too late for the introduction of 'negative' eugenical measures. Instead, the code prioritised pronatalism and the strengthening of agricultural society (once again in the form of financial rewards) whilst penalising specific antinatalist actions such as abortion and contraception (Offen 1991: 150). Of course,

ideas about some antinatalist measures, such as premarital examination of couples and birth control, were not unknown in France. At the turn of the twentieth century, for example, the radical pedagogue and political activist Paul Robin had vigorously campaigned on an agenda of fighting *dégénération* through qualitative restrictions to procreation (Quine 1996: 63). Such alternatives, however, had been largely contained within an overwhelming liberal pronatalism and eclipsed by far more powerful concerns with French demographic contraction and with the resurgent German power. By the time that they came once again to the fore in the mid to late 1930s, external factors in addition to internal opposition had rendered their adoption practically impossible. Accusations that they smacked of either ‘Nazi’ totalitarian social interventionism or ‘Anglo-Saxon’ moral indifference killed off any such projects in their infancy—and with them the institutional dynamics of the French Eugenics Society that dissolved itself in 1940 (Leonard 1985; W Schneider 1990b: Chs 7–10).

The case of interwar Italy is even more indicative of both the tensions involved in the modernisation project and the interaction between ‘fascist’/‘totalitarian’ visions, scientific discourses, and traditional beliefs. As Paul Weindling (1988: 109) has noted, it was in Fascist Italy that demographics, scientific population management, eugenics, and fascist nation-statism came together for the first time. While Fascist population policies included ‘negative’ measures such as financial penalties for bachelors and restrictions on emigration (Ipsen 1996: 173ff), there was a fundamental pronatalist consensus that bound together the Fascist formula of “*il numero come forza*” (force in numbers—Mussolini 1928; OO, XXII, 209–16, in Griffin 1995: 58; Ipsen 1996: 217) and the Catholic opposition to anticoncessionary measures vis-à-vis birth control. One cannot exaggerate the role of the Catholic church in producing a cultural and ethical milieu that militated against both neo-Malthusian principles of population control and more radical ‘negative’ eugenical measures such as sterilisation or euthanasia (Martire 1928). With the opportunistic alliance between the Fascist State and the Vatican in 1929 (Lateran pacts), the extension of the Italian state’s power became possible through the resolution of the ‘Roman Question’ after almost sixty years of political division between state and church in Italy. The price, however, of this compromise was the recognition of the church’s social influence over biological, spiritual, and ethical matters. As a result, the field of population politics became even less permeable by the totalitarian aspirations of the regime. At the same time, there was a small but powerful and vocal constituency of admirers of the NS racial model within the PNF hierarchy, with Roberto Farinacci—former secretary of the Fascist Party—and Telesio Interlandi—editor of the anti-Semitic *Difesa della Razza*—taking centre stage in the late 1930s (Mughini 1991; Israel & Nastasi 1998: Ch 4). But the perceived ‘Nordic’ origins of this brand of eugenical thinking generated significant hostility and eventually produced a counternarrative that propagated the idea of a distinct ‘Mediterranean’ *razza* (Pogliano 1984; see also earlier, Ch 2).

What was even more interesting in the Italian case was the way in which cultural caveats had already resulted in the self-censorship of the scientific totalitarian aspirations. It became clear very quickly that the main debate in Italy would revolve around the question of birth control, with two different strategies being articulated (Mantovani 2003, 2004; Cassata 2006). On the one hand, neo-Malthusian scientists, concerned with the growing disparity between population and natural resources, advocated interventionist measures aimed at both arresting the rate of population increase and improving the quality of the 'genetical stock' of the national community. On the other hand, a strange alliance of social Darwinists and radical nationalists had already started popularising the motto 'number = strength', thus prioritising pronatalism at any cost. The former group advocated anticoncessionary measures in order to forestall negative biological and social developments (such as war as a result of competition for resources within the nation, miscegenation, perpetuation of inferior-quality genetical stock, etc). By contrast, the latter category of scientists drew their ammunition from highly disparate scientific, political, moral, and economic arguments in order to validate their preference for pronatalist measures (Maiocchi 1999: 16–20). There was also a distinct group of Catholic commentators who contributed to the debate, making their moral aversion to involuntary, negative eugenical measures the basis for a comprehensive opposition to the regulatory role of science and state in family matters. Giuseppe Moscati, Mario Mazzeo, Giuseppe De Giovanni, and in particular Agostino Gemelli (1931) agreed on the absolute desirability of keeping scientific and political intervention out of matters of life and death, including marriage, procreation, and the taboo issue of euthanasia (Maiocchi 1999: 24). A law scheme underlining the necessity of birth control was discussed in 1922 and once again during the 1924 Congress of Social Eugenics, but came to nothing as the majority of the participants insisted on the 'voluntary' character of any initiative in this direction (Maiocchi 1999: 20). In fact, even Ferdinando De Napoli (1924)—who had been instrumental in the preparation of the scheme in the first place—seemed to warn against 'anticoncessionary' measures, censuring them as a dangerous erosion of individual liberty and invasion of the private sphere.

On his part, Mussolini provided the most categorical support to the 'numero = forza' motto in his May 1927 Ascension Day Speech (OO, XXII: 360–90), in which he criticised neo-Malthusianism and thus legitimised a drive towards pronatalism (Quine 1996: 33–35). To be sure, the Duce was not unaware of the neo-Malthusian warning about a growing disequilibrium between demographics and natural resources. In this respect, his 'battle for births' coincided chronologically with, and was linked politically to, the 'battle for wheat' and the reclamation of land (Frandsen 2001) in order to increase productivity and thus support the quantitative expansion of the Italian population (Maiocchi 1999: 33–40). Negative eugenical measures were ruled out, not so much for moral reasons as for their incompatibility

with the priority to demographic expansion. Yet, the distinction between private and public sphere that De Napoli had referred to was becoming increasingly irrelevant and inconsistent with the regime's ideological orientation. Umberto Gabbi (1927), editor of the *Archivio Fascista di Medicina Politica*, encapsulated the victory of an organic nationalist discourse when he underlined that the nation and the state have to take priority over the individual in promoting national interest.

The debate as to *who* was better placed to improve the fortunes of the nation and, equally importantly, *how* this was to be best achieved was in full motion in the second half of the 1920s. With the increasing etatist orientation of the Fascist regime, the institutional role of the Fascist state in legitimising political projects and providing patronage in return for compliance increased. In the context of this unitary state doctrine, aimed at bestowing legitimacy upon the regime as the only institution capable of representing national interest in its totality, the 1929 Concordat with the Catholic church became a powerful disincentive to any idea of introducing antinatalist measures, or indeed enhancing the power of modern/secular influences on the traditional domain of marriage, procreation, and death. Given the regime's apparently nonnegotiable emphasis on pronatalism, eugenics had already been deprived of a crucial asset in the struggle for hegemony. Even those scientists who had resisted the pronatalist orthodoxy in the 1920s realised that the tide had already turned. Professional pride had accentuated a sort of polemics between Italian and 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'Nordic' eugenics, the latter being censured by Italian scientists as too deterministic, simplistic, and devoid of any moral standard (Gillette 2002: 50–99). With Mussolini himself openly critical and even scornful of German racialist thinking and relevant policies until 1936–38 (Israel & Nastasi 1998: 189; Gillette 2002: Ch 3), the cause of 'negative' eugenics was effectively subverted by both the scientific community itself and by the absence of political will on part of the Fascist regime. Even after the regime had produced a racialist platform for the exercise of more extensive biopolitical control over the population in 1938 (Goglia 1988; Gillette 2003: 50–59), the project lacked the clarity and open-ended ambition of the totalising combination of racial hygiene and racial nationalism witnessed in 1930s Germany (see Ch 7).

THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF EUGENICS: CONSENSUS AND DISAGREEMENTS

The similarities between the epistemological and sociocultural milieu in Italy and France before and even after WW I have generated a discussion about the alleged differences between a 'northern European' and a 'Latin' (Catholic) model of eugenics. Indeed, Italian and French eugenicists cooperated actively in the ranks of the international eugenical movement against the more radical (antinatal and/or racist) prescriptions of their Anglo-Saxon,

Nordic, and German counterparts. The foundation of the International Federation of Eugenic Organisations (IFEEO) in 1925 appeared for a moment to provide a scientific forum and an institutional framework for establishing a common ground between eugenics experts from a wide range of countries—Britain, Germany, The Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, Italy, France, Belgium, but also the USA (Kühl 1994: 71–86). From the first moment, however, it became clear that the views of the US, German, and some Scandinavian representatives were far more radical than what the rest of the delegates were willing to accept. In the late 1920s the IFEEO steering group, under the leadership of the American biologist and founder of the US Eugenics Record Office back in 1910 Charles B Davenport, put forward a set of ideas for the popularisation, internationalisation, and standardisation of 'racial hygienic' principles that included measures against 'racial miscegenation', immigration, and unregulated procreation (Kevles 1985: 129; Kühl 1994: 77). These proposals divided the delegates and did little to mend relations between a broad US–Northern European bloc and the 'Latin' group of scientists. In 1935 the latter even attempted to set up a rival international organisation, focused on an environmental and less deterministic programme of eugenical action, with Corrado Gini as its president (Quine 1996: 30–31). They were joined by colleagues in Belgium, Romania, Spain, but also Latin America. Clearly countries with a strong Catholic tradition were overrepresented in this organisation (Kühl 1994: 91). In spite of differences amongst them, the participants of this group shared a growing unease with the direction of eugenics in the 'Nordic' and Anglo-Saxon world. This might even have to do with the persistence of an academic cognitive model based on humanism and a philosophical-cultural perception of society in the so-called 'Latin' countries (Padovan 1999)—a model that contrasted sharply to the higher kudos of empirical, natural, and positive sciences in Germany, Scandinavia, and the Anglo-Saxon world (Israel & Nastasi 1998: 39–92). These factors militated against the emergence of a science with totalitarian, extreme biopolitical aspirations.

Thus the disagreements at the various international congresses of eugenics experts in the first three decades of the twentieth century reflected distinct national, political, and scientific traditions. The German paradigm of *Rassenhygiene* constituted one pole of the debate, with the US model of 'eugenics' perceived by many as an alternative. The 'negative' aspects of 'eugenics' were contrasted to a 'positive' population policy geared towards demographic growth. Lamarckian models of environmental primacy were juxtaposed to Mendelian heredity, the former favouring a eugenical focus on social factors such as alcoholism, the latter adopting a far more rigid view on qualitative 'racial' improvement that veered towards notions of involuntary 'cleansing'. Discussions raged on for decades: about how far science should lead the way towards a future 'ideal' society and how it could assist politics in terms of legislation, regulation, and protection of the population's social and/or biological health; about the relation of science to distinct cultural

traditions; about the applicability of international experiments and initiatives to specific national contexts; about the possibility of a compromise between a new (revolutionary) scientific paradigm such as ‘eugenics’ and/or ‘racial hygiene’, religious/cultural traditions, and conventional morality.

Clearly, the experience of the USA had provided a tangible dimension to the debate on the potential scope of scientific intervention in matters of biological and social life (Kevles 1985: 3). The 1907 Indiana ‘sterilisation’ law in particular, followed by similar legislative measures in more than thirty other US states, appeared to legitimise the most extreme prescriptions of ‘negative’ eugenics. It also broke the taboo of antinatalism and active population selection—even more so as the measure was introduced in a country universally admired for its allegedly modern, progressive achievements (E Black 2003: 63–67). It was no coincidence that early ‘eugenical’ measures introduced in Germany under National Socialism (such as the 1933 ‘sterilisation’ law and the legislation against ‘habitual criminals’ of the same year—see following) were portrayed as extensions of the very same US model, as if this somehow provided the Nazi experiments with enhanced scientific and moral authority (Kühl 1994). Thus, not surprisingly, little by little the German case acquired a paradigmatic value across Europe during the 1930s, whether as a source of inspiration for similar radical measures in other countries or as a dystopian vision of what could go horribly wrong with scientific encroachments in the social and the political domains. Almost in every country scientists from different disciplines debated the implications of eugenics for, and its pertinence to, national traditions and conditions with enthusiasm, reservations, scorn, and censure—all in good measure.

It would be inaccurate and misleading to suggest that even within Germany *Rassenhygiene* had come anywhere close to being an unassailable scientific paradigm up to 1933. As in the Wilhelminian period, the Weimar Republic hosted a broad spectrum of interpretations of the new disciplines that ranged from the racial-anthropological fixations of ‘Nordicist’/‘Aryanist’ scientists to vehement critiques from liberal and socialist scientists who refused to accept the racialist implications of *Rassenhygiene*. It is important to remember that the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene* (the heir to the abortive plan for an international ‘race hygiene’ movement—see earlier, Ch 2) was only one (however important) organisation concerned with eugenics and racial hygiene, coexisting alongside the *Deutscher Bund für Volksaufartung und Erbkunde* with clear social-democratic leanings. A group inside the former and the majority of the latter’s membership rejected the racial-anthropological ramifications of ‘Aryanism’. Whilst the ‘Nordicist’ trend had a long lineage amongst high-profile academics in both the Wilhelminian and the Weimar periods, progressive antiracist alternatives enjoyed comparable prestige, particularly from the ranks of socialist scientists attuned to ‘social medicine’ (Weindling 1989: 212–25). It was more the extreme, almost revolutionary ramifications of the views espoused by the former group—rather than the extent of their diffusion amongst the

German professional and academic elites prior to 1933—that set the tone for the debate across Europe and resulted in the crystallisation of a distinctly 'German' model. The input of the radical German experts on *Rassenhygiene* in the discussions of the international eugenics forums gradually overshadowed other dissenting currents inside Germany before the NS regime silenced them altogether and elevated this extreme model of 'racial hygiene' to the status of the new state's official science.

Thus, what came to be associated with *German* racial hygiene represented an extreme and rather limited current within the broadest spectrum of scientific alternatives. Only small minorities in other European countries appeared convinced of the benefits of this radical *Rassenhygiene* model and made no effort to conceal their admiration before 1933 (Weindling 1989b). However, a growing number of scientists across the continent became increasingly more willing to consider the model's implications and contemplate at least some of them as potentially applicable to their countries. They strove to popularise them, to adapt them to specific circumstances, to make them appear less radical and more acceptable to their domestic audiences and institutions. The most prominent Romanian disciple of German *Rassenhygiene* in the 1910s and 1920s, Iuliu Moldovan, popularised the notion of a 'biopolitical state' in his country with the publication of his treatise *Biopolitica* in 1926 (Bucur 2002: 83; Turda 2007). Moldovan was convinced both of the benefits from a racial-hygienic management of society and of the need for a rigorous racial-anthropological defence of the Romanian nation against its 'others' (in this case, Jews, Hungarians, Romani, etc). However, he was also aware of the difference between the German and the Romanian contexts in terms of modernisation. His vision of a 'total eugenical state' rested on the fundamental premise that the latter would centralise, coordinate, and expand medical provisions and promote a comprehensive public-health reform (Bucur 2002: 198). Because Moldovan was aware that his prescriptions were radical and far-reaching, he suggested a slower, more evolutionary process of change, anchored in state legislation and responsible scientific management. He also viewed the most extreme racialist ideas of the German model with scepticism, assessing them as inappropriate for the Romanian case (Bucur 2002: 108). In Hungary the founding of the Society for Racial Hygiene and Population Policy in 1917 betrayed both the divisions amongst scientists on matters of the quantitative or qualitative betterment of the population and their attempts at mending their differences. István Ápathy and József Madzsar continued to advocate a moderate form of eugenics, attuned to the German *Rassenhygiene* but rejecting its more extreme racial-anthropological connotations. Although Lamarckian and Mendelian conceptions of heredity divided the participants in scholarly debates about 'eugenics' in Hungary before and after WW I, the prevailing spirit was one of synthesis, not of fundamental opposition. Even one of the most enthusiastic proponents of the German and North American models of racial hygiene, Géza Hoffmann, was cautious in his advocacy of 'negative'

selection, in the face of the overwhelming consensus on the importance of an expansive population policy and the misgivings about the US (and, to an extent, also German) model in Hungary (Turda 2006: 308–9).

It should come as no surprise that many of the most radical (and nonsocialist) scientific disciples of eugenics in interwar Europe were attracted to the ‘totalitarian’, ultranationalist, and palingenetic message of fascism. From Eugen Fischer, Otto von Verschuer, and Egon von Eickstedt in Germany to Iordache Făcăoaru in Romania (Bucur 2002: 56–57; Turda 2003 and 2007), Otto Reische in Austria (Czech 2006), Ivo Pilar and Ćiro Truhelka in Croatia-Bosnia, Umberto Gabbi and Nicola Pende in Italy, visionaries of a total biopolitical state saw in their countries’ fascist movements a promising reservoir of political radicalism that contrasted sharply with the perceived timidity of political elites and the conservatism of social/ethical realities. Alfred Ploetz’s letter to Hitler in 1933 with which he commended the Nazi leader for being the only “[politician] willing to implement racial hygiene” (in Evans 1997: 147) was the most infamous instance of scientific *anticipatory* support for fascism. But already in the 1920s and early 1930s a growing number of scientists associated with the broad disciplines of eugenics/racial hygiene had already lent their support to, or had become active members of, fascist movements across Europe. Many amongst them would become involved in—or even spearhead—the implementation of eugenical and racialist policies by accepting positions in fascist and, later, pro-Axis collaborationist regimes. Some, mostly in Germany, were destined to administer eliminationist projects and oversee the persecution or mass destruction of ‘unworthy life’ (*lebensunwertes Leben* or *Ballastexistenz*) in the early 1940s.

FROM MANAGEMENT TO ELIMINATION: NS POLICY, BIOMEDICINE, AND THE ‘CLEANSING’ OF THE VATERLAND, 1933–1941

It is thus not difficult to comprehend the disproportionate vote of confidence that the German biomedical profession gave to Hitler and his movement in the 1930s. *Mein Kampf*’s references to a medicalised vision of racial hygiene, the Führer’s subsequent pronouncements about the centrality of ‘race’ in his worldview, Rudolf Hess’s motto of National Socialism as “applied biology” (Lifton 1986: 31), and the overall deference shown by the NS hierarchy to the power of science, all seemed superlatively ‘modern’ and promising to those doctors engrossed in the various forms of eugenical thought. The NS regime took the new idea of ‘differential welfare’ to extremes, seeing it as a field of wholesale intervention in support of a putatively science-based programme of national regeneration (Massin 1993: 197–262). Its language in the 1930s appeared to promise the kind of fully empowered ‘biopolitical state’ that many radical eugenicists—and not just in Germany for that matter—had long espoused and yearned for.

Support for the NSDAP amongst biomedical circles had already reached high levels prior to the *Machtergreifung* of January 1933. The popularisation of racial hygiene had received a major boost when the publicist Alfred J F Lehmann—an anti-Semite and subsequent supporter of Hitler's movement—took over the publication of the *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*. Then, in 1929, the NS German Physicians' League (*Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Ärztebund*, NSDAB) was formed, attracting more than 3,000 members from the biomedical professions (roughly 6%) before 1933 (Proctor 2003: 409ff). With the introduction of the Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtenstands*) on 7 April 1933, the purging of the biomedical professions from Jewish, communist, and other 'undesirable' elements was both swift and devastatingly effective (Lifton 1986: 33; Kühl 1994: 123–5). Biomedical practitioners were joining the NSDAP in far larger numbers than was the case with any other professional group (Macklin 1992: 192). Nearly 50 percent of them eventually joined the party and about 7 percent became members of the SS, thus making doctors one of the most overrepresented professional groups amidst its ranks (Proctor 1988; 2003: 410–11). Meanwhile, the two largest professional medical associations—the *Hartmannbund* and the *Deutscher Ärztevereinsbund*—gave their enthusiastic support to the new regime in a clearly voluntary and anticipatory manner two weeks before the introduction of the April 1933 Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service. Acting on behalf of both associations, Dr Stauder officially welcomed "the firm determination of the Government of National Renewal to build a true community of all ranks, professions, and classes, and (the members of the medical associations) gladly place themselves at the service of this great patriotic task". He also brought the associations in contact with the NS German Physicians' League. Still, before the introduction of the April law, on 30 March, Stauder resigned voluntarily and the head of the NSDAB, Dr Gerhard Wagner, took over as president of all medical organisations in the Reich (Hanuske-Abel 1996: 1455–7).

The collaboration between the NS authorities and the purveyors of the scientific totalitarian vision amongst the German biomedical profession produced immediate results: 1933 was a veritable *anno terribile*, starting with the so-called 'Sterilisation Law' (Law against Hereditarily Diseased Progenies) and the Law against Dangerous Habitual Criminals (Proctor 1988: Chs 4, 7; Wachsmann 2001). The former justified sterilisation as an 'individual sacrifice' for the benefit of the Volk, whilst the latter expanded the scope of 'hereditary' conditions that would be subject to this new form of 'remedy'—from cases of physical and mental pathology to repeated 'criminal' behaviour. This was only the first step in the direction of empowering the German biomedical profession with regard to previously unfathomable areas of jurisdiction. The institutions that would decree on the sterilisation law's application in individual cases, the Hereditary Courts, would be staffed by a majority of medical practitioners. Their verdict would depend

on the data supplied through medical channels and on criteria set by doctors themselves on an individual basis. No wonder then that prominent figures of the profession could not hide their enthusiasm for the new NS legislative arrangements (Lifton 1986: 25–34)!

Nevertheless, the 1933 laws had two qualities that set them apart from subsequent legislation produced by the regime. Firstly, they were race-neutral or, more accurately, they were predicated on purely racial-hygienic assumptions. This meant that they subjected individuals (and not groups en bloc) to the same standards of diagnosis and treatment regardless of their racial-anthropological (e.g., ‘Aryan’, ‘Jew’) designation. Secondly, they advocated (in theory at least) a eugenical form of treatment and not a punishment, dealing with disease as an unfortunate event that had to be eradicated in the longer term for the benefit of the collectivity but should not penalise the affected individual for an otherwise biological accident. Scientists across the world (including the official leadership of IFEO and many prominent scientists in the USA) applauded the introduction of the laws, and praised both the regime and the biomedical profession in Germany for their boldness (Mehler 1988: 14; Kühl 1994: 125–7).

The next major landmark in NS racialist policy came two years later. With considerable delay (given that doctors had long ago insisted on the necessity of a law that would regulate marriage, sexual relations, and procreation), the regime introduced a new set of laws in September–October 1935. Two of them are of considerable interest in this case: the ‘Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour’ and the Reich Citizenship Law—together referred to as ‘Nuremberg Laws’. Their logic emanated from a fundamental belief that miscegenation weakened the genetic quality of a biological ‘group’ of people, leading to an increase in hereditary diseases, sterility, and to a parallel decline in intellectual capabilities. There was, however, an alarming shift of emphasis here that was hardly consistent with the ‘scientific’ reasoning against miscegenation, for both laws (the Citizenship Law was supplemented in November 1935 with a legal definition of who was ‘a Jew’) mentioned specifically *Jewish* blood as the primary concern of racial miscegenation and as the source of allegedly irreparable damage to the genetic stock of the German Volk. Jews were the focus of the law—and ‘Jews’ as a preconceived racial-anthropological group regardless of each individual’s racial-hygienic condition. The result was that the honeymoon period between German and international eugenicists came to an abrupt and bitter end in the aftermath of the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws (Proctor 1988: 132–5).

These laws, along with the October 1935 ‘Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German People’ that introduced certificates of racial ‘fitness’ as a precondition for marriage, entailed a massive empowerment for the biomedical profession on a much wider range of social domains. They enhanced the normative effect of the previous sterilisation law by subjecting ‘hereditarily burdened’ individuals to treatment prior to

coming into wedlock. The 'race-neutrality' of the two 1933 laws had given way to a decisive alignment of science with fixations based on 'race' and anti-Semitism that informed the very core of NS ideology. From the first moment of the establishment of NS rule, groups, institutions, and individuals within the NSDAP had identified the Jews as the primary target of their 'cleansing' vision for the Volk. The April 1933 boycott and the ad hoc intimidation (often violent) of Jewish communities across the Reich by NSDAP racial fanatics (Schleunes 1970: 36–61) had done enough to divulge the eliminationist intentions of the NS regimes vis-à-vis the German Jewish population. Separate laws aimed at the ostracism of the Jews from Germany's professional, economic, and social life followed one another at a frantic pace, only thinly disguised as 'corrective' measures for the German nation's self-protection (Burleigh & Wippermann 1991: Ch 4; Friedländer 1997: Chs 6, 9). But it was only with the 'Nuremberg Laws' of 1935 that the Jews were exiled from the biological capital of the German nation and were placed in an exceptional position in terms of legal status, reduced to the fate of the *homo sacer*—an entity that only existed within the legal order as a total outcast (Agamben 1998: 132ff).

Around this time, competing institutions and visions, both within the NSDAP and the NS state, were preparing for a fierce battle over the ownership of the *Judenfrage* in view of the proximity of a final reckoning (Schleunes 1970). Whilst people like Julius Streicher, the editor of the popular anti-Semitic publication *Der Stürmer* and representing the radical face of unprincipled *alte Kämpfer* and grassroots National Socialism, strove for an activist 'solution' on the street level without legal or political restrictions, economic considerations were paramount in the parallel 'Aryanisation' project that represented a more orderly (though no less morally repugnant or devastating) procedure of economic and social marginalisation of the Jews (Schleunes 1970: 132–68; Barkai 1994). As for the SS and their increasingly totalitarian ambitions with regard to the shaping of NS policy, the 'Jewish question' was fast becoming a matter not of segregation but of wholesale 'removal'. Hitler himself justified the 1935 'Nuremberg Laws' as an attempt to provide "a legislative solution [in the direction of] creating a new level" for the relations between the German Volk and the Jews. But he also ominously warned that, should this attempt fail, "the position [of the NS regime vis-à-vis the Jews] must be re-examined anew" (Baynes 1942, I: 731–2). Although the Nuremberg Laws represented a form of political compromise that temporarily thwarted the ascendancy of more radical alternatives to the handling of the *Judenfrage*, they symbolised a fundamental swing of focus and, eventually, of authority (Kraut 1994). In hindsight, this was the beginning of a radicalising process that would lead to the uncontested primacy of the SS in matters of racial policy during WW II and to their critical role in the planning of genocide.

The remaining years until the outbreak of the war confirmed the establishment of a new, far more radical and aggressive paradigm for the regime's

racial policy. In the spring of 1937, under the utmost secrecy, the NS authorities sterilised forcibly the 700 or so children of a specific type of mixed racial background. Disparagingly known as ‘Rhineland bastards’ (*Rheinlandbastarden*), they were the offspring from sexual relations between local German women and black soldiers from French colonial troops stationed in Rhineland during the occupation of the area in the aftermath of WW I (Lusane 2003). The efforts of the NS authorities, in close cooperation with the biomedical profession, to find a ‘solution’ to this perceived racial ‘anomaly’ went back to April 1933, when the children were officially registered. Yet, at the same time, they reflected a prejudice against racial miscegenation (particularly involving black populations) that went even further back. The pioneering research on children born through unions between Dutch soldiers and indigenous (Hottentot) women in Southwest Africa (‘Rehoboth bastards’), carried out by Eugen Fischer nearly three decades earlier and widely praised in the 1930s, provided the pseudoscientific alibi for the sterilisation of the entire group (Bergmann, Czarnowski, & Ehmann 1989: 127–30; Kühl 1994: 77–79). The fact that this operation did take place, in spite of the absence of an adequate legal basis for sterilisation, is extraordinary in itself. But the connivance of distinguished members of the biomedical profession in supplying expert knowledge and the methodology for forced sterilisation attested to the ongoing radicalisation of the scope of the NS regime’s ‘cleansing’ project. A few distinguished doctors realised that the future direction of the whole project was now at stake. In one of the interviews with physicians of the NS period, Robert J Lifton recorded a telling incident: at one point the head of the NS Physicians League, Dr Gerhard Wagner, complained that the criteria used to assess ‘health’ and ‘disease’ were becoming increasingly arbitrary and distorted by social preconceptions (Lifton 1986: 29). Of course, his objections were directed less at the victimisation of ‘the Jews’ or the ‘Rhineland bastards’—priorities that he did not seem to challenge. But such a reaction, true or apocryphal, was indicative of the growing unease experienced by a (small) number of biomedical practitioners with the erosion of the legal basis, of the principle of individual assessment of every case, and eventually of their own expert jurisdiction over such decisions (cf. Lifton 1986: 298).

The sad story of the ‘Rheinlandbastarden’ had no long-term repercussions, as it involved a very distinct and ‘closed’ group of people that was numerically limited, highly visible, and relatively easier to target from the viewpoint of sterilisation. But the fate of the Jews and of the genetically ‘flawed’ was still to be decided. With Himmler’s appointment as Minister of the Interior in 1937, the paramilitary elite organisation of the *Schutzstaffeln* purchased lethal political leverage, being able to mastermind ‘solutions’ that extended beyond the limited horizon of the existing legal-bureaucratic apparatus of the state (Schleunes 1970: Chs 7–9). The ideological goal was *elimination*—an open-ended term that said much more about the result (total purging of the Jewish presence and influence from

the Volk and German Lebensraum) than about the prescribed methods for attaining such a radical goal (resettlement? expulsion? annihilation?). To be sure, the regime continued to promote legal measures for the continuing exclusion of the Jews from every form of public life in the remaining years until the outbreak of WW II (Bauer 1982: Ch 5; Friedländer 1997: Chs 5, 8). Yet, although the legal apparatus of persecution continued to evolve unabated until 1941, other, far more radical 'solutions' of elimination were already being considered and tested. And, once again, war provided both the catalyst and the veil of secrecy that the NS regime needed in order to test these new 'solutions' unhindered by domestic and international repercussions.

THE T-4 ('EUTHANASIA') PROGRAMME: A MOMENT OF TRIUMPH?

Apart from the onset of the war, 1939 brought two crucial developments. On the one hand, the sterilisation programme—already past its peak after 1937/8—was terminated, no doubt in the light of more radical developments and intentions (Noakes & Pridham 1995: 1042). On the other hand, under the guise of war Hitler finally supplied a direct authorisation for the implementation of the so-called 'euthanasia' project. Political planning depended on unconditional medical connivance in this case; and this was exactly what happened. The physicians involved in the operation applauded, as they had done a few years earlier with the introduction of the sterilisation law. The choice of the target group—people with severe mental disabilities—was predictable but equally contentious. For years mental disability had been portrayed as an intolerable and potentially dangerous hereditary defect that also carried a huge financial cost for society (Burleigh 1991, 1994, 2004). However, earlier discussions on this subject, going as far back as 1935, had stumbled on the NS leadership's awareness of the potential backlash that such an enterprise would provoke, not least amongst the sizeable Catholic constituency of the Reich that had displayed considerable unease even with regard to the sterilisation programme (Koonz 1992; Dietrich 1990). Now, the shadow of war and the sacrifices involved in the military effort gave a new sense of urgency to such an idea. In fact, the first political sanction for a 'euthanasia' treatment preceded Hitler's formal authorisation by more than a year. In 1938 the Führer had given his authorisation to administer a "mercy death" to a severely disabled infant ('baby Knauer') after repeated petitions from his family. This precedent initiated a debate about the extension of this kind of treatment to all similar cases and resulted in the so-called 'child euthanasia' programme. Supervised by a team within the Hitler chancellery (*Kanzlei des Führers*, KdF), this programme became the forerunner of the subsequent 'euthanasia' programme initiated in late autumn 1939 (Burleigh 1994: 97; Friedlander 1995: 39–62).

Like its predecessor and the earlier sterilisation programme, 'euthanasia' was, once again, justified not as a punitive operation but as an allegedly compassionate social intervention to end a 'miserable' existence and a sacrifice for the sake of the sacrosanct *Volksgemeinschaft*. It was also predicated on the basis of a race-neutral, rigorous assessment of 'disease' and 'curability', allegedly safeguarded against abuse through the crucial supervisory role of the biomedical profession at every stage of the process (Klee 1983; Friedlander 1995: 21–22; Schafft 2004: 158–63). The project became known as T-4, from the address of the building that was its operational centre (Tiergartenstraße 4 in Berlin). In its two-year life span the T-4 project remained firmly under the scientific and administrative direction of the biomedical profession. Given the pressure of time, resources, expert personnel, and the need for utmost secrecy, once again the lower echelons of the system retained the crucial function of identifying the patients and carrying out the essential groundwork for their entry into the T-4 machinery (Friedlander 1995: 235; Benedict & Kuhla 1999). The distance between the scientists and the object of their enquiry grew to such an extent that the operation became impersonal and bureaucratic. Those experts involved in the operation were carefully chosen so as to avoid any complications in the process. Unsurprisingly, then, they took the regime's call for cost-efficiency seriously and (particularly in the case of young and ambitious physicians) enthusiastically enough to divert resources to developing a more 'efficient' and even more detached method of 'processing' (Tucker 1994: 127; Burleigh 2004: 134).

The only serious internal debate concerned the method used to administer the 'mercy killing'. Whilst some doctors maintained that the initially used method of lethal injection was the most appropriate as the culmination of a personalised 'healing' process, others found the symbolic transformation of the doctor into a (mercy!) killer unpalatable or even threatening whilst some invoked issues of efficiency and resource allocation (Lifton 1986: 45–76). Therefore, when sometime in the winter of 1940 the first demonstration of the new gassing technique took place in the converted prison of Brandenburg near Berlin (now euphemistically called 'Brandenburg State Hospital and Nursing Home'), medical responses were predictably mixed. That this latter method was eventually adopted by the functionaries of the T-4 programme in 1940–41 satisfied cost-efficiency and the need for distancing between the doctor and the victim but showed little respect for the allegedly ethical cornerstone of the whole enterprise—a 'mercy death' to end *individual* misery (Lifton 1986: 123).

Such a cold-blooded system, whose 'contribution' of freeing up over 93,000 hospital beds was recorded in a self-congratulatory tone by NS functionaries and doctors alike on official state documents (Klee 1983: 340), was undoubtedly the least race-specific project of the regime's radical phase of mass murder. Racial-hygienic considerations created an ad hoc target group for physical elimination that involved Germans and 'others' alike, bound together only by their perceived deviance from a state of biological

'health' and 'normality'. Nevertheless, during the nearly two years of its operation the T-4 programme underwent a radicalisation of both method and scope that had a cumulative effect on the entire NS eliminationist policy. Technological innovation through the use of gas and specially adapted rooms rendered the prospect of a genuinely 'final solution' to the 'problem' of mental disability within reach. This prospect, in turn, accelerated not only the scope but also the pace of selection and extermination of victims. In the end, the T-4 programme evolved into a genuine project of industrialised mass murder with very few (and increasingly shrinking) allowances for nuances or exceptions. There is no other way to explain the 'celebration' of the 10,000th victim in one of the six designated killing centres (Hadamar) by its medical staff (Proctor 1988: 25–6)!

However, by 1941 the veil of secrecy and deception surrounding the T-4 project started to wear thin, leading to a number of increasingly vocal condemnations of what was happening behind walls. The disparaging sermon of the Catholic bishop of Münster, Clemens August von Galen (Griech-Poelle 2001, 2002), and the protests from the Protestant bishop of Württemberg, Theophil Wurm, were the most high-profile and vocal manifestations of a wider public unease with the mere suspicion of a state policy geared towards forcibly terminating life (Burleigh 1994: 175–80). In August 1941 the T-4 programme was officially ended (Noakes & Pridham 1991: 1040). But by that time it had at any rate met its intended target, on the basis of the formula 10,000:10:5:1—one psychiatric patient killed for every five in-patients from a total of ten people requiring psychiatric treatment in every 10,000 (Burleigh & Wippermann 1991: 144–5). According to overall statistics discovered at one of the six killing centres of the T-4 network (Hartheim), more than 70,000 patients had been killed by the time the regime suspended the action—almost exactly the figure suggested by the above formula and derived from an estimate of around 700,000 people with psychiatric problems across the Reich (Burleigh 1994: 220–37).¹ To this figure of victims a further 5,000 children with physical disabilities should be added, casualties of the separate programme of 'child euthanasia' that continued under the command of the KdF (Lifton 1986: 50–62; Friedlander 1995: 39–62).

For the doctors involved in all these eliminationist racial-hygienic projects the 1939–41 period represented an unmitigated triumph in the sense that the taboo of the unqualified 'sanctity of life' had been breached. This step opened up unfathomable possibilities, perfectly in line with the totalitarian reach of their vision. What they failed to recognise was that by the autumn of 1941 they had allowed the regime authorities to absorb them into a wider campaign, this time geared towards *medicalised mass killing*. In this campaign, biomedical experts would serve as experts, supply the veneer of allegedly scientific authority, and play a central role in both selection and execution; but the parameters of the project itself, its priorities, and objectives, would be otherwise set by the NS regime. Thus, doctors allowed what was meant to be a partnership to turn into an NS-inspired, predominantly

racial-anthropological enterprise of mass murder in which they were mere agents.

But, in hindsight, the T-4 programme made a further, more sinister contribution to the NS regime's project of mass elimination. As Henry Friedlander (1995: 52; 2004: 171) has argued, it constituted a dress rehearsal for an already incubated Jewish 'final solution' as well as the laboratory in which practical 'solutions' were tested, developed, and produced further opportunities. Its official suspension in late August 1941 opened the way for two subsequent lethal operations—the mass killing of the Jews concentrated in the Polish ghettos in the following autumn (later code-named *Aktion Reinhard*) and the Special Treatment (*Sonderbehandlung*) 14f13 action, geared towards the extermination of concentration camp inmates with disabilities (Noakes & Pridham 1991: 1043–8; Aly 1995: 331; De Mildt 1996). The redeployment of personnel, administrative practices, and technological know-how from the T-4 apparatus to the *Aktion Reinhard* took place seamlessly after a short period of high-level consultation. The main issue examined was how the technology and expertise of the T-4 team could be deployed in the context of wider 'solutions' in the spectacularly extended territories under NS control after the first victorious phase of Operation Barbarossa (Klee 1983: 417). By November 1941 most of the participants in the 'euthanasia' action had been informed of new assignments in the east, carefully camouflaged under the institutional banner of 'Organisation Todt' (D Pohl 1993: 100). Two of the leading figures of the T-4 operation, Christian Wirth and Viktor Brack, had already indicated their willingness to second the T-4 personnel to other agencies operating in the occupied territories. Brack in particular, in his dual role in the SS and the KdF, had acted as the crucial logistical operator of the entire 'euthanasia' project (Friedlander 1995: 68). It was his name that appeared on Hitler's September 1939 authorisation to proceed with the 'euthanasia' project. He was also instrumental in exploring more 'efficient' methods of extermination, including mass sterilisation with X-rays and finally gassing vans (first experiment in the Brandenburg asylum in January 1940—Hochstadt 2004: 95). In the autumn of 1941 a chain of dramatic events took place in different locations. On 25 October the expert of racial affairs of Rosenberg's Ministry of the Occupied Eastern Territories, Alfred Wetzel, indicated that Jews "incapable of work [would be] *eliminated through the Brackian methods*".² At the beginning of November a morbid 'workshop' took place at the Sachsenhausen camp, during which thirty Jewish inmates were gassed (Beer 1987: 411). Around that time a different experiment was carried out at Auschwitz, where around 850 prisoners were murdered with the common pesticide Zyklon B through exhaust fumes (Longerich 2000: Section B). Plans to construct new concentration facilities in Belzec were already underway since October; in late December Wirth visited the site and started arranging the migration of T-4 personnel there (Browning 1991: 30). A chilling indication of things in store came with the order of a massive furnace for a planned camp at Mogilev in

November. This was the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial relation between the construction company and the SS that supplied the death camps of Operation Reinhard (primarily Auschwitz) with the necessary technological infrastructure in the months to come.³

Meanwhile, some biomedical experts sought (and got) preferential arrangements in concentrations and death camps that allowed them to conduct unprecedented medical experiments (Josef Mengele and twin 'research' at Auschwitz, Sigmund Rascher's high-altitude and freezing experiments at Birkenau and Dachau [Overy 2002: 374–80], typhus and poison experiments at Buchenwald, sulfonamide tests at Ravensbrück, mustard gas experiments at Sachsenhausen, etc). During these experiments human subjects chosen from the camps' inmates were subjected to horrendous conditions and tests that led to numerous deaths, physical and psychological torture, as well as permanent conditions that survivors carried with them for the rest of their lives (Weindling 2001, 2004).⁴ This was a brutal but fitting epilogue to the biomedical illusion of omnipotence, haunted by its own utopia of human perfectibility and perversely devoid of any respect for human life regarded as 'unworthy of living' (Weindling 2005; Baumslag 2005). Having lost control of the 'cleansing' project and relinquished any form of moral responsibility for their acts under the guise of Nazi 'licence', biomedical experts ended up as mere footnotes to the industry of mass murder and the NS biopolitical revolution, as self-referential adjuncts to the killing camps and extras in the Nazi multiple "death worlds" (Wyschogrod 1985). The death camps of the GG, where so many people were murdered or 'let die', epitomised the extreme, exceptional sovereign power of the NS regime—not of the biomedical experts who had sought to claim for themselves the authorship of the 'new man' and the 'ideal national community' back in 1933 but unwittingly surrendered to the NS vision in the process.

The weakness or failure of scientific and political support for extreme 'negative' eugenical measures outside Germany is indeed striking; and so was the holistic, limitless scope of biopolitical intervention experienced under NS rule. The full alignment of science with politics and vice versa in the context of a hybrid totalitarian vision became reality after January 1933 in Germany alone, under the auspices of the NS state. It becomes clear in hindsight that the climate of the Weimar Republic helped unleash but failed in containing the radical, counterparadigmatic trends and in entrenching the axiomatic value of moral, political, and institutional counterbalances. The first decade of the Weimar period witnessed the charting of a plethora of modern possibilities for the future, some congruent with the liberal experiments of the 1920s but others pointing in the exact opposite direction. It was there that the disorienting effects of 'high' modernity—the violent reaction to the disintegration of the cosmic order that it bred, the sense of a loss of meaning and direction in which individual and collective existence could be anchored—and an explosive surplus of discordant energies that it had hosted pointed to the direction of a revolutionary decentring of history. The

Weimar balance was fragile from the start, but it was critically compromised in the wake of the world economic crisis that brought to the fore a number of further tensions barely disguised during the 1920s. If the ascendancy of 'negative' *Rassenhygiene* represented an escalation on the scientific level, the rise of National Socialism constituted an escalation on the level of nationalism and etatism that worked in a compatible direction. The shift from pluralism to singularity, from the individual to the national body, from multidimensional social intervention to 'total' principles of 'cleansing' became possible on the basis of an intersection between different 'totalising' utopias, each feeding off and nurturing each other. All this is crucial for understanding the swiftness of the transition to the extreme totalitarian framework and the unleashing of such devastating energies in the post-1933 period.

In hindsight, neither the extremity of the envisaged 'solutions' nor the weakness of their various counterbalances was particular to (or particularly acute in) interwar Germany. What was particular was their lethal coincidence under the authority of a regime transfixed by the prospect of fully realising the biopolitical totalitarian potential, shattering safeguards and smashing any oppositional voice or alternative vision (Ayass 1995: 222). Not only did 'race' become the signifier of national rebirth, but this very notion of 'race' was fixed and all-pervasive. The NS regime imbued its ultranationalist discourse with an array of different understandings of 'race'—some of which were rooted in traditional anthropological prejudice and others derived from an ultramodern vernacular of scientism. In so doing it articulated the most radical and far-reaching vision of racial 'cleansing' as precondition for national and then 'European' regeneration. It also provided a tangible expression of 'total' national sovereignty and took the notion of serving the alleged national interest to an extreme, previously unfathomable terrain of mass violence. In the following chapter I will examine the export and deployment of this extreme vision outside Germany, in the expanded German Lebensraum after September 1939. What should be stressed at this point is the critical significance of the NS 'agency' for what happened both inside the Third Reich until 1939 and across the entire NS 'new order' after the outbreak of the war. Even at the stage during which the NS regime was not interested in developments outside its borders, the radicalism of its racialist policies functioned as a 'licence' to think and act in similar ways outside Germany. With the outbreak of WW II this 'licence' became more tangible, as the NS/fascist 'new order' assumed the character of a new European imperial structure (see following, Ch 7). More than being simply a 'legitimate discourse', the 'licence to kill' became an unfolding model of policy-making, the uncontested building bloc of a 'new order', a legitimising precedent, and a paradigm for ridding society of allegedly troublesome 'others' that found numerous disciples across the continent.

6 The Radicalisation of the NS Project of Elimination and the ‘Licence to Kill’

THE TRIPLE ESCALATION OF THE NS PROJECT OF ELIMINATION

It is impossible to understand the post-1938/39 extension of the NS genocidal policies beyond the boundaries of the old Reich and across the vast areas of NS-occupied Europe without placing them into the context of a much wider campaign that involved both territory and populations in ‘total’ terms. On the one hand, the campaign of Lebensraum-expansion in the continent related to the crusade for the production of the ‘new (fascist) man’ (see Ch 3). This ‘new man’, according to NS ideology, needed an optimal territorial environment (quantitatively and qualitatively) in order to flourish. This is why the NS regime was so eager to capitalise on eminently modern ‘scientific’ research on populations studies, demographics, economic management, and topographical planning; and why so many amongst the relevant experts hastened to assist with enthusiasm the Third Reich in its far-reaching reorganisation project. On the other hand, territorial expansion created a constantly broader domain of jurisdiction and utopian management for the NS regime. The acquisition of land was seen as a crucial precondition for the envisioned ideal national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*). It was part of a campaign to ‘redeem’ those Germans still living under foreign rule (pan-German irredentism), to repatriate ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) into the national living space, and to unite the entire German racial community (and the territories inhabited by them) within a national state. But territorial expansion also took the form of acquiring territorial resources for economic, geopolitical, or purely historical reasons, regardless of the ethnic or ‘racial’ identity of the people living there (W Smith 1991; Kallis 2000: Chs 2, 4). The identity of the populations living in the contested area mattered when they were of German origin but did not constitute a serious obstacle when they belonged to a different group. Once control had been established over large areas of central and Eastern Europe, the primary goal of settling ‘valuable’ populations there also became a far wider issue of large-scale population management that involved (re-)settlement, displacement, and eventually elimination. The racial-anthropological fixations of the NS vision that had motivated

the first stages of elimination inside the Reich were constantly being fuelled and escalated by ideas and experiments forged inside the Reich and then exported to the occupied territories. At the same time, however, new opportunities and problems were being identified as the Reich expanded, causing further radicalisation in the overall NS ‘cleansing’ project. Every new territorial acquisition offered previously unfathomable opportunities for realising the NS utopia but also came with huge overheads in terms of managing the existing resident groups that did not fit in the original plan.

Therefore, while large-scale (Grossraum) territorial expansion and ‘population management’ constituted the two sides of the NS history-making project, when taken together they pulled NS decision-making in antidiagonal directions and complicated the regime’s goal of constructing an ideal ‘new order’. They inflated ambitions as to how ‘valuable’ Germans could be deployed across the new lands in order to ‘Germanise’ them and how the new German Lebensraum would be organised in political, racial, social, and economic terms. They also radicalised ideas about what could be done with the ‘unwanted’ groups inside the Reich and forced the pace of eliminationist policies. But, even more lethally, they inevitably escalated the initial project into an international one, extending well beyond the boundaries of the German Reich.

The vision of large-scale territorial and population management across the vast NS ‘new order’ after September 1939 gradually dwarfed anything previously conceived or undertaken by the NS regime, and eventually generated conflicting priorities and demands on resources (Kallis 2003b). This reality confronted the NS military and civilian authorities with a series of complex dilemmas in the process that could not be (and were not) addressed purely as matters of ideological intention. As we will see, the ‘solutions’ generated after 1939 pointed to a single direction—*escalation*. But this very escalation was neither always congruent with preconceived intentions nor intelligible as pure logistical problem-solving. The wholesale racial-anthropological war against Jews, Roma, and (after 1939) Slavs became a “war within the war” (Jersak 2004), generating volatile tensions between intentions and resources, and prompting the German authorities to be more radical or more flexible, depending on the circumstances and challenges facing them. In this respect, a distinction between ‘cleansing’ the *Volk*, establishing a comprehensive new racial-economic order in the east, and eliminating ‘alien’ populations (by displacement or physical elimination) was not tenable in the first place, given that each process had a knock-on effect on the rest. This is why the NS utopia of a new political, territorial, racial, and economic order in Europe pointed to elimination both as an ideological intention and as a logistical side effect. The result—partly planned and partly improvised—was a triple escalation: shift to total measures of elimination, use of extreme violence, and extension of the project’s scope beyond the confines of NS state jurisdiction, either unilaterally or in collaboration with national/local authorities and collaborators.

SOLVING THE JUDENFRAGE: THE PATH TO ELIMINATION

The radicalisation of NS racist policies against the Jews until 1939 (see earlier, Ch 5) continued and gathered a murderous momentum after the outbreak of WW II, affecting both those still residing in the Reich and those who fell under NS jurisdiction in the occupied areas of the continent. The initiative for the escalation of anti-Jewish eliminationist policies came from a multitude of agencies and jurisdictions from within state and party, with an unpredictability that befitted a polycratic system of rule “working towards the Führer” (Kershaw 2003; McElligott & Kirk 2004). Hermann Goering’s handling of the so-called ‘Aryanisation’ of the Reich’s economic life, Joseph Goebbels’s propaganda approach to the Jewish question, as evidenced in the events surrounding the *Kristallnacht* of November 1938 (Read & Fischer 1989; Volkov 1990), the Ministry of Justice in terms of legal jurisdiction, the Ministry of the Interior and the Reich Chancellery, the German Workers Front (*Deutsche Arbeiterfront*, DAF), and from 1941 onwards the new Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories (*Ministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete*)—all provided plans, held conferences, shared responsibility, and contributed managerial initiative at various stages of the evolution of NS Jewish policy (Browning 2000: V/a). But it was the SD and the SS (both part of the growing Himmler ‘network’ in the NS system) that emerged as the clear winners in the jurisdictional and political battle in the years leading to the war (Schleunes 1970: 214). Keeping an open mind as to the possible ‘solutions’ to the *Judenfrage*, experimenting with new, radical alternatives, and always keeping one step ahead of central decision-making, Himmler’s associates not only responded with fanatical commitment to NS policy developments but also often precipitated them. They explored and developed initiatives in two main eliminationist directions: emigration and physical elimination. The department of Jewish affairs of the SD (*Hauptamt II/112*) had already piloted a special office for Jewish emigration in Vienna since August 1938 (*Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung*), under the supervision of Adolf Eichmann. The success of this localised scheme (around 150,000 Jews left the Reich between 1937 and 1939 through this channel) prompted the NS authorities to proceed with the establishment of a similar office in Berlin in January 1939, this time under Himmler’s deputy, Reinhard Heydrich.¹ Infrastructural expansion and jurisdictional confusion did not stifle the lethal resourcefulness of the various NS agencies with regard to the fate of the Jews. Already in December 1938 a conference was summoned at the Ministry of the Interior, in which an array of “further possibilities” were explored (Aly & Heim 1991: 31; Sydnor 1998: 162). It was there that the possibility of full registration and confinement of all Jews was accepted as a desirable step in the event of war, without ruling out the exploitation of Jewish labour in special facilities.

Immediately after the invasion of Poland the administrative apparatus of the NS state grasped these new possibilities for more radical action

and stepped up a gear. On 27 September the Reich Security Central Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, RSHA) was established in an attempt to streamline the security mechanisms of the Third Reich (Heinemann 2001). Heydrich became head of the new organisation and immediately recalled Eichmann to Berlin in order to supervise the activities of *Referat IV B4* of the Gestapo regarding exclusively Jewish affairs. Armed with Himmler's mandate to explore new solutions to the mounting 'Jewish problem' after the occupation of Poland with its 3.3 million Jews, Heydrich informed high-ranking NS officials dealing with Jewish affairs that preparations for the swift concentration of Jews in specific (few) urban areas were already underway—a scheme that he clearly considered an investment for a future 'final solution', even if the latter remained unspecified (Corni 2002: 23; Hochstadt 2004: 87–9).² At the same time, the prospect of resettling the millions of ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) into the new territories of the Reich became a crucial facet of the entire NS population-management scheme—and was inevitably connected to the deportation of Jews and Poles from the areas earmarked for German resettlement. In early October the final administrative shape of occupied Poland was decided. Four Gaus (two totally new—Danzig/West Prussia and Wartheland—and two enlarged with the spoils of the war—Silesia and East Prussia) formed a protective arch between the old Reich and a vast reservation area to the east that came to be euphemistically known as General Government (GG). The function of this administrative no-man's-land had already been spelt out by Heydrich, who on 9 September referred to it as a "non-German Gau" destined to become a dumping ground for all unwanted foreign population from the rest of (annexed) Poland (Lozowick 2000: 63). At the time of its creation, the GG numbered 1.6m Jewish residents (two-thirds of the entire Jewish population of pre-1939 Poland). Starting in December 1939 and continuing in waves throughout 1940, deportations of both Jews and Poles to the GG coincided with an influx of *Volksdeutsche* into the 'German' Gaus of Poland. In his new role within the RSHA, Eichmann proceeded in January 1940 to discuss plans for the mass deportations of the Reich's Jewish population to the GG (Aly & Heim 1991: 134). A separate company was established to deal with the logistics of both *Aussiedlung* and *Umsiedlung* (*Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhand GmbH*, DUT), keeping meticulous records of the resettlement-cleansing operation. By the end of 1940 DUT experts calculated that around 300,000 Poles alone had been 'evacuated' from the annexed Gaus of Poland: 234,000 from Wartheland, 31,000 from Danzig, 15,000 from Upper Silesia, and a similar number from East Prussia.³ The DUT report matched every 'evacuation' with the settlement of particular groups of *Volksdeutsche*. For example, 64,000 Baltic Germans and almost 130,000 Volhynian/Galician Germans were destined for Wartheland, whilst peasant *Volksdeutsche* families from Galicia were earmarked for particular areas of Silesia. Emphasis on agricultural settlements and the fact that so many of the *Volksdeutsche* settlers were farmers meant that the Nazi 1939–40 plan for dealing with

deportations from Poland (*Nahplan*) was forced to include many more Poles (involved in agriculture) than Jews (predominantly urban or trade-oriented; Lozowick 2000: 64–73).

It seems likely that the RSHA kept exploring various scenarios throughout 1940, ranging from a more heavy-handed forced emigration policy to the economic exploitation of 'fit' Jewish labour to indiscriminate 'disposal'. It is in this context that the so-called 'Madagascar Plan' has to be placed and understood (P Friedman 1980: 354–80; Browning 2004b: 81ff). The original idea for mass deportations of all Jewish populations under the control of the Reich to the French-controlled island of Madagascar belonged to Joachim von Ribbentrop's Foreign Ministry. The idea soon gave way to a fairly detailed draft plan in early June 1940, compiled by Martin Luther's assistant in the Foreign Ministry—and head of the *Judenreferat* (D III)—Franz Rademacher and subsequently revised by the SD *Judenreferat* Theodor Dannecker in the following two months (Aly & Heim 1991: 257). In purely logistical terms the draft plan that was circulated in August 1940 appeared virtually unworkable. Expert officials, including Rademacher himself, estimated that it would take at best four years to deport the Reich Jews to Madagascar, with huge logistical complications and financial overheads (Sydnor 1998: 170). Furthermore, reservations were voiced about the island's capacity to sustain such a large population on the basis of its existing resources and infrastructure. Whether this plan was ever seriously entertained by the highest echelons of the NS system as a viable long-term solution or was intended as a decoy is still debated (Herf 2006: 147). There is some evidence that the prospect of forced mass resettlement to Madagascar had been communicated to NS officials as a possible solution. For example, in July 1940 the head of the GG in Poland, Hans Frank, ordered the termination of ghetto construction in his territories, quoting the emigration of all Jews to Madagascar as the main reason (Browning 1986: 348; 2005: 5). Nevertheless, the plan died a premature death due to geopolitical and military developments—in particular, the extension of the Reich's war campaign in conjunction with the failure to defeat Britain in 1940. As Eichmann testified during his 1961 trial at Jerusalem, the matter also generated a fierce jurisdictional competition between the RSHA and the Foreign Ministry.⁴ On his part, Heydrich did not waste the opportunity to remind Ribbentrop that the sole responsibility for Jewish policy lay exclusively within his jurisdiction and that any future solution would have to be initiated or at least determined in its inception by him (Poliakov 1979: 50).⁵ Within a few weeks this de facto privilege received a de jure grounding—a Hitler *Befehl* handed over to Himmler endowing the SS with full authority over 'population matters'.⁶

The increasing use of the adjective 'final' (*endgültig*) next to any mention of 'solution' to the 'Jewish problem' in the remaining months of 1940 reflected how the SS apparatus was by then exploring a far more radical definitive strategy vis-à-vis the interconnected issues of territorial expansion,

population resettlement, and elimination of ‘racial enemies’. Heydrich had already left the door open for the eventual abandonment of the regime’s emigration policy since June 1940 due to the logistical nightmare caused by the occupation of Poland and the dramatic increase of the number of Jews under NS control (Sydnor 1998: 171). In the same June 1940 letter to Ribbentrop mentioned earlier he stated that emigration alone could not solve the *Judenfrage*; instead, a far-reaching “territorial solution” was needed. Towards the end of 1940 he was already engaged in drafting a comprehensive proposal about a possible ‘final solution’ (Breitman 1991: 146ff). By the time Goebbels—in his capacity as Gauleiter of Berlin—summoned a special conference at the Propaganda Ministry to discuss the removal of Berlin Jews in March 1941, another word had crept into the official NS vocabulary—“evacuation” (*Evakuierung*). Oblique wording and euphemism aside, the tone of the discussion amongst the various NS agencies after the abandonment of the Madagascar plan revealed a new sense of determination and boldness in the direction of thinking the previously unthinkable (Breitman 1994: 486).

By that time Heydrich had compiled a new memorandum outlining further-reaching ideas about the ‘final solution’ to the *Judenfrage*. What this Heydrich project contained and when it was sent to Hitler and Goering remain unknown, although it would be safe to assume that Hitler must have received it by the end of January 1941 (Klarsfeld 1989; Meyer 2000). Dannecker—by then moved to the SD office in occupied Paris—made a reference to this document in a memorandum that he prepared for his superiors, concluding that the ‘final solution’ was a priority emanating from the Führer’s will and was now entirely in his hands. He also made clear that this very ‘solution’ involved the *entire* Jewish population in *all* areas under NS control in Europe. The memorandum disclosed few details about the proposed ‘solution’ but made oblique references to a combination of short-term decisions and long-term planning in line with Hitler’s wishes. When Eichmann spoke at Goebbels’s conference for the deportation of Berlin Jews in March 1941, he fused the elliptical terminology of ‘evacuation’ and ‘final solution’ by speaking of “*final evacuation*”, without specifying either the destination or the meaning of these terms (Longerich 2000: 14.1–3).

For intentionalists and functionalists such phraseology has always been elastic enough to endorse either interpretation of the origins of the ‘final solution’ (Browning 2004: 177). The former have invoked the ban on Jewish emigration from the GG, already in place since November 1940 (in Arad, Gutman, & Margaliot 1981: 219), Himmler’s ban on the release of Jewish camp inmates in March 1940, as well as a number of localised initiatives—such as Dannecker’s own scheme in Paris to set up a network of camps for the detention and eventual evacuation of French Jews—as evidence of a long-term, ideology-driven commitment to the mass annihilation of the Jews (Klarsfeld 1989: 363). For intentionalists the centrality of Hitler’s ideological intention to exterminate Europe’s Jews constituted both the driving

force behind the NS policies during WW II and the distinguishing feature of the NS 'final solution' when compared to any other genocidal project during WW II (Dawidowicz 1975; Mayer 1990; Lipstadt 1993; Kershaw 2000b: 93–133). By contrast, functionalists have focused on a stream of logistical problems (military events; food, security, and labour issues) and unforeseen developments during the first half of 1941 that—in Hitler's own words—"prioritised pragmatic considerations over racial experiments" (Browning 1994: 94–9; 1993). Both Hans Mommsen's notion of "cumulative radicalisation" from below (H Mommsen 1997; 1983: 381–420) and Martin Broszat's suggestion that the last, murderous phase of the NS Jewish policy developed as a "way-out of the blind alley" (Broszat 1985) pointed to a policy that, albeit broadly corresponding to NS ideological fixations and 'appearing retrospectively' as coherent, emerged out of a pool of considered solutions no earlier than in the summer of 1941.

In the last years the debate appears to have shifted towards "a more subtle balance between the murderous logic of Nazi antisemitism, the methods of functioning of the regime, and the influence of context" (Burrin 1997).⁷ Troubling questions, however, do linger. Did the mass killing operations of the *Einsatzgruppen* that followed the advance of the Wehrmacht forces during Operation Barbarossa constitute the first phase in an otherwise defined long-term strategy of annihilation (Krausnick & Wilhelm 1981: 533)? If so—and many are still unconvinced (U Adam 1972: 303–13; Burrin 1994: 134)—what was the point in continuing the debate about the long-term economic viability of the ghettos in Poland or the ways in which Jewish 'productive' labour could be best exploited (Aly & Heim 2002: Ch 9)? Why did Hitler authorise the murder of (German) psychiatric patients immediately after the outbreak of the war but shied away from testing the policy of elimination on the millions of Polish Jews, preferring instead a complicated and costly policy of resettlement and ghettoisation (Browning 1991: 15)? If the SS were so unequivocally committed to an ideological project of mass extermination on a European scale from at least the beginning of 1941, why did they wait until the Wannsee conference in January 1942 to inform the other state, party, and military agencies about it, especially since Heydrich had been working on a 'final solution' for at least twelve months prior to the infamous meeting at the Berlin villa? Undoubtedly secrecy and deception had to be maintained, given the fierce personal and jurisdictional conflicts amidst the ranks of the NS polycratic system. Extermination, however, was a policy option that required both careful long-term planning and a window of short-term opportunity, only partly determined by NS decisions.

Therefore, at some point during 1941 such a window of opportunity must have become apparent to the NS leadership—not as a sudden apocalypse but gradually, in a process of experimentation and stock-taking. The scholarly debate on the origins of the 'final solution' has produced a bewildering spectrum of verdicts as to the timing, motivation, and rationale of the decision, spanning the entire year 1941 (Browning 1991: Ch 1), involving

exhilaration with victory and frustration with obstacles, ideological fanaticism and cold-blooded logistical management. Yet the catalogue of contradictions in the NS policy-making regarding the *Judenfrage* during 1941 is simply too long to explain away as deception. This does not question the centrality of ideological anti-Semitism in NS/Hitlerian ideology, but it makes the search for a definitive break-point and a single decision either quixotic or irrelevant. NS polyocracy and Hitler's 'charismatic' leadership did not lend themselves to this type of decision-making (Weinstein 1980; Wehler 2003: xx–xxii). Authorising preparations of a particular kind did not instantly mean the abandonment of alternative explorations. Furthermore, the absence of a single order 'from above' never meant inactivity in pursuit of radical innovations or paralysing confusion (Allen 2002). After all, this had been the trademark of SS dynamism from 1938 onwards—the ability of the 'Himmler network' to precipitate future solutions, to chart new paths, to make radicalisation intelligible and feasible in practical terms. Even in the case of the *Einsatzgruppen* that ran amok in the east during the second half of 1941, there are strong doubts that a single project of annihilation was communicated unequivocally from a superior source (Krausnick 1977; Streim 1981; Streit 1997).

In addition, the past two decades have produced a series of local studies on the origins of the NS policy of annihilation, revealing that the incentive for radicalisation often emanated from fanaticism and/or lethal creativeness on the microlevel—that is, in localised and issue-specific situations. Recent regional studies on occupied Poland or specific parts thereof suggest a process of ad hoc innovation 'from below', underpinned by long-term ideological fixations (e.g., anti-Semitism) and sanction 'from above' but catalysed by short-term and tangible logistical pressures (Herbert 1998b: Introduction). Such initiatives appeared to break a taboo and produce a 'licence' that could both be appropriated by other local agents and radicalise central policy-making. This in no way suggests that the genocidal option was somehow invented haphazardly in the backwaters of the chaotically emerging Nazi empire. In fact, the contrary appears far more plausible: the NS apparatus had accepted the short- and long-term benefits of a policy geared towards the Jews' eventual physical elimination by 1941 and appeared eager to step up the pace on the crest of Operation Barbarossa. The catalyst, however, seems to have come far more than previously thought from the awareness of pressures, crises, and deadlocks in particular areas of the overall population project and from radical recipes conceived in such restricted, urgent situations (Black 2000: 547).

Overall, the stunning success of NS territorial expansion in 1939–41 came at a huge price. The task of first constructing and then managing a massive NS political-territorial empire in the occupied areas of the continent—and this during an ongoing 'total' military campaign—was extremely complex in itself; but, in hindsight, the NS state outpaced itself and proved ill-prepared for the task. The expansion of the ghetto system continued in

1940, both in terms of infrastructure and volume of deportees from Poland. That this was meant as a temporary measure geared towards a future goal of deportation was also betrayed by the stipulation that all concentration facilities be located close to railway junctions or lines (Dawidowicz 1976: 59–64). At least the governor of the GG, Hans Frank, seemed convinced about this (H Frank 1975: 3.4.1941). Whatever that 'final evacuation' of Jewish populations involved, NS planners knew from the beginning that it would be a huge logistical operation—and subsequent events only confirmed their initial suspicions.

The transient nature of the ghettos, however, did not mean that the details of the 'final solution' had been worked out beforehand. By 1940 the large-scale resettlement vision had been obscured by very tangible logistical problems of maintaining the existing ghettos, accommodating the increasing number of deportees, and ensuring an intermediate role for them in anticipation of the vague notion of a 'final' settlement (Corni 2002: 26–40). Very different ideas—about the role of the ghettos, about the timing and destination of deportation, about labour utilisation and food policy—continued to float around until well into 1941 (Browning 1992: 29; 2005: 7). Protests from the GG about the overcrowding of local ghetto facilities appeared in 1940 and increased dramatically during the following year (Corni 2002: 23; Crew 2005: Ch 6).⁸ Similar issues arose when Berlin pressed for more deportations to the new ghettos established in the east immediately after the conquests of Operation Barbarossa. Hard-fought battles ensued between those who saw ghettos as a mechanism of indirect elimination ('attritionists') and others who appeared to seriously consider their productive capabilities in the longer term ('productivists') or were concerned about hygienic conditions within them, not only at the top echelons but also on a local basis (Corni 2002: 123). At some point during and after June 1941 a series of initiatives, decisions, and pressures convinced the regime that mass murder was not just broadly desirable in the longer term but also preferable *and* possible as an immediate 'solution' to particular short-term challenges (Browning 1992: 53). In hindsight, this was also the turning point which resulted (gradually again, but now in an irreversible manner) in a lethal priority given to the specific project of a *judenfrei* Europe and gradually transformed the elimination of the Jews from a pivotal facet of a wider goal into a self-referential and self-fulfilling aim (Stern 1975: 221–3). If logistical considerations and rational economic planning had underpinned earlier decisions about ghettoisation and selective murder, this approach gradually faded away, along with earlier utopias about large-scale scientific management of the biological and population capital in the NS *Neuordnung*. The notorious example of the 2,200 Jews transported in June 1944 from the distant island of Rhodes all the way to Auschwitz at a time when the NS military campaign was collapsing on all fronts is quoted even by arch-functionalists as an exception to an otherwise ostensibly rational process of 'cleansing' (Aly & Heim 1987: 14). Such exceptions, however, were increasingly becoming the

norm of NS deportation policies from 1943 onwards (Diner 2000: 148–9). This constituted evidence of the progressive alienation of NS Jewish policy from the economic, demographic, and military context in which it had been initially conceived and pursued until 1943 (Diner 1993: 367). Its assertion as the indisputable, autonomous goal of the NS policy of elimination was given a more official sanction in the aftermath of the Wannsee conference (January 1942), when a kaleidoscopic grouping of officials representing the various agencies involved in the *judenfrei* project were informed of the policy changes, the escalation of method and objective, as well as the primary role of the SS in the new murderous enterprise (Kaiser 1995; Gerlach 1998b; Lehrer 2000).

GENERALPLAN OST: THE DIALECTICS OF POPULATION MANAGEMENT, ‘GERMANISATION’, AND MASS EXTERMINATION

The emergence of the *Judenfrage* as a largely autonomous concern of NS racial policy in the east constituted only one (however crucial) facet of the broader grandiose *Grossraum* economic and population NS planning for the new territories. The momentum generated during the period of exhilaration with the prospect of final victory in 1939–41 continued to keep a large number of experts busy and to generate detailed reports (Aly & Heim 1987, 2002). A network of NS agencies established special divisions and invited experts to work on across-the-board projects regarding the future exploitation of the territorial Lebensraum, including population and economic management. Already in 1937 the links between Lebensraum expansion and German/Volksdeutsche colonisation of the east had become apparent enough to the NS regime to establish the *Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle* (VOMI). This agency functioned as a central liaison between the Third Reich and the various ethnic German communities across Central and Eastern Europe. Whether through the Volksdeutsche’s willingness to be repatriated in an extended Germany or as a result of compulsory agreements (e.g., the German minority of south Tyrol that Hitler had sacrificed in favour of good German-Italian relations), the fate of ‘ethnic Germans’ had critical influence on NS planning for the ‘new order’. But the VOMI was only the beginning of a wider campaign to ‘reclaim’ German blood (Burleigh 1988: 161). The appointment of Himmler as Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of Germanism (*Reichskommissar zur Festigung deutschen Volkstums*, RKFdV), as well as the timing of this decision (7 October 1939), were crucial indications that Hitler had empowered the ‘Himmler network’ with a mandate to devise and implement a radical population policy involving resettlement and elimination in equal measure (Koehl 1957; Heinemann 2001: 391).⁹ In the RKFdV Konrad Meyer headed *Hauptamt C* that dealt with “planning and territory”. In the RSHA the reorganised

Amt III.B dealt with 'racial' and population matters. The Racial-Political Office of the NSDAP (*Rassenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP*, RPA) possessed in-house expertise in Dr Erhard Wetzel. The German Labour Front (DAF) had already established the *Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut* (AWI) since 1935 but seized the opportunity after 1939 to stake a big claim in the consultations regarding the economic exploitation of the occupied territories (Patel 2005). Finally, from 1941 onwards Alfred Rosenberg's Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories could also claim its very own expert: Dr Wetzel again, whose racial/Jewish affairs portfolio afforded him a role in the discussions about the future of the eastern territories under the ministry's jurisdiction. From the autumn of 1939 until early 1943 these agencies produced a series of reports and plans, most of which concerned the occupied territories in the east in the context of what came to be generically called *Generalplan Ost* (Mai 2002). The bulk of this material is either lost or fragmentary; but what remains, together with collateral evidence, provide an exciting outline of the shifts in NS thinking with regard to the fundamental issue of territorial/population management during this crucial period for the NS military and racial policy.

The occupation of large areas of Poland in the autumn of 1939 generated a sense of exhilaration amongst the regime's economic and racial experts. Already by the end of September the anthropologist Otto Reche had compiled a lengthy report on the "demographic securing of the [eastern] territories", which envisaged the total expulsion of the current inhabitants of German-occupied Poland and rejected the suggestion that a considerable number could be 'Germanised'. Instead, according to Reche, the 'cleansing' and annexation of the new Polish territories constituted only the first step towards securing the demographic-racial future of the German Volk, which was expected to reach 150 million in the not-so-distant future and therefore needed a further 200,000 square kilometres of land fit for settlement (Burleigh 1988: 167–71).¹⁰ The subsequent reorganisation of the occupied Polish territories constituted the first step in the direction charted by Reche. It created a new area of roughly 94,000 square kilometres (c. 91,000 excluding the Danzig area) and inflated perceptions of a future ideal German living space. The previously unfathomable opportunities for both resettlement and Grossraum economic planning whetted the appetite of NS planners. Thus, German-occupied Poland became the laboratory of exploring radical formulas for implementing the NS race and population utopias—a space that could be transformed into a tabula rasa and then remodelled as an ideal microcosm of a future 'new order'. It was there that the solution of the Reich's putative 'overpopulation' problem and the acquisition of Lebensraum for 'valuable' ethnic Germans became directly contingent on the elimination of Poles and Jews from the German cultural, territorial, and racial sphere (Noakes & Pridham 1991: 922–96). The irony of the NS experiments in Poland between September 1939 and the launch of Barbarossa in June 1941 was that the literal expansion of German 'space' brought with

it a perception of threatening ‘contraction’ (Midlarsky 2005). The latter involved both the future German settlers who had to be accommodated there and the millions belonging to indigenous non-German groups. As NS experts had determined from the beginning that many of them were “racially useless” (in Burleigh 1988: 167), and others had to be racially ‘reclaimed’, the preparation of the new lands for their intended function presupposed a vast campaign of redemption and cleansing.

The attempts of the NS experts to reconcile the resettlement of the Volksdeutsche with an ambitious vision of model ethnic German settlements in the new eastern Lebensraum rested on a fundamental twin premise: that no German blood whatsoever should be lost; and that this blood should be allowed to flourish freed from allegedly harmful racial influences that surrounded the ‘German’ element in Poland. Accordingly, in early September 1939 Heydrich gave a succinct preview of long-term NS planning ideas for the newly occupied areas. Whilst the fate of the Jews was unequivocal (‘deportation’ far away from the Reich, with exceptions made only for economic/labour reasons), the NS policy against ethnic Poles would be far more complicated, involving distinctions based on racial and economic ‘value’. What he meant became clear in the following months. Reclaiming German blood would also involve a significant number of the inhabitants of occupied areas, who would be placed in a protected category earmarked for Germanisation (*Eindeutschung*). The rest of the Poles would be subjected to a wholesale ‘ethnographic’ campaign of ‘cleansing’ in three forms: murder (*politicide* or killing of the political and intellectual elite—cf. Stein 2002); forced deportation from those areas of Poland designated as fit for the resettlement of ethnic Germans (Danzig, Posen/Wartheland) into the GG; and exploitation of Polish human capital as slave labour (Lukas 1997; Moser 1985). The impact of resettlement on the fate of Poles was immediate—and devastating. For, as we saw earlier, it was Polish farmers who were targeted in order to make space for the NS utopia of model German agricultural communities; and it was once again urban Poles (alongside Jews) who had to be moved in order to accommodate the influx of urban Volksdeutsche (Aly 1995: 114). Sometimes the complementary function of the two projects was literal: Poles were driven out through the same facilities and channels that were set up to bring Volksdeutsche in Poland; the latter would wait in special facilities as the Poles and Jews were being summarily evicted. Perversely, some poorer Poles, whose properties had been deemed unsuitable for the incoming German settlers, were spared from immediate deportation, but this opened the way for their ruthless economic exploitation as slave labour force.

During the winter of 1939/40 an array of statistics, ideas, and plans alluded to an almost zero-sum balance between settlement of Volksdeutsche and ‘cleansing’ of unwanted indigenous populations in the near future.¹¹ The RKFdV calculated that of the 46,000 square metres of usable agricultural land in the four Ostgaus, three-fifths would be reserved for new

German settlers and the rest for returning *Ostsiedler* from Eastern/Central Europe. The bulk of this land for resettlement was located in Wartheland.¹² In March 1940 the RKFdV again prepared a report that dealt exclusively with population matters in the newly occupied areas. The report calculated the size of the 'ethnic German' group in the four Ostgaus at just above eight million (including an estimate for those Poles and other ethnic groups worthy of Germanisation); Poles were still the largest group (8.5m), with Jews estimated at around 610,000 and other minorities at 160,000. Full ethnic Germans, German citizens but not citizens of the Reich, along with roughly one million from those considered 'racially worthy' foreigners and assimilated Germans (*Renegaten*), were considered by the NS authorities as racially 'Germans'—the first group by default, the other two via the route of enforced 'Germanisation'.¹³

The efforts of the RKFdV's experts to determine the extent of the Germanisation process and to agree on specific criteria for those cases of mixed ethnic/racial background led to the creation of the *Deutsche Volksliste* (DVL) in early 1940. The list defined four categories of people with varying degrees of Volksdeutsche credentials. At the top were ethnic Germans who were active members of the national community before September 1939, followed by those who were initially inactive but were mobilised after the invasion. The third group comprised those of German origin who had mixed with Poles but had allegedly not lost their identity, and those non-Germans who had married a German and "accepted their worldview". Finally, the fourth group included those of German origin (*Deutschstämmige*) who had become *Renegaten*. Of the four categories, the first two would form the backbone of the eastern Volksdeutsche communities, but only those in the first group would be allowed to join the NSDAP. The members of the last two categories had to be sent back to the old Reich in order to be 'reeducated' and thus reclaim fully their putative Germanness. Children of mixed German blood too would be directed to the Reich for the same purpose, either together with their families or (if the latter had been deemed 'unworthy') alone, even if this meant a forceful separation from their parents (U Schmidt 1999).¹⁴ During 1941–43 the DVL and the Germanisation project were progressively expanded from Poland to the entire western and eastern territories of the NS 'new order', in a vast area from France to the depths of the Soviet Union (Miege 1972; Kettenacker 1973). The grandiose plans for creating ideal German colonies in the resettled areas of the east were based on the arbitrary expectation that such Volksdeutsche numbered millions. When the numbers did not add up, Himmler was happy to find them by interpreting the relevant racial criteria less rigidly and by applying them to a larger sample of population groups in Poland and the Soviet Union (D Bergen 1994: 574). Later on, the criteria for inclusion into the fourth group of the DVL had to be stretched once again in order to allow the inclusion of an extra six million Poles deemed suitable for protection under the Germanisation classifications (Burleigh 1988: 184).

As the scope and ambition of the NS resettlement and Germanisation projects constantly increased, the position of those excluded from the plans became more and more untenable. The abandonment of the Madagascar plan (see earlier) and the shrinking of channels for a systematic emigration policy along the lines introduced in 1938–39 generated a further strong impetus for radical thinking. Meanwhile, the GG was being flooded with deportees from across Poland and, later, with many more from other parts of the continent. GG officials complained about grossly exceeded ‘storage capacity’ and resisted vocally further plans for new evacuees imposed on them by authorities in Berlin. When debating the extent of the *Judenfrage*, Heydrich spoke of four millions in early 1940, but the figure had increased to six millions by the end of the year—presumably indicating that Jews from all NS-occupied and Axis-controlled Europe had also been calculated. *Volksdeutsche* continued to return in order to be resettled; but new, involuntary German immigrants were being added—not just from south Tyrol but also from those Romanian areas that the Soviet Union annexed in the summer of 1940 on the basis of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop agreements (see following, Ch 7).¹⁵ With preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union well underway in the spring of 1941, deportations to the east were halted; and this was at a time when the momentum was building for the final ‘evacuation’ of the old Reich’s Jews to the east. The prospect of occupying the vast lands to the east of the October 1939 demarcation line and of smashing the Soviet Union with Operation Barbarossa underlined new vast opportunities for *Grossraum* planning but also accentuated the huge problems of the current situation (Rodogno 2006: 47–57, 226–56). From the viewpoint of racial and population experts such a dramatic further extension of land in the east necessitated new radical thinking on all fronts.

It was in this context that the term *Generalplan Ost* made its appearance in the official vocabulary of NS experts barely a month after the invasion of the Soviet Union through a plan prepared by Dr Meyer of the RFKdV (Roessler & Schleiermacher 1993: 65; Schulz 1996: 3.3.2). It is, however, interesting to place this document within a wider context of planning initiatives from different agencies at various stages of the NS *Lebensraum* war. Meyer himself had drafted an earlier *Generalplan* for Poland in January 1940 (Müller 1991: 130). But in the usual jurisdictional jungle of the NS state there were other powerful contenders eager to seize the initiative, for their own empowerment in the NS hierarchy and for thwarting their opponents’ ambitions. In late autumn of 1939 Wetzel (then working in the RPA) had coauthored with Guenther Hecht a report on the exploitation of the conquered Polish lands and the treatment of the population thereof (Wetzel & Hecht 1939). This was supplemented by further thoughts in July 1941, taking into account the projected territorial gains at the expense of the Soviet Union after the launch of Operation Barbarossa (Podranski 2001: 7). It was Wetzel again, in his subsequent capacity as racial expert of Rosenberg’s ministry, that produced a memorandum on what appears to have been a further

Gesamtplan Ost prepared by the RSHA in late 1941/early 1942 and bearing Himmler's approval (Wasser 1993; Madajczyk 1994: 50–59). While the latter plan is unknown to us, Wetzel's *Stellungnahme und Gedanken zum Generalplan Ost des Reichsführers SS*, drafted in late April 1942, discussed its recommendations in a critical manner that reflected the tense relationship between Himmler and Rosenberg at the time (Heiber 1958: 281). Only a month later Meyer struck back with a comprehensive *Generalplan Ost* that spelled out a detailed vision about the future resettlement and exploitation of the vast territories under NS control in the east (Eichholtz 1982: 260). By the end of 1942 the RKFdV had circulated a further plan—this time encompassing the entire domain of 'resettlement' across the NS 'new order' and appropriately titled *Generalsiedlungsplan*—that had accommodated Himmler's suggestions and pressure for immediate action (Rössler & Schleiermacher 1993: 97–117). In the meantime, Rosenberg felt strong enough in his position to convey specific instructions to the various *Reichskommissars* in the eastern territories, often in defiance of the 'orthodox' thinking of the RKFdV or the RSHA (Schulz 1996: Ch 4). To complete the political-jurisdictional zigzag, the AWI of the DAF produced no fewer than five reports between February 1941 and the end of 1942, primarily dealing with the economic exploitation of material and human resources in the east (Rössler & Schleiermacher 1993: 226–49; Schulz 1996: Ch 5).

This kind of planning was almost certainly abandoned in early 1943, most probably in the aftermath of the defeat at Stalingrad that had rendered Himmler's ambitious plans for the Germanisation of the eastern territories practically impossible (Eichholtz 2002). Yet, in the three years of its evolution as a demographic-economic-territorial project, the thinking behind what came to be called *Generaplan Ost* provides insight into the links between population management, resettlement, Germanisation, and elimination of specific 'racial' groups. For a start, the fact that, in spite of jurisdictional and expert duplication, it was the RKFdV that eventually dominated the planning process points to a direct causality between resettlement of ethnic Germans and 'evacuation' of 'alien peoples' (*Fremdvölker*). All surviving relevant documents pay particular attention to the equilibrium between 'making room' through deportation of indigenous populations and identifying ethnic Germans for immediate and long-term settlement in the new eastern territories. Meyer was adamant that the bulk of the German settlers had to be peasants, although the DAF reports also underlined the importance of industrialisation in order to make the most of the available raw materials and to ensure that the new territories would be economically sustainable in the longer term. The main points of disagreement, however, between the various agents concerned three issues: the fate of the indigenous populations, the areas identified as most appropriate for German settlement, and the overall extent of *Eindeutschung* in the east (Eichholtz 2004: 802). In different ways all three issues engaged the question of racial policy as both priority and side effect of the NS vision for the 'new order' in the east.

The fate of Poles and Jews occupied a prominent position in Meyer's first report in January 1940. The author identified 560,000 Jews and 3.4 million Poles for immediate "evacuation" and "deportation" (*evakuieren* and *abschieben*, respectively), 'making space' for an almost identical number of *Volksdeutsche* (Müller 1991: 130). By comparison, the RSHA plan drafted in late spring 1942 had a much wider remit after the territorial conquests achieved through Operation Barbarossa. The radicalisation of NS resettlement thinking was evident in the figures provided for 'clearing' (*Aussiedlung*), ranging from 85 percent of all Poles to 65 percent of inhabitants in west Ukraine. For Jews in the whole area under NS control the equivalent figure was unsurprisingly 100 percent. Overall, 31 million *fremdvölkische* inhabitants were expected to be deported to Siberia, 14 million were earmarked for Germanisation, and more than 10 million *Volksdeutsche* would be resettled in carefully identified territories (Heiber 1958: 297; Schulz 1996: 3.3.3). The landmark *Generaplan Ost* of May 1942 was even more detailed, extending the review of *Eindeutschung* potential to Estonia, Latvia (both 50%), and Lithuania (15%), totalling 5.6 million further cases of Germanisation. As for the *Generalsiedlungsplan* of late 1942/early 1943, here the exercise in comparative Germanisation reached new heights, extending all over NS-occupied Europe (with France and Czechoslovakia allocated the highest—50%—quota).

The fate of the Jewish populations was included in the overall discussion of *fremdvölkische* groups, estimated at around 45 million in the reports of 1940–41; but there was no further mention thereof in the subsequent versions of the *Generaplan Ost* or in the late-1942 *Generalsiedlungsplan*, although the treatment of Poles and Slavs in general continued to feature prominently (Podranski 2001: 13–14). The last surviving report that mentioned 'Jews' (the RSHA *Gesamtplan Ost* of late 1941/early 1942) alluded to their total *Aussiedlung* from the entire eastern lands. The timing of this shift is revealing. By the end of 1941 the cumulative escalation of anti-Jewish policy had all but removed the Jews from the resettlement equation. Later plans envisaged that Poles, Russians, and other Eastern European population groups would be subjected to a degree of potential Germanisation¹⁶ and even made certain allowances for a fairly substantial number of *Fremdvölkische* inhabitants in the areas earmarked for resettlement, primarily as cheap labour force. Whilst, however, NS 'new order' planners had not ruled out the exploitation of able-bodied Jews as workforce in the short term, this was implicitly regarded as a facet of a different process that had nothing to do with the future form of the eastern territories. In fact, in his commentary on the RSHA 1942 report, Wetzel explained why he did not refer to the Jews, stating that "[this] was *unnecessary* (*sich erübrigt*) due to the *solution* to the Jewish question" (Schulz 1996: 4.2.3; IMT, XXIX, 1997-PS—emphasis added). He considered the "liquidation" of Poles and Russians ("like the Jews", as he noted) highly desirable but impossible due to numbers, economic consequences, and potential international repercussions (Heiber

1958: 307). He took issue with the small percentage of *Eindeutschungen* suggested in the RSHA report but did not shy away from proposing the complete “eradication” (*ausmerzen*) of both large sections of the Russian population and of Jewish *Mischlinge*.

It is likely that the authors of the plans were broadly informed of the escalation of NS policy of elimination vis-à-vis the Jews. Yet, it is equally true that this radicalisation had already been underway at the time that the RKFdV, the RSHA, and Rosenberg’s ministry were debating the finer points of the *Generalplan Ost* (Madajczyk 1989: 844–57). Whether the thinking behind the various plans simply reflected the new situation created through the escalation of eliminationist measures against the Jews in the east or partly precipitated, is a question that remains without a categorical answer. The chronological coincidence between the two projects points to plausible links (Roth 1993: 27). There is evidence that the NS leadership—and Himmler in particular—took these draft plans very seriously. It would be impossible otherwise to comprehend the Reichsführer’s personal involvement in the discussions and his painstaking revisions to the draft plans presented to him throughout 1942, as well as his determination to restrict the timescale for resettlement (initially calculated on a 30-year basis by Meyer) to twenty-five and then twenty years (Madajczyk 1962: 412). The shifts in thinking evident in the plans from 1940 through to early 1943 echoed accurately the various phases of NS planning and decision-making, from the intoxicating sense of triumph and opportunity to the anxiety at unforeseen bottlenecks, and finally to the disintegration of the NS ‘new order’ in the east.

By the time that military and logistical considerations forced the shelving of the *Generalplan Ost*, the NS authorities had accomplished only an infinitesimal part of their resettlement vision. Many parallel projects already in preparation by 1942 were suspended and never realised (Aly & Heim 2002: 273ff). Meanwhile the plan to murder the Jewish population in Poland was in full swing, under the command of the SS and police leader in Lublin, Odilo Globocnik. The operation, carefully prepared by the RSHA in secrecy, had started in the autumn of 1941 but became identified with Heydrich in a way that he had never intended or wished for. For on 27 May 1942 the (also) governor of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was ambushed by members of the Czech resistance, seriously wounded, and succumbed to his wounds eight days later, leaving his name as his final legacy to the murderous operation in Poland (from then on known as *Aktion Reinhard*). The change of name came at a time when the operation was already gathering its intended brutal momentum. Overcrowded ghettos in the GG were being liquidated, starting with the one in Lublin on March 1942 (Corni 2002: 262–92).¹⁷ With four death camps in full operation (Belzec, Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor), mass deportations from almost all Jewish reservation areas in Poland gathered pace (Arad 1987). Lodz to Chelmno, Lublin to Belzec, and Warsaw to Treblinka became itineraries of mass murder on a scale that even Goebbels found “barbaric” (Goebbels 1948: 27.3.1942).

The general escalation of the project for a *judenrein* continent was as horrifying as it was telling: mass murder of male Jews in NS-occupied Serbia during the autumn of 1941 (TWC XI: 977–8; Manoschek 1993, 2000, 2000b), beginning of deportations from the western territories to the east, pressure on collaborationist regimes (such as Slovakia and Romania) to either deport their Jewish populations themselves or hand them over to the Reich authorities from 1942 onwards (see following, Ch 8), construction of the mass extermination complex at Auschwitz-Birkenau, centralisation of the whole operation in the hands of the SS, fading of the earlier distinction between ‘able-bodied’ and ‘unfit’ Jews. The ninety-two high-profile experts of the T-4 programme that had been drafted into Operation Reinhard (see earlier, Ch 5) busied themselves with improving the efficiency of the technological apparatus and the administration of mass murder. A chilling interim acknowledgement of the intensifying pace and brutality of Jewish mass annihilation was provided in the infamous report compiled by Dr Richard Korherr, chief inspector of the statistical office of the SS and a close associate of Eichmann, in January 1943 (Challen 1993).¹⁸ The report contains fairly reliable figures about the Jewish ‘final solution’ that cover the period up to the end of 1942 and supplies a total ‘evacuation’ figure (to that point) of 1,873,549 Jews across Europe. Eloquent also is the mention of the rapidly shrinking population of the ghettos in the GG, “mainly due to deaths”, as Korherr dryly commented (Corni 2002: 195–226). The relevant figures for the ‘old’ Reich were equally telling: from 590,000 Jews in 1937 to 233,000 in 1939 (impact of emigration policies) to 51,000 in 1943. The author also informed his superiors that the figures quoted excluded Jews deported by other governments and the many unrecorded executions of Jews in the NS-occupied Soviet Union. He did provide, however, figures for deportations from other countries: nearly 800,000 in total until the end of 1942, of which 57,000 were from Slovakia, 38,500 from The Netherlands, and 42,000 from France. Overall, Korherr estimated a total of Jewish deaths since 1933 in excess of 4 million—about 40 percent of the original Jewish population in the continent. Himmler’s supplementary evidence to the report, produced a month later, offered further macabre insight into the scale of annihilation. It highlighted the chillingly negative birth-death balance amongst surviving Jews since 1939 and gave eloquent data about the destruction of the European Jewish communities. Only Hungary and Romania showed big Jewish populations, mainly due to the two governments’ decision to halt the evacuation process (see following Chs 8–9).¹⁹

The Korherr report is significant for an additional reason. Commissioned by Himmler personally, it constituted hard evidence of the discrete, self-directed nature of the project and of its autonomous priority for the NS leadership. The dissociation of Jewish elimination from the context of large-scale population management in the east proceeded at a terrifying pace throughout 1942 and 1943, at a time when the grandiose population projects ground to a complete halt. In 1942 it was decided that the

entire eastern territories (including the GG) would be made *judenfrei* at any cost, regardless of the ongoing discussions about economic exploitation and resettlement (Longerich 2000: Section E). This momentous change of policy evolved gradually but had clearly reached a definitive, irrevocable stage by December 1941, when Hans Frank exhorted his colleagues in no uncertain language to “liquidate [and] destroy [the Jews] . . . anywhere we come across them”.²⁰ In the end the lethal ‘modern’ NS projects involving resettlement in various forms (*Aus-/Um-siedlung*) were either abandoned or (in the case of the Jews) replaced by a behemoth of first, direct mass murder and finally, industrialised total annihilation (Browning 1991; Callinicos 2001). Beyond this stage the extermination of European Jews assumed the centralised, ideologically intended, and politically uncompromising character that intentionalists assumed it possessed from the very beginning.

The most radical phase of Jewish elimination—from mid-1941 onwards—created an ‘exceptional’ negative space, in which every form of known violence, every knowledge of eliminationist techniques every tried-and-tested formula, and every new extreme idea would be synthesised and allowed to run amok (Traverso 2003: 149). It was Henry Friedlander (1995) who made the strongest case for a profound link between the killing of psychiatric patients (T-4) and extermination of the Jews (see also earlier, Ch 5). Götz Aly suggested another crucial link, this time with the inhuman treatment of Soviet prisoners of war, who were consciously condemned to death by engineered starvation (Aly & Heim 2002: 250). The connection concerned the virtual indifference to the destruction or indirect elimination of human life on such a gigantic scale (estimates vary from 2.8 to 4 million Soviet POW victims) in a period of just eight months (Streit 1990, 1997; HISR 1999). Just before the launch of Operation Barbarossa, NS planners had conducted far-reaching feasibility tests for an overambitious population and food strategy in the east. Towards the end of May 1941 the Ministry of Nutrition, in association with the Wehrmacht High Command and the Four-Year Plan agencies, circulated guidelines for the economic organisation of the east, which envisaged that tens of millions of people would become “superfluous” (*überflüssig*) and die of famine or be transported to Siberia. Absolute priority would be given to the needs of the Wehrmacht troops.²¹ This meant that this ‘superfluous’ population and the areas they inhabited (mainly forest zones and big cities) would be excluded from any future development plan, resulting in the estimated death of up to 30 million Soviet citizens (Gerlach 1998: 15; 2000: 216). The so-called ‘Hunger Plan’ of 1941 proved yet another exercise on paper, for very soon the occupying authorities were forced to ration foodstuff and somewhat cushion the effects of food shortages. Yet, the accumulation of millions of Soviet prisoners of war in the first months of Operation Barbarossa presented the NS authorities with an opportunity to relieve food pressures by deliberately allowing the ‘nonproductive’ (i.e., not involved in labour) members of this group to starve to death (Gerlach 1998: 50–56). A similar fate awaited Jewish populations in

the eastern occupied territories during Operation Barbarossa. As Himmler was determined to rescue the harvest in the east and give exclusive priority to the supply of the Wehrmacht troops during their advance towards Moscow, the rationing of food and the decision to condemn 'unproductive' Jewish and Slav communities to levels of nutrition that were well below sustenance levels reflected the NS overriding belief in their *de facto* expendability (Welch 2001).

The 'solution' of indirect murder through famine (whether by artificially withholding supplies or as a collateral result of overconcentration of population in a particular area and requisitioning of all available foodstuff) had actually been put forward in 1940 in the context of a different discussion about the economic viability of the ghettos in the GG (Browning 1986; Aly & Heim 2002: Ch 9). In 1940 Rudolf Gater of the GG's Reich Board for Economy and Efficiency was asked to draft a report examining the possible solutions to the overpopulated Warsaw ghetto (Aly & Heim 1991: 84–138). Unconvinced about the long-term prospects of using Jewish labour to turn ghettos into self-sustaining enterprises, Gater discussed two possibilities: either supplying the 'Jewish quarter' with a level of resources able to sustain its 'productive' population; or turn the ghetto into a device for the wholesale 'liquidation' of its inhabitants (Aly & Heim 2002: 198–200). As a rationalisation expert, he took a series of measures to ensure an acceptable degree of productive economic activity but, like many others in the NS planning elite, never viewed the ghettos as anything more than a temporary, unsustainable stage of a wider, more radical 'solution'. The eventual decision to liquidate the ghettos through mass deportations in the east reflected this very conscious and calculated assessment, even if in the perverse NS moral universe the latter solution was considered by some as a more 'humane' prescription to indirect starvation (Müller 1983)! But the mere notion that it was desirable *and* justifiable to 'let die' millions of people for the sake of a vague 'rationalisation' betrayed a chilling indifference to certain forms of human life that was fast becoming the central facet of NS policy vis-à-vis every population group that had come to be regarded as racially 'unworthy'.

SINTI/ROMA IN THE NS 'NEW ORDER'

The liquidation of the ghettos and the 'final evacuation' of their inhabitants was also a 'solution' that had been precipitated by another NS expert of the GG, Dr Fritz Arlt, who in 1940 (at the age of 27!) was chosen to head the Division of Population Management and Welfare. In a series of reports compiled in 1940, Arlt spoke with conviction about the economic and demographic benefits of an immediate policy of mass deportation of 'inferior' peoples from the GG—not just of Jews, but also of Poles and Sinti/Roma—as a solution to the perceived problems of 'overpopulation' and

an alternative to starvation (Arlt 1940),²² Arlt was perfectly aware of the unbending priority that the NS leadership had given to the 'solution' of the *Judenfrage*. In his assessment of the population situation in the GG, he called for the mass 'deportation' of Jews (up to 1.5 million), leaving aside for the moment both Poles and Sinti/Roma. The latter group was conspicuously absent from the considerations for the *Generalplan Ost* that followed, as it had been from most landmark legislation pieces that the NS regime put in effect in the period between 1933 and 1939.

As in the case of Jewish persecution, the escalation of the NS policy of elimination towards the Gypsies followed a mixed pattern of centralised intent and local initiative (Sandkühler 1996; Black 2000). The pattern of individual local/regional initiatives that had characterised anti-Gypsy policy in Germany since the landmark 1899 Bavarian law (see Ch 4) did not change with the Nazi *Machtergreifung*; in fact, the various German *Länder* came to an agreement in March 1933 to cooperate in the direction of "fighting the Gypsy plague" with new initiatives derived from the logic of the 1926–29 laws, first in Bavaria and then in the entire Reich (Zimmermann 1996: 88; Huonker & Ludi 2001: 47). The *Zigeunerpolizeistelle/Zigeunerzentrale* continued to be the centre of anti-Gypsy schemes, even after the dissolution of the Reich's federal structure by the NS regime in 1934. Two years later it was transferred to Berlin and placed under the jurisdiction of the Reich Criminal Police (*Reichs Kriminalpolizeiamt*, RKPA; Friedlander 1995: 257). Integrated into Himmler's Ministry of Interior-SS 'network', the new office cooperated—not always harmoniously—with other agencies dealing with the *Zigeunerfrage*: mainly the Ministry of Justice and the Eugenic and Population Biological Research Institute of the Reich Health Office. The latter was part of the Ministry of Health and headed by the Reich expert of Gypsy research Dr Robert Ritter. In 1941 Ritter accepted a further position at the Institute of Criminal Biology of the Security Police (part of the RKPA), which in turn had been absorbed into the RSHA in 1939 (*Amt V*; Hohmann 1991: 136). Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1942 the new Minister of Justice, Thierack, agreed to transfer responsibility for the fate of all racial-anthropological groups (Jews, Sinti/Roma, Poles) to Himmler and the SS.

'Gypsies' had been clearly identified as an allegedly problematic (*artfremde*) racial category necessitating meticulous research and restrictive regulation by both the NS leadership and various German scientists. This, however, did not result in specific legislative arrangements that applied directly to the Sinti/Roma. Neither of the two 1933 racial-hygienic laws ('sterilisation law' and law against 'habitual criminals'—see earlier, Ch 5) specified clear racial-anthropological targets. Equally, the two 1935 Nuremberg laws did not make any reference to Gypsies. In the last years before the war, the NS authorities considered the possibility of drafting a series of specific laws with more immediate ramifications for the position of Sinti/Roma in German society. The Ministry of Justice debated the case of a law against the broad category of the so-called 'asocials' (*asoziale* or *Gemeinschaftsfremde*),

whilst the Ministry of the Interior deliberated the pros and cons of a special 'Gypsy' law (*Zigeunergesetz*; Willens 1997: 248).²³ Neither of the two projects, however, came to fruition. In spite of continuing pressure for codification and regulation from experts working on the 'Gypsy question', the NS regime remained unable or unwilling (probably both) to streamline its policy in this domain until the very end.

This said, NS racist legislation and policy-making affected Sinti/Roma in a significant collateral way. Stereotypical images of their nonsedentary, roaming life, of different physical appearance, of unconventional customs and social codes, of criminality, as well as of their nonchalant attitude to economic productivity, reinforced inherent prejudices about the Sinti/Roma that implicated them directly in the racial-hygienic concerns of the NS regime about biological, hereditary 'degeneracy'. The stigma of 'asociality'—a condition that proved one of the major motivating factors behind early NS racial-hygienic legislation and policy initiatives—was vague enough to encompass potentially any form of nonconformist social behaviour (Ayass 1988, 1988b), including 'feeble-mindedness', 'disorderly wandering', 'work-shyness', criminality, begging, and other forms of nonconformist social behaviour, many of which ticked the boxes of the 'Gypsy' stereotype. Thus, although rarely explicitly mentioned, Sinti/Roma fell under the jurisdiction of the two 1933 laws: as *Gemeinschaftsfremde* and branded 'asocials' they could fall under the provisions of the 'sterilisation' law; as 'biologically prone' to unlawfulness, they could end up in custody as "habitual criminals". They were targets par excellence of every "preventive custody" measure and were included in the random expulsions of 'alien' Jews (without German citizenship) in 1934 (Milton 1992: 1). If there was any initial doubt about the ensuing fate of the 'Gypsies' as second-class citizens of the Reich, the 1936–37 commentaries on the Nuremberg laws established their applicability not just to the Jews but also to "Gypsies, negroes and bastards" (Stuckart & Globke 1936; Wippermann 1997: 151).

The NS concerns with 'asociality' increased during the preparations for the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, when a series of sweeping operations removed from the streets of the capital beggars, prostitutes, homeless people, and 'Gypsies' in what may now be seen as a micro-laboratory test of 'cleansing' society from undesired elements (Burleigh & Wippermann 1991: Chs 5–6; Gellately 2001: Ch 5). This had an immediate knock-on effect on the specific attitudes to the Sinti/Roma, evident in Himmler's June 1936 decree for "Combating the Gypsy Plague" (*Bekämpfung der Zigeunerplage*). This decree authorised police to carry out mass arrests and create reservations in the outskirts of cities for confinement. The largest camp for the concentration of Gypsies (*Zigeunerlager*) was established in the inhospitable terrain of a sewage plant at Marzahn, Berlin (Bruckner-Boroujerdi, & Wippermann 1987); but many such camps sprang up in different parts of the country, starting with Cologne in 1935 (Friedlander 1995: 253). From this point onwards NS policy against Sinti/Roma escalated in two ways. The first was

once again collateral: in 1937–38 the regime embarked upon a series of organised 'actions' (*Aktionen*) against 'asocials' that led to mass arrests and deportations to camps; in all these cases the net was cast wide enough to include many Sinti/Roma. A telling example was the so-called "work-shy action" (*Aktion Arbeitsscheu Reich*), authorised by Himmler in early 1938 and carried out in late April (Ayass 1988, 1988b). In the accompanying instructions it was stated that 'Gypsies' constituted high-priority targets of the operation, along with vagrants and criminals. The second escalation of anti-Gypsy policy was direct: 'Gypsy'-specific measures gathered momentum during the same period, such as Himmler's December 1937 order to arrest individuals inclined towards criminal activity, the so-called "Gypsy clean-up week" (*Zigeuneraufräumungswoche*) in June 1938 (Ayass 1988) and, finally, Himmler's new decree in December 1938 titled "Combatting the Gypsy Nuisance" (*Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens*). The latter document made references to an imminent "final solution" to the *Zigeunerfrage*, thus presaging a far more ominous future for the Sinti/Roma in the Third Reich (Zimmermann 2002: 13; Milton 2004, 1992).

A new phase of escalation in the systematic elimination of Sinti/Roma began in 1939—and once again it was a regional, rather than Reich-wide, initiative. In the annexed territories of Austria after the *Anschluss*, a large-scale operation for the confinement of Gypsies in camps began, focusing on the areas of Salzburg (Maxglan) and Burgenland (Lackenbach—the largest *Zigeunerlager* in the entire Reich; G Schmidt 1998: 9–12, Chs 4–5; Thurner 1998). Then, with the outbreak of war in Poland the *Zigeunerfrage* predictably became a facet of the wider NS population programme. In a secret conference chaired by Heydrich in late September 1939, the fate of the Sinti/Roma was discussed alongside that of Jews and Poles in the context of a wider solution that involved the racial reorganisation of the conquered territories in the east (Burleigh & Wippermann 1991: 121). Heydrich informed the participants of plans to deport around 30,000 Sinti/Roma from the *Altreich*. Less than a month later he issued a decree that took care of a further issue in preparation for the deportations—the total ban on their freedom of movement. Sinti/Roma were now ordered not to leave their place of residence or face immediate arrest and deportation. Plans for the creation of a 'Gypsy' reservation in the Lublin region of the GG evolved in parallel with the wider discussion about the fate of Jews and Poles in the NS 'new order' (P Friedman 1980: 357; Aly & Heim 2002: Chs 1–2).

By May 1940 about 2,800–3,000 Sinti/Roma had been deported east (Arad 1987: 150), whilst the RKPA was busy working out the details of a wider 'evacuation' action from the entire Reich territory. Yet, the *Zigeunerfrage* was soon to be dwarfed by the explosive logistical problems involved in the 'resettlement' of the other two racial-anthropological groups (Jews and Poles). Further deportations planned for the summer of 1940 were temporarily halted under the weight of the logistical 'storage' nightmare in the GG and the increasingly vocal complaints of its administration (Praeg &

Jakobmeyer 1975: 146, 158). Eichmann had already suggested a ‘solution’ to the ‘Gypsy question’ in parallel to that prepared for the Jews—namely, deportation by appending “three to four wagons” to each Jewish transport. (Wiesenthal 1967: 290; G Schmidt 1998: 14). In the end, however, a ruthless sense of priority dictated the postponement of the action against Sinti/Roma.

The respite lasted until the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. In the context of the Einsatzgruppen ‘cleansing’ operations in the east, Sinti/Roma were targeted alongside Jews, ‘partisans’, and communists. It seems that the initial orders did not specifically mention ‘Gypsies’ as a group (again, not different to the case of the Jews, who were mentioned in inconsistent ways and usually as part of the ‘Jewish-Bolshevik’ elite). As a result, early operations against Sinti/Roma were not recorded separately in the operational reports. Evidence, however, exists to attest to large-scale killings at least since August 1941. The so-called ‘Jaeger report’, compiled on 1 December 1941 as an overview of the activities of the Einsatzgruppen in the east, sporadically mentioned the execution of ‘Gypsy’ men and women (Klee, Dressen, & Riess 1988: 46–58). Shortly afterwards, about 800 Sinti/Roma were executed by Einsatzgruppe D in Simferopol, as its commander, Otto Ohlendorf, admitted after the war. Beginning with 1942, executions of ‘Gypsy’ victims were more systematically recorded, particularly by Group D (IMT, VIII: 596; IV: 133).

Meanwhile, back in Berlin, Ritter continued to amass registration and genealogical files for his group of Sinti, Roma, and *Jenische* (a category that he considered the largest—around 90% of the total group—and the lowest in terms of ‘racial value’—Willens 1997: 226). Determined to influence NS decision-making in the direction of effecting a separate *Zigeunergesetz*, he classified the ‘Gypsy’ population on the basis of the number of each individual’s grandparents and overall ‘racial purity’ (*reinrassigkeit*) thereof. Unlike the case of Jews, the more ‘pure’ persons were found to be, the better their status in the hierarchy of NS racial value. Therefore, a small group of ‘Gypsies’ found to have at least three ‘pure’ grandparents was separated from the bulk of the *Zigeuner Mischlinge*. Then Himmler’s perverse fascination with the racial origins of the Sinti/Roma (see earlier, Ch 4) produced a sensational development. In October 1942—that is, amidst the escalating extermination of Jews—he issued a decree allowing relative freedom of movement to this selected group of “pure Gypsies” (*Vollzigeuner*) within designated areas (Steinmetz 1996: 52; Willens 1997: 250). ‘Good’ mixed Gypsies who agreed to enter one of the nine ‘racially pure clans’ would also benefit from the new regulations. This decree would not affect Roma and those *Mischlinge* who refused to comply with the new measures (Fraser 1992: 257; Lewy 1999: 204). Nevertheless, it constituted a reversal of the trend towards physical elimination by recognising the right to existence of *reinrassige* Sinti/Roma and ‘good *Mischlinge*’ willing to join the ‘clans’ specified by the NS authorities—a total of about 4,000 individuals from the entire population

of Gypsies in the Reich, estimated at between 30,000 and 50,000 (Kenrick & Puxon 1981: 33; Zimmermann 1996: 299).

Less than two months later, on 16 December 1942, Himmler issued a new regulation that, whilst broadly in agreement with the distinctions introduced by his earlier decree, effectively condemned the bulk of the Sinti/Roma population to immediate deportation eastwards (Lewy 2000: 140–51). The so-called 'Auschwitz decree' dealt with the deportation of Sinti/Roma from the Reich. Details about exemptions were worked out in a separate meeting in mid-January 1943. Racially 'pure' Sinti and Lalleri were still in principle covered by the beneficial provisions of the earlier Himmler decree. Those who had registered with the 'clans', married to Germans, serving in the armed forces, were considered "socially adjusted" (with permanent residence and work), performing crucial economic tasks for the war effort, as well as those with foreign nationality, would be exempt, provided that they consented to sterilisation (Lewy 2000: 141). The transfers to Auschwitz began immediately and reached their peak in early spring 1943. The actual figure of deportees is still debated, ranging between 13,000 (official figure given in Auschwitz original statistics) and 20,000 (calculated by the RKPA). In addition, 3,500 were sent to other camps. As for those left behind, the figure is equally difficult to ascertain: Himmler spoke of a 'handful', the NS authorities estimated around 5,000–8,000 'pure Gypsies' and 'adjusted' Mischlinge, but Guenter Lewy (2000: 148) argued that the actual figure was higher, mainly due to the those who managed to evade deportation.

The NS policy vis-à-vis the *Zigeuner* in 1942–43 was far from unambiguously accepted within the regime's hierarchy. In the aftermath of the publication of the October 1942 decree, a number of very prominent figures in the NS regime registered their disapproval vis-à-vis the intended exemption of 'pure Gypsies' from the policy of elimination. Martin Bormann, head of the Party Chancellery and Hitler's secretary after Rudolf Hess's flight to Scotland, wrote to Himmler in early December 1942, expressing his disagreement in principle with the exemption of 'pure Gypsies' and pointing out that such measures were impossible to enforce in the circumstances of war. He also drew Himmler's attention to the fact that this particular exemption flew in the face of the general NS policy 'against the Gypsy plague' and would therefore "not be understood by either the [German] population or the [NS] functionaries". Bormann concluded that "[t]he Fuehrer as well *would not approve of* [the measures] if even a section of the Gypsies were to be given back their old freedoms".²⁴

Bormann was not alone in his reservations; the Minister of Justice, Thierack, too disapproved of what appeared to him as an attempt by the Reichsführer-SS to separate the *Juden-* and the *Zigeuner-fragen*. The decree was never officially revoked, and some distinction between 'pure' and Mischlinge Sinti/Roma of the Reich remained in effect even after January 1943 (Lewy 1999: 209). But Bormann's concerns were indicative of a much wider desire within the NS system to proceed with the elimination of Sinti/Roma along

the lines of the ‘final solution’ to the Jewish question. Supported by Thierack, he continued to fight Himmler’s policy vis-à-vis the ‘good Gypsies’ during 1943. Himmler did fight back, however. His determination to preserve a small portion of the *German Sinti/Roma* population was a stark statement of his own primary authority and jurisdiction in the domain of racial policy within the NS ‘new order’. This also manifested in his interventions regarding food rationing in the concentration camps. A decision to deprive Jews—including women and children—of sustenance levels had already been taken in 1941. This decision (and the equivalent one affecting Soviet POWs at around the same time) was part of a wider strategy of ‘rational’ cost-cutting measures at a time when the NS authorities were confronted with real problems concerning food availability and distribution in the east (Aly & Heim 2002: 235–52). Nevertheless, whilst rations of essential foodstuff to all Jewish inmates were introduced (and subsequent promises to increase them came to nothing—Corni 2002: 124),²⁵ a similar measure had not been implemented with regard to some *Zigeuner* inmates of the concentration camps in the GG. In April 1943 the administration of Auschwitz was prepared to grant pregnant Sinti/Roma inmates and their children rations equivalent to those available to Germans because “[the Reichsfuehrer SS] intends something special for the Gypsies”. The head of the Central Office of Economic Administration suggested instead a compromise, whereby they could be allocated rations corresponding to, or even exceeding, the food supply given to female eastern workers.²⁶ Himmler accepted the compromise solution a few days later.²⁷ Such measures for the allegedly second-lowest group in the NS hierarchy of ‘racial value’ were a blatant anomaly; soon afterwards the Ministry of Food revoked them as part of a blanket ban on ‘special’ (higher) food rations issued in concentration camps (Lewy 2000: 154–5). But the fact that they were seriously considered and suggested, no less by Himmler, is in itself extraordinary.

This leaves us with the question of what was in store for those included in the 1943 deportations. Auschwitz deportees were kept in a special ‘Gypsy camp’—essentially a family camp without separation of sexes—under appalling conditions of overcrowding and poor sanitation. This explains the high number of epidemics that affected the inmates in 1943 and 1944, leading to many deaths from disease and mass shootings by the camp’s authorities. In addition, due to labour shortages that affected the Reich in 1943–44, many able-bodied Gypsy camp inmates were deployed in productive tasks. All this seems to suggest that the deportation decree did not amount automatically to death; it was a clear eliminationist measure in the sense of transforming the Reich into a *Zigeunerfrei* zone but most likely not a decoy for extermination—at least not in 1943. Still, this did not save the Gypsy inmates from disease, malnutrition, or the horrifying medical experiments conducted in Auschwitz and in other camps (see earlier, Ch 5). Whilst not synonymous to murder, deportation did not mean survival either. The racial status of the Gypsy (*Mischlinge*) inmates of the NS camps was immutable and any

original decision (if indeed there was one) to spare them from annihilation was reversible on precisely that basis.

The final, devastating chapter was written in the summer of 1944. The Auschwitz *Zigeunerlager* was liquidated on the night of 2/3 August, sealing the fate of its remaining 3,000 or so inmates in the most horrifying manner. As Guenter Lewy (2000: 162) has claimed, in the absence of reliable evidence as to the circumstances that led to the liquidation of the *Zigeunerlager*, it is likely that the initiative came from below, from the commander of the camp himself. According to Hoess, the deportation of Hungarian Jews en masse in the previous spring and summer (see following, Ch 9) pushed the camp's 'storage' capacity to breaking point. At the same time, however, an acute labour shortage problem prompted a policy of exploiting the human capital deported to camps in wartime production, particularly after Goebbels's announcement of 'total war' in early 1943 and Albert Speer's 'rationalisation' programme (Piper 2000; Allen 2002; Corni 2002: 227–61). These two developments pulled the fate of the Gypsy prisoners in opposite directions, the former pointing to their swift extermination in order to 'make space' for the Hungarian inmates, the latter highlighting their conditional utility as labour force. Hoess himself claimed that the Gypsies were deported to the GG in order to be kept there and released to the east after the victorious conclusion of the war. The decision to liquidate the *Zigeunerlager*, he maintained after the war, came in the form of an oral comment by Himmler himself when he visited Auschwitz in the early summer of 1943 (Hoess 1959: 114–5, 139). This sounds likely but it does not explain the timing of the gassing action in August 1944—more than a year later; nor does it shed any light on the nature of that "something special" that the Reichsfuehrer-SS had in mind in the spring of 1943 in order to authorise the (temporary) increase of food rations for Gypsy women and children. There is no doubt, however, that the *Zigeunerfrage* remained Himmler's personal domain until the very end and that he felt sufficiently empowered to authorise the temporarily anomalous treatment of Sinti/Roma—both prior to and in the aftermath of their deportation to the camps. Bormann's December 1942 letter (see preceding) suggested that even Hitler *did not need* to be involved in the formulation of anti-Gypsy policy or to be fully aware of the measures taken by the SS with regard to the 'Gypsy question'—in that instance almost two months after they had been issued. If this was the case, and Sinti/Roma were not sent to the camps for immediate extermination en masse but were eventually murdered, the role of short-term events, pressures, and shifts acquires a special significance for understanding the evolution of NS eliminationist policy.

TOWARDS AN NS HIERARCHY OF 'RACIAL VALUE'

Himmler's intriguing initiatives with regard to the Sinti/Roma population of Germany were significant in one more way: they reflected a series of racial

criteria that affected the relative standing of small groups within an arbitrary racial-anthropological hierarchy. Himmler appeared to suggest that there were some ‘Gypsies’ who were better than the rest of their group—and these could be found overwhelmingly amongst Germany’s Sinti/Roma population as opposed to the Balkan or eastern territories that fell under NS control during WW II. This kind of differentiation in favour of the Gypsies who came from the old Reich was reminiscent of a similar discussion that took place in the autumn of 1941 with regard to Jews. In the context of continuing Einsatzgruppen ‘cleansing’ operations in the east and of the parallel deportations of Reich Jews into the eastern territories, some amongst the German civilian and military authorities questioned the logic of a policy that annihilated Jews or forced them into slave labour without taking into account their provenance. A rather bizarre argument emerged from these discussions, suggesting a relatively higher ‘racial value’ for *German* Jews in comparison to the eastern Jews (the category referred to as *Ostjuden*)—and, therefore, a different (somewhat more favourable) treatment for the former. This idea was not, of course, new. The *Ostjuden* had been caricatured ever since the nineteenth century, even by liberal commentators or Jewish intellectuals (Gilman 1986). They had also been the first targets of expulsion from the Reich under the new legislation of March 1934. This law allowed the police to expel individuals without German citizenship but was used primarily against Eastern European Jews during the 1930s.²⁸ Nor did this distinction amount to a departure from the policy of eliminating Jews from the German Lebensraum, regardless of their origin or country of provenance. What was at stake in this discussion, however, was another, more subtle matter—namely, whether the emerging policy of physical mass annihilation vis-à-vis eastern Jews in the newly conquered territories would be extended to *German* Jews or not.

Christian Gerlach (1998b: 763) has argued that Hitler’s decision to authorise the deportation of German Jews in the autumn of 1941 was not coterminous with extermination at that stage. As mentioned earlier, the Führer’s decision on this matter was rather belated, given that high-ranking members of the NS regime and local hierarchies had been pressing for such a development since late 1940 and planning had been finalised by early 1941. When the first transports with German Jews eventually left the Reich in October/November 1941 for the GG (primarily at the Lodz ghetto), they were exempted from execution. At Minsk, the arrival of the deported German Jews caused the execution of more than 10,000 Belorussian Jews, in the context of a perverse logic of ‘making space’ for the new arrivals. When, however, a similar convoy reached Lithuania, mass executions did occur, causing protests from local NS authorities and a real sensation, Gerlach maintained, back in Berlin (Gerlach 1998b: 767). In fact, in Minsk German Jews were kept in a separate ghetto before their final liquidation in the summer of 1942 and early 1943. The Reich Commissioner at Minsk, Wilhelm Kube, visited the ghetto in late November 1941 and

shortly afterwards wrote a carefully worded protest to his superiors. In it he claimed that German Jews were “nothing like the animal hordes of [east European/Russian] Jews” and refused to have “Lithuanians and Latvians execute [people who] had fought [for Germany . . . or] were half-Aryan” (in Weinrich 1946: 153). Undoubtedly the ostensible benevolence of some German officials had also a lot to do with the economic exploitation of German Jews who were still heavily involved in wartime production.²⁹ Nevertheless, this episode is indicative of how NS ideology-driven projects could be less rigid in the short term or allow for gradations, effectively producing a hierarchy of ‘racial value’ based on considerations of productive capacity and provenance (Caron 1998: 26). It was this implicit discrepancy between the treatment of German and eastern Jews, Gerlach argued, that constituted the main focus of the Wannsee conference of January 1942, in the context of Heydrich’s determination to redefine who was ‘a Jew’ in unequivocal, more expansive, and normative terms for a meaningful ‘final solution’.

To understand the different appraisals behind the treatment of the various groups designated as ‘detrimental’ to the national community, as well as the escalation of individual policies vis-à-vis specific groups, the concept of *racial value* becomes of paramount significance (Kallis 2005b). Not just the worldview of the NS movement but also the policies of Hitler’s regime post-1933 were underpinned by such a hierarchy of ‘racial value’ that attributed relative worth to racial-anthropological groups and then allowed for further gradations within each of them on the basis of both racial-hygienic principles and pragmatic considerations. This hierarchy placed ‘Aryan’ Germans on top, Jews at the bottom, and a multitude of other groups in varying positions of relative merit or diminished impairment. Jews, Sinti/Roma (with the temporary exception of the small *Vollzigeuner* group due to Himmler’s intervention), and Slav population groups, whether residing in Germany or in the occupied territories, were summarily castigated as both racially ‘harmful’ and irremediably unproductive. Their overall racial status was not questioned in subsequent years, even when external factors necessitated the deployment of sections of this otherwise undesirable group in particular productive activities. The remaining population was classified under two broad categories—those foreign populations with a ‘sound’ racial-anthropological and cultural makeup, expansively earmarked for ‘Germanisation’ at the height of the Generalplan Ost and the DVL hubris (see earlier); and those who were racially ‘neutral’ (neither Aryan nor belonging to the directly castigated groups singled out on ideological grounds). All these categories reflected deep-seated NS ideological preconceptions and obsessions that were not subjected to any form of rational scrutiny or fundamental reassessment. But in the inauspicious circumstances of a hugely demanding ‘total’ war effort, they constituted a large reservoir of ‘usable resources’ that *could* be mobilised and integrated into the wide productive effort of the Reich on an ad lib, temporary basis.

Classifications based on unalterable racial-anthropological characteristics were made at an early stage of NS rule and remained irreversible even after a mounting logistical-military crisis hit Germany after 1940–41. ‘Aryan’ Germans were considered as de facto ‘valuable’ unless certain alleged defects rendered them racially ‘deviant’ or ‘useless’—and these, as we saw in the case of ‘asocials’ and mentally ill, were not spared from the harshest punitive fate. At the same time, the concept of Volksdeutsche became a major determinant of NS population policy in the east and, to a lesser extent, west. It was a gruesome paradox that, during the 1941 Einsatzgruppen ‘cleansing’ operations in the east, mass murder coexisted with a bizarre obsession with identifying Volksdeutsche in the depths of Ukraine/Russia, and granting them a highly privileged status. Such a policy proved a monumental failure in the longer term. By 1944 various NS agencies complained that the ‘quality’ of many designated Volksdeutsche under the ‘Germanisation’ programme left a lot to be desired (D Bergen 1994: 573). But such was the overriding power of conviction in the NS racial-population policy and their fixation with ‘reclaiming’ every drop of alleged ‘German blood’ that the idea of being able to identify ‘Germans’ who had otherwise lost any cultural connection with their putative Vaterland was never seriously questioned.

The evolution of NS ‘cleansing’ policy from the legalistic measures of 1933–35 to the murderous phase of the early 1940s took place without any precedent and in the face of—often vocal but hollow—international condemnation. The NS regime alone turned a ‘licence to hate’ into a veritable ‘licence to kill’ that implicated the political, economic, military, and administrative echelons of the NS ‘new order’ at every local and regional level. The NS policy was extreme and all-embracing, affecting a plethora of racial targets within the boundaries of the Reich. In this quixotic pursuit to remake an ideal ‘new man’, an ideal Volk, and an ideal future state, it went far further than any other regime and party in Europe, fascist or not, was prepared to go. Nevertheless, by the late 1930s its anti-Jewish policy had become a blueprint for elimination and a legitimising precedent for others to follow. As more and more fascist regimes and parties across the continent came to see NS Germany as the leader of an international history-making campaign, and as they perceived themselves as participants in this history-making assault on decadence, they felt that what was happening in Germany could—and should—happen in their countries too, against their own Jews and/or particular ‘others’. The NS precedent invested the option of a ‘cleansing’ campaign with a kind of metaphysical legitimacy and historic significance that was conspicuously lacking in eliminationist discourses and policies before 1933. With the outbreak of WW II and the creation of a pan-European NS *Neuordnung*, more-or-less ‘willing executioners’ appeared everywhere, empowered by the NS ‘licence’ and eager to stake their own claim in the new fascist Europe. By that time the NS regime too had upped the stakes, no longer contented with the ‘redemption’ of the expanded German Lebensraum but determined to extend its murderous vision to the

whole of Europe. The NS paradigm of 'cleansing' turned into an empowering, exhilarating 'licence' that unleashed similar campaigns in almost every corner of the fascist camp—and was transformed in turn into a genuine fascist crusade. The last section of the book focuses on the radicalisation and diffusion of this 'licence to kill' that unfolded into a pandemonium of parallel processes of 'cleansing' with or without Nazi direct involvement during WW II.

Part IV

Genocide, Agency, and 'Licence' in the NS 'New Order' (1939–45)

The four chapters of Part IV examine different aspects of the same question—namely, how the atmosphere of 'licence' shaped, radicalised, and helped unleash multiple murderous agencies across the NS 'new order'. Undoubtedly the genocidal paroxysm that consumed WW II Europe was not the sole result of direct NS agency, however fanatical, efficient, and devastating the Nazis were in this respect. Other agencies—of fascist/friendly regimes, of radical fascist/ultranationalist movements and political leaders, as well as of local societies and 'ordinary' (qua Goldhagen) individuals—were also lethally active, mostly voluntarily and sometimes through fear, conformity, or greed. But the catalyst for all these agencies was the sense of permissiveness resulting from NS orders, decisions, actions, and precedents—what I previously referred to as a 'licence to kill'. Chapter 7 shows how the NS model of Jewish persecution (particularly the landmark of the 1935 Nuremberg laws and the so-called 'Aryanisation' of the economic sphere) became a blueprint for the elimination of Jewish influence in many European countries (fascist or allied to NS Germany) and informed a series of similar national legislative arrangements to that effect. A crucial channel for the diffusion of the NS paradigm was the emerging sense of an international fascist loyalty centred on the idea of a NS-led crusade for the regeneration of Europe. By the early 1940s this almost metaphysical allegiance had also acquired the form of a concrete international military-political-ideological 'new order' with NS Germany as its undisputed authority and compass. In this sui generis order, fascist regimes and fascist movements perceived themselves as both primary actors within their own national spheres and 'agents' of a wider history-making project spearheaded by NS Germany.

Chapters 8–10 deal with different types of eliminationist agency and their devastating cumulative effect on the lives of millions of victims inside the NS wartime 'new order'. Chapter 8 focuses on fascist and 'fascistised' regimes allied with NS Germany, exploring how they seized voluntarily the NS 'licence' in order to deal forcibly with their own 'others' (mainly but not exclusively Jews). With the exception of Hungary—which was invaded by

NS forces in 1944 and was forced to deport its remaining Jews against the wishes of its government—all other countries-members of the fascist bloc participated in the ‘cleansing’ project voluntarily, largely determined its pace and scope, and resisted any later NS pressure to go beyond what they were prepared to accept. Chapter 9 deals with the radicalising agency of fascist/fascistised movements across the NS ‘new order’. Their role was crucial, for these often self-proclaimed “soldiers of fascism” agitated for harsher eliminationist measures, subverted their own national governments, initiated violent pogroms, staffed auxiliary police formations or formed paramilitary groups, and pledged themselves to the realisation of the NS ‘cleansing’ vision with a missionary zeal that set them apart from most other collaborators. Finally, Chapter 10 explores the effect of the sense of permissiveness on ‘ordinary’ people and communities who became involved in violent acts of elimination on their own initiative, by joining groups assisting the Nazis in their murderous undertaking or simply by seizing the opportunities for action amidst the chaos and collapse of order caused by the NS war.

7 National Eliminationist Projects and the Emergence of the NS ‘Agentic Order’

THE ESCALATING ELIMINATIONIST PARADIGM: FROM NUMERUS CLAUSUS TO NUMERUS NULLUS

The publication of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (1996) turned out to be a highly symbolic event in the reassessment of the motives that led to, or at least facilitated, the execution of the NS ‘final solution’. In spite of its well-documented flaws (Becker 1997; Wippermann 1997; Finkelstein & Bern 1998; Wesley 1999) Goldhagen’s analysis echoed a fascinating proposition. His “ordinary Germans” participated with varying degrees of enthusiasm and emotional involvement in the NS genocidal project neither because they had been instructed by NS propaganda to hate the Jews nor because they were coerced into patterns of actions they otherwise abhorred or because they became fervent Nazis themselves. For Goldhagen the main explanation lay elsewhere: German society had already been conditioned in cultural terms to accept such a message and therefore were more likely to respond to it with eagerness and devotion. In diminishing the significance of NS ideological agency in the *Endlösung* Goldhagen shifted the focus of interpretation away from the situational context to long-term cultural determinants, albeit in the restrictive context of a single (German) society and a single (Jewish) target group.

Yet, for precisely that matter Goldhagen’s interpretive lens suffered from a shallow depth of field. His sample of perpetrators was exhausted within German society, where ‘Germans’ become a holistic category devoid of religious, class, regional, political, and individual nuances that even völkisch nationalist fanatics would have been proud of (Burleigh 1997: 200). At the same time, Goldhagen refrained from identifying an army of further eager perpetrators, this time outside the Greater German Reich. The actively or passively compliant attitude of many politicians and parties, social institutions, and local populations across interwar/wartime Europe qualifies at least as ‘willing’ as Goldhagen’s “ordinary Germans”. When it comes to other interwar regimes, one also encounters willingness—to persecute, to eliminate culturally and socially, sometimes even to murder or at least to create ‘pure’, ‘cleansed’, and ‘reborn’ societies. This may not have necessarily

resulted in an active eagerness to kill ‘others’ (although it did on many occasions), but it usually amounted to a malevolent abandon or surrender of responsibility with regard to their eventual fate. Thus, by barricading himself inside the notion of a German long-term genocidal anti-Semitic *Sonderweg*, and by ignoring parallels with a wider ‘eliminationist mindset’ in other areas of the continent that came to the fore in the interwar Europe and reached its climax during WW II, Goldhagen wasted an opportunity to ‘historicise’ a much broader campaign of elimination involving many European states, societies, and victims—primarily but not exclusively against Jews.

It is a poignant, devastating irony that the interwar period started with a bold experiment in national self-determination and minority protection (see earlier, Chs 1, 4) but ended in a pandemonium of violence, expulsion, and murder of so many minority groups that their respective states were meant to protect. One of the British delegates at the Versailles negotiations, Robert Cecil, stressed that “a European peace founded only on nationality and without any other provisions is [unlikely] to be desirable or even in all respects beneficial” (in Mazower 1997: n1). The first real test for this complex balancing act came with the discussion of the territorial and political status of the new Polish state. The ensuing treaty made history with its provisions for full equality for its citizens “without distinction as to race, language or religion” (Karski 1985). These arrangements became the example for similar agreements regarding minority protection in both new (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Estonia) and established but territorially expanded (Romania, Greece) states after WW I. The League of Nations, the annual European Congress of Minorities, and the Permanent Court of Justice provided a normative basis for, and theoretically guaranteed, individual arrangements (Garces 1995; Mazower 1999: Ch 2).

Yet, from the very beginning the notion of minority protection was regarded as inimical to, and onerous for, nation-states, which sought a valid excuse for discarding them. When it came to a choice between (geo)political stability and minority rights in the new states or their old allies, the Great Powers themselves were far more eager to secure the former by turning a blind eye to violations of the latter. State authorities were also eager to test the resilience of the novel international arrangements by reneging on their earlier guarantees (Northedge 1986: Ch 4). We have already seen (Ch 4) how in the early 1920s the Polish government attempted to introduce restrictions on Jewish access to professions and education but faced the reaction of the League of Nations. Hungary offered an even more fertile breeding ground for anti-Jewish eliminationist legislation, particularly in the aftermath of the revolutionary Béla Kun regime and the ensuing ‘white terror’ (Volgyes 1971; Braham 1981, I: 16–20). A *numerus clausus* (‘closed number’ or quota) system was introduced in 1920 with regard to the Jewish minority, although a new government under Count István Bethlen from 1921 onwards proved far less eager to enforce the law and six years later achieved its formal repudiation (Kovács 1994: 49).

The Hungarian *numerus clausus* experiment did not go unheeded elsewhere as a legitimising precedent. In neighbouring Romania the minority situation was even more complicated, particularly in the light of the strongly multiethnic composition of the expanded Romanian state after the territorial adjustments of the Treaty of Trianon (one-third were not Romanians) and the pressure on the government to grant extensive rights to all minorities residing inside Romanian territory. Therefore, the strong resurgence of radical nationalist and anti-Semitic currents already in the early 1920s came as no surprise. In 1922 the Bucharest university professor Alexandru C. Cuza founded the 'National Christian Union' (UNC) with a vehemently anti-Semitic ideological profile and strong support amongst students (Volovici 1991: 32; Livezeanu 1995: 265). Concerned with the multiethnic/multireligious composition of the new Romanian state after the Treaty of Trianon, and emboldened by the successful 'Jewish quota' legislation in neighbouring Hungary, the UNC demanded the introduction of a similar system that would restrict Jewish access to education, professions, and the economy, whilst at the same time prohibiting Jews from teaching, serving in the military, voting together with Romanians, and standing for office. No law to that effect was promulgated; in fact, a new constitution accepting full Jewish emancipation was passed in March 1923. This was the auspicious climax of the efforts to construct a plural notion of citizenship in the new Romanian state that had commenced in the 1860s (Iordachi 2001). However, legal achievements did not translate into changes in societal attitudes towards the Jews. Anti-Semitic agitation escalated throughout 1922–23, fuelled by the prospect of full Jewish emancipation. It resulted in violent attacks against Jewish students and vocal calls for the expulsion of all those Jews who had moved to Romanian territories after August 1914 (Livezeanu 1995: 270). Anti-Jewish violence was mainly driven by the predominantly young members of the UNC and later by the 'League of National Christian Defence' (LANC), the successor organisation to the UNC founded once again by Cuza in March 1923 (see earlier, Ch 4).

When in 1927 the twenty-eight-year-old Corneliu Zelea Codreanu seceded from the movement of his erstwhile mentor to found the fascist 'Legion of Archangel Michael', a new, more violent chapter in the history of Romanian anti-Semitism commenced. In December 1927 Codreanu's followers burnt down synagogues in the Transylvanian city of Oradea Mare, setting off a wave of intimidation across the country that lasted for months (Carp 1994: 123). In 1930 the formation of the Legion's paramilitary organisation—the 'Iron Guard' (*Garda de Fier*)—was celebrated with a wave of anti-Jewish violence, primarily in the 'new' (post-Trianon) regions of Bessarabia and Bukovina. The pattern of allegedly spontaneous, sporadic but violent intimidation against Jewish communities in the country, often galvanised by Iron Guard militants, continued throughout the 1930s. Jewish shops and stalls were often attacked, students thrown out of the classrooms, businesses burnt down, synagogues vandalised, and people beaten up, often in full public

view. The Romanian government was eager to avoid an escalation of violence but did not do enough to protect the sizeable Romanian Jewish community (4.2% of the population according to the 1930 census—Butnaru 1992: 32). In spite of taking measures to dissolve the movement (1933), arrest scores of its members (including Codreanu himself in early 1938), and ban it from taking part in the elections, the Iron Guard continued to attract substantial public support and be a highly visible, popular agitator across the country (Fischer-Galati 2006).

Nevertheless, the 1920s witnessed few changes in the legal framework for the protection of minorities, including the Jews. The quota paradigm represented a widespread demand of ultranationalist and nascent fascist movements in many parts of Europe. However, pitted against a heightened international sensitivity to the fate of minority groups and pressure for liberal reforms, more radical eliminationist platforms had little chance of success. In this respect, the *numerus clausus* programme constituted the most acceptable assault on a liberal citizenship policy that appeared to dominate in the aftermath of WW I. Nevertheless, whilst little change was registered on the official legislative front, popular agitation was both widespread and escalating, particularly in Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe. Once the demand for Jewish quotas had been articulated—successfully in Hungary, not so in Romania and Poland—it inspired similar hypernationalist discourses in other countries. In 1927, protests organised by the Jewish community in the Greek city of Salonica against the various *numerus clausus* measures introduced or debated elsewhere in Europe prompted one Greek newspaper to suggest that “it would not be a bad idea to adopt similar measures in Greece too”.¹ At the same time, legal protection in no way shielded minorities from intimidation, *de facto* persecution, or occasional outbursts of violence. Victimised for centuries and unprotected by an existing state, Jews continued to be the most regular target of agitation—an agitation tolerated or even indirectly encouraged by the very same state authorities that formally guaranteed their allegedly equal citizenship status. Pogroms—that time-old technique of allegedly spontaneous, sporadic, and restricted eliminationist violence against the Jews—were recorded in the interwar period, once again with a much higher frequency and intensity in countries of the “authoritarian half” of Europe in the east and south (Mann 2004: 24; 2005: 64). As early as the autumn of 1918 the Polish city of Lwów became the scene of a series of pogroms directed by ethnic Poles against its sizeable Jewish population (Engel 2003: 34–42; Hagen 2005). The subsequent attempts of the new Polish government to punish the culprits (including soldiers) and the reluctant endorsement of the minority clauses in the treaty of Polish independence did little to alleviate the tension between Poles and Jews. Several further violent incidents were recorded in 1919–20 in various places of Poland and western Ukraine with strong Jewish presence (Piotrowski 1998: 41; Mick 2000, 2003). In 1930, the Greek city of Salonica witnessed an unprecedented violent pogrom, during which unruly squads of Greek

radical nationalists and disgruntled refugees from Asia Minor (forcibly resettled in mainland Greece under the 1923 Turkish-Greek population exchange scheme) wreaked havoc in the city's Jewish quarter of Kambel, causing fatalities and leaving behind scores of injured from both sides (Kallis 2006b). In neighbouring Turkey extensive anti-Jewish riots erupted in 1934 in the territories of eastern Thrace, at a time when the Turkish President Kemal Atatürk was inviting Jewish professors fleeing from the Third Reich to emigrate to Turkey (Bayraktar 2006: 98).

Nevertheless, in spite of these sporadic rushes of violent eliminationism, the anti-Jewish paradigm did not change substantively between 1918 and the mid-1930s. Sustained by centuries of culturally embedded prejudice, highlighted by contemporary anxieties and antagonisms, but temporarily stifled by a counterparadigm of minority rights and legal toleration, anti-Jewish violence was the sporadic exception rather than the norm. Eliminationism was evident in the various quota measures, as well as in aggressive cultural assimilationist policies pursued by national authorities (Bauman 1991: Chs 1–2); but official state discourses continued to be formally oriented towards toleration and management, not elimination, of the *Judenfrage*. Popular pressures for eliminationist measures against Jews and other minorities continued to gather momentum in the 1920s and early 1930s, but governments refrained from legislating to that effect. What was alarming, however, was evidence of forbearance for, or even secret complicity in, the sporadic and allegedly spontaneous instances of violence. In three of the previously mentioned instances of anti-Jewish violence (Romania 1927, Greece 1930, Turkey 1934) the benevolent neutrality and indirect support of official (primarily local) authorities was disquietingly conspicuous.

Thus, the gap between desirability of a 'life without others', on the one hand, and acceptability/feasibility of elimination, on the other, was constantly challenged and reconceptualised, even if very little was happening in the actual political and legal domains. In hindsight, the perceived lull of the 1920s was deceptive in the sense that the relative weakness of an aggressive eliminationist momentum had mostly to do with the overriding power of legal-political counterbalances and with the absence of an authoritative anti-Jewish precedent somewhere else. In spite of its disintegrating legitimacy and appeal, the liberal paradigm remained firmly in place, if only largely by default. At the same time, traditional perceptions of morality and legality continued to render violence taboo—undesirable and definitely intolerable in its own terms. Where and when violence did occur, aggressive behaviour against 'others' had the character of a temporary, incidental digression, justified in relative terms (as allegedly necessary self-defence) and not amounting to a lasting change of paradigm. Just like in the preceding century, pogroms were appealing to governments because they offered a temporary outlet for public frustration without implicating the state per se in unlawful, morally reprehensible behaviour. This function was particularly convenient in the interwar period, when international obligations vis-à-vis minorities and lip-

service to legal equality rendered the prospect of state-sponsored violence against minorities untenable. Looking at the events leading to the April 1933 anti-Jewish boycott in Germany (Barkai 1994: 36), one is struck by the determination of the NS authorities to ensure that this alleged ‘people’s (spontaneous) action’ be carried out in an orderly and nonviolent fashion. The then fledgling NS regime presented the action as a measure of justifiable retaliation against the boycott of Germany announced by international Jewish organisations in March 1933, and explicitly prohibited any provocation against foreign nationals residing in Germany (including non-German Jews; Gewirtz 1991).²

NATIONAL SOCIALIST GERMANY AND THE ‘LICENCE’ TO ELIMINATE: LEGALISED AND VIOLENT ELIMINATIONISM IN THE 1930S/EARLY 1940S AND THE ‘NS PRECEDENT’

The paradigm of dealing with ‘contestant others’ changed—gradually but dramatically—in the second half of the 1930s. The rise of Hitler’s NS regime in Germany pioneered a very different model, based on the prospect of full elimination rather than of restrictive regulation. Between 1933 and 1939 Jews were ostracised from almost every professional and social activity (see earlier, Ch 5)—a veritable *numerus nullus* vision that was supported by aggressive propaganda about the alleged threat of ‘Jewish domination’ (Kallis 2005; Herf 2006). This model was restricted to Germany (and, from 1938, to the annexed territories of Austria and Czechoslovakia) until the outbreak of the WW II. Even so, fascist movements in most European countries praised it as the ultimate solution to perceived minority issues and to the alleged ‘Judeo-Bolshevik’ threat. In the longer term, however, the NS eliminationist experiments redefined the limits of what acceptable political action meant—mainly with regard to the Jews but also more generally in relation to any instance of ‘contestant enmity’ that appeared threatening to a nation.

The devastating shift from sporadic eliminationism to systematic, state-sanctioned elimination that took place in the course of the 1930s required a very different, lasting commitment to large-scale, sustained violence as both a goal in itself and a means to an end (Brubaker & Laitin 1998). Given the extreme moral ramifications of elimination and the fundamental taboo barriers that it breaches, the need for justification and rationalisation was inescapable. The growing body of NS legislation against the social, economic, and cultural freedom of the Jewish minority in the 1930s pointed to the vision of a two-tier citizenship inside the Reich, with Jews pushed firmly to the margins of coexistence. The combination of racial and religious/cultural criteria in the 1935 ‘Nuremberg laws’ (see earlier, Ch 5) established a model for exclusion that many across Europe viewed as both desirable for, and applicable to, their national contexts. Similarly, the ‘Aryanisation measures’,

introduced from 1937 onwards with a view to depriving Jews of access to German economic life and of their assets, were understandably attractive to states and individuals beyond the Reich (Barkai 1989: Chs 1–2; Gerlach & Aly 2002). Many professional groups hastened to implement or even anticipate the *Entjudung* (literally, cleansing of the Jews) of their organisations in order to occupy their former positions and improve their chances of upward mobility (Blass 2002: 98). In addition, revenue from the liquidation of Jewish property and from the ad hoc punitive taxation of Jewish communities was welcomed by NS authorities, as was the confiscated property of Jews who by the outbreak of the war had opted to emigrate by giving up their assets in the Reich. With all these measures the NS regime was breaking new ground, prompting a radical reconfiguration of the anti-Jewish legal/political paradigm. But, in choosing to proceed gradually and under the guise of state legislation, it also offered a more acceptable and 'modern' path to the elimination of a 'contestant other' that was fully under the grip of state bureaucracy and maintained a semblance of legal normativity.

Yet, this was one side of the story. Starting with the April 1933 boycott of Jewish businesses the NS regime also explored the 'carnavalesque' trail that entailed random, arbitrary persecution and sporadic violence. Intimidation of Jews, Sinti/Roma, and other minorities was increasingly tolerated (and often openly or secretly encouraged) by NS state and party authorities. Repressive measures, such as 'sweep operations', 'protective custody', and indefinite detention, also intensified in the second half of the 1930s. Then, in November 1938 came the *Kristallnacht* pogrom that saw extensive violence at the local level, secretly organised and visibly tolerated by the NS authorities (Barkai 1991; Hill 1996). In fact, the complicity of NS officials in the event has been extensively documented, reaching as high in the hierarchy as Joseph Goebbels and Heinrich Himmler (U Adam 1988, 1991; Pehle 1991). What was even more interesting was the regime's decision to use *Kristallnacht* as a pretext for imposing further financial penalties on the Jewish population as well as for justifying further repressive measures against them.

Even before the outbreak of the war and the radicalisation of the regime's policy vis-à-vis its alleged racial foes, events in NS Germany had serious repercussions, both inside the country and beyond. The gathering anti-Jewish momentum set a powerful legitimising precedent for elimination that did not go unheeded by fascist fellow travellers and other ultranationalist sympathisers across the continent. It is no coincidence that a number of countries embarked upon a more aggressive course of action vis-à-vis their Jewish minorities in the late 1930s, on many occasions imitating or adapting NS earlier initiatives. The influence of the NS paradigm was evident in the case of 1930s Hungary. Although the early *numerus clausus* measures had been allowed to lapse, the rise of Gyula Gömbös to power in 1932 promised a renewed pro-fascist and anti-Semitic momentum. Gömbös was a notorious figure of the 'white terror' that followed the Béla Kun regime

and of the proto-fascist ‘Szeged idea’ (Braham 1981, I: Chs 1–2; Karfunkel 1982: 3) who subsequently became an open admirer of fascism and National Socialism in particular. An anti-Semite in the 1920s and the first head of government to visit Berlin after Hitler’s appointment to power in 1933, Gömbös had all the necessary qualities to usher in a more radical anti-Jewish policy in Hungary. Yet his co-opting by the country’s Regent Admiral Miklós Horthy had a somewhat moderating effect on his political outlook. Gömbös trod a delicate path between his conservative sponsors (the Horthy establishment) and the more radical forces of the Hungarian right—amongst them the openly fascist Arrow Cross and the Scythe Cross (also known as ‘National Socialist’). Although he confided to Goering his intention to turn Hungary into a one-party, NS-style state (Laqueur 1995: 22), his sudden death in October 1936 cut his political ambitions short. What, however, Gömbös had been unable to achieve in 1932–36 became possible shortly after his death. Between 1938 and 1941 the Hungarian government issued three ‘Jewish laws’ in order to redefine restrictively their citizenship status. The first was introduced by Kalman Daranyi in May 1938 and followed a predominantly religious definition of who was a ‘Jew’, exempting those who had left the Jewish community before 1919. The *numerus clausus* regulations that had been allowed to lapse in the 1920s were reactivated, determining a ceiling of 20 percent in economic, professional, and educational organisations to be achieved within five-to-ten years. A year later a second law was passed through parliament by the new government of Pál Teleki. The revised definition continued to follow a predominantly religious approach, although it placed new restrictions on those who had converted after their seventh birthday and on those whose family had not been resident in Hungarian lands since 1849 (Hilberg 1985, III: 796–802). In addition, the quota regulations became even more restrictive, specifying a ceiling of 6 to 12 percent in economic organisations whilst also introducing a *numerus nullus* in education, press, arts, government, and local administration (Braham 1981, I: Chs 4–5; Braham & Pók 1997; Cesarani 1997).

Taken together, the two ‘Jewish laws’ were clearly eliminationist in character. They echoed the NS ‘Nuremberg’ model of legal citizenship restriction without fully embracing the latter’s extreme racial paradigm, as they did leave a narrow window of opportunity through conversion and length of residence. Indeed, the number of converted Jews in Hungary during 1938–40 was much higher than in any other European country, and the Hungarian church authorities kept this option available whilst continuing to support already baptised Jews. But the increasingly closer ties between Horthy’s authoritarian regime and NS Germany after 1938 strengthened the position of those inside the Hungarian political elite who favoured a closer emulation of the ‘racial’ Nuremberg model. Thus, a third law came into effect in 1941, this time jettisoning the primary religious principle of the previous two in favour of a racial one. Not only all three-quarter but also many half-Jews were now officially designated as ‘Jewish’. In conjunction with

the restrictive measures already in force since 1938/39, the third 'Jewish law' amounted to a severe eliminationist assault on the Hungarian Jewish community that would have been far less likely without the NS precedent (Hilberg 1985, III: 801).

In Romania the initial failure of the numerus clausus agitation led by Cuza's UNC in 1922 (see earlier) did not quench the extreme right's anti-Jewish zeal. The promulgation of the new Romanian constitution in early 1923 fuelled the anti-Jewish mood, as it incorporated both a minority-protection agreement and a Jewish emancipation clause (Livezeanu 1995: 271). The formation of the fascist League of Archangel Michael by Codreanu in 1927 took the struggle against the Jews to another level of militancy and violence. One of the movement's greatest strengths was the widespread popular impression that it was supported by the NS regime in Germany—an impression that was erroneous but was used by Codreanu to recruit more members and gain political capital at the expense of his conservative and rightist competitors (Yavetz 1991: 606). Meanwhile, Cuza had not given up his ambition to form a viable ultrarightist and anti-Jewish political front. In 1935—already in his late seventies—he fused his League of National Christian Defence (LANC) with the National Agrarian party led by Octavian Goga and formed a new political organisation under the name 'National Christian Party' (NCP), adopting 'fascist' uniforms, rituals and—increasingly—racialist anti-Jewish rhetoric. In 1935 Goga and Cuza met with Hitler in Berlin—a gesture that underlined the NS regime's preference for a more traditional authoritarian and anti-Jewish force in Romania than the far more radical and unpredictable Iron Guard (Deletant 2006: 32). After receiving 9.15% in the 1937 elections (against 15.58% achieved by the Iron Guard-led coalition under the name 'All for the Fatherland'), the Cuza-Goga party was co-opted by king Carol II in the context a 'lesser evil' logic (Easterman 1942: 94; Brustein 2003: 159).

If the king's intention was to "reduce the importance of the Iron Guard" (Vago 1975: 27), the experiment backfired on numerous fronts. Instead of diffusing the anti-Jewish momentum, competition between *Lăncieri* (LANC) and *Gardisti* (Legionaries) resulted in cumulative escalation, with violence spreading to many Jewish districts across the country. What was even more alarming to Carol was evidence of a secret rapprochement (promoted by Berlin) between Goga-Cuza and Codreanu, with a view to uniting the ultranationalist and anti-Jewish vote in the forthcoming elections (Deletant 2006: 34). Thus, less than two months after he had appointed the Goga-Cuza cabinet, the king dismissed the government and asserted full dictatorial powers, followed by an unprecedented violent persecution of the extreme right (including Codreanu, who was tried and executed). Nevertheless, during its short spell in office the NCP government managed to pass a series of anti-Jewish measures. Predictably, the first (January 1938) concerned the issue of citizenship, now placing the onus on the members of the community to prove their 'Romanian' descent or else lose their rights.

As a result, more than 120,000 Jews were disenfranchised (Hilberg 1985, III: 761). Furthermore, *numerus clausus* (or *vallachicus*, as it was called in Romania) made a forceful reappearance, leading to mass dismissals of Jews from administrative positions and professional organisations.

The fall of the Cuza-Goga government on 10 February 1938 did not reverse this trend. The expelled Jews were never reinstated, citizenship restrictions remained, and the quota principle was radicalised, both in intensity (occasionally reaching *numerus nullus* proportions) and scope (with more and more institutions adopting it). In order to dispel rumours that he had targeted both the Goga-Cuza cabinet and the Iron Guard due to their anti-Semitism, Carol intensified anti-Jewish measures.³ Jews were thrown out of schools and universities; they were banned from practising law and medicine; they were removed from state jobs; many saw their businesses become 'Romanianised' (under the official policy of *Românizare*) without any compensation. Informal intimidation too escalated, with Jews attacked, their assets vandalised, and businesses forced to close down (Mendelsohn 1983: 206; ICHR 2004: 21–38). The real turning point, however, came in 1940. In early August the government of Ion Gigurtu issued two further citizenship laws. In contrast to the religious definition used in the 1938 precedent, the new legal framework introduced a clear 'racial' dimension, encroaching upon those who had converted and introducing similar requirements to the Hungarian laws of 1938–41 (baptism of parents, cut-off date for conversion etc—Butnaru 1992: 64). As a result, the concept of 'blood Romanians' (*Români de sânge*) became fully coterminous with Romanian citizenship and generated an extreme nation-statist utopia in which Jews and other ethnic minorities had no place.⁴

And the already fraught situation was about to get far worse. On 26–27 June 1940 the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum to Romania demanding the return of the territories of Bessarabia and Bukovina—the main postwar Romanian territorial spoils whose cession in 1919 the Soviet regime had never officially recognised. The Soviet leadership had ensured that their strategic interests in this region be enshrined in the secret protocol of the August 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop nonaggression pact. When, nearly a year later, Molotov informed the NS authorities in Berlin of the Soviet intention to invoke the protocol and annex the territories, NS Germany put pressure on the Romanian cabinet to accept this bitter encroachment on Romanian sovereignty. The subsequent withdrawal of the Romanian troops from Bessarabia and Bukovina (both with large Jewish populations) was accompanied by an upsurge in anti-Jewish propaganda, openly accusing 'Judeo-Bolsheviks' of conspiracy against Romanian national interests. Violent pogroms started on 29 August 1940 and gathered momentum in the following weeks, introducing a genuine regime of terror in the two provinces (Hausleitner 2004). Then, in September, Romania was also forced to cede a large part of its (northern) Transylvanian territories to Hungary and south Dobrudja to Bulgaria on the basis of the Second Vienna Award settlement⁵ (Hitchins 1994:

453). This settlement, intended as a German reward for the two pro-Axis states that fulfilled their territorially revisionist ambitions, amounted to transferring more than forty thousand square kilometres of territory and more than one million Romanians to neighbouring countries with which Romania had always been in direct competition (Bucur 2002b). A sense of bitter national humiliation brought down Carol's dictatorship and propelled Ion Antonescu to power, in an awkward alliance with the rump Iron Guard movement that had survived its dissolution and the execution of its leadership in 1938 (Turczynski 1971; Payne 1997: 277–89).

The so-called 'National Legionary' regime lasted until January 1941 and was marked by a further escalation of the indigenous anti-Jewish paradigm, in terms of both legal regulations and raw violence.⁶ The 'cleansing' of Romanian economic life (an escalation of the policy of late 1930s policy of *românizare*) proceeded along the lines of the paradigmatic 'Aryanisation' campaign in the Third Reich, with Jews as the primary victims. Antonescu himself made no effort to conceal the source of inspiration for the new measures. In early 1941 he explained the rationale of 'Romanianisation' in words that celebrated the influence of the NS precedent:

This state shall base its policies on the primacy of Romanianism in all domains of life. I pledge to unhesitatingly enforce all reforms necessary for the elimination of foreign influences and the safeguarding of our national interest. *The struggle of the grand German National Socialist revolution and fascist achievements shall serve as guideposts of experience to be adapted to Romanian needs* in order to graft on our realities the new world supported by the achievements in organization of these peoples. (in ICHR 2004: Ch 6, emphasis added)

In addition to economic 'Romanianisation', Jews were now also thrown out of the armed forces, banned from marrying 'blood Romanians', prevented from owning cultural assets or participating in the arts, and deprived of their immovable property. Further restrictions were placed on the operation of synagogues and the burial of Jews, both as a result of two decrees against the 'Mosaic cult' (Safran 1967). The *Entjudung* of professional organizations was completed through a series of measures introduced by the Antonescu-Legionary government and continued well into 1941–42, again with the explicit acknowledgement that this was a campaign made possible through the pioneering example of NS Germany. All in all, Antonescu, aided by his Iron Guard accomplices, pursued and completed Romania's legal alignment with the practices pioneered in NS Germany in the direction of an aggressive 'numerus nullus' solution against the country's Jews. In addition, Legionaries embarked upon a pandemonium of violence against Jews across the country. From the first moments of the Antonescu-Legionary regime, Iron Guard squads unleashed a wave of terror against Jewish communities. They vandalised or burnt down synagogues; intimidated, assaulted, and

even killed rabbis; disrupted Jewish education; and randomly humiliated Jews in various parts of the country. This kind of violence reached a climax during the attempted Legionary coup of 20 January 1941 against Antonescu himself (Hilberg 1985, III: 763; Butnaru 1993: 35–9). The putsch failed, followed by the ruthless persecution of the Iron Guard that put an end to its participation in government; but before it was over, it had already reached the proportions of a widespread lethal pogrom against the Romanian Jews that had left thousands massacred and the rest terrorised.

FASCIST ITALY AND THE EMERGING ANTI-JEWISH PARADIGM

Notwithstanding the NS influence in all the preceding developments in Hungary and Romania, one may also detect a pattern of continuity with indigenous anti-Semitic trends that predated the rise of fascism. The case of Italy, however, provides an eloquent example of how the NS racialist paradigm could influence official attitudes and policy-making elsewhere *in spite*—and not because—of national traditions and short-term insecurities. Modern Italy did not have a strong anti-Jewish tradition; its Jewish population was minute (0.1%) and overwhelmingly integrated. Furthermore, the country emerged from WW I as a member of the victorious Entente coalition, with modest territorial gains and only one main minority issue (the German-speaking group in the newly acquired South Tyrol, which Hitler ‘sacrificed’ at an early stage in favour of good German-Italian relations⁷—Kallis 2000: Ch 4). However, modern Italy was suffering from a sort of ‘inferiority complex’. In the words of Richard Bosworth, it was (and was considered to be) “the least of the great powers” (Bosworth 1979); and neither the country’s record in the colonial field nor its military performance in WW I did much to alter this impression. Furthermore, as we saw (Ch 2), the alleged ‘racial quality’ of the modern Italian nation had been repeatedly questioned by racial anthropologists, particularly in Germany. In the first half of the 1930s the Duce devoted a substantial part of his energies to promoting the idea of the alleged continuity and unity of the Italian *stirpe* from the Roman and Etruscan times to the contemporary *nazione*. Locked in a highly problematic and often acrimonious relation with NS Germany between 1933 and 1935, he chose to challenge the fixation of Nordic racism with the alleged superiority of the ‘Aryan’ race by seeking recourse to the notion of *mediterraneità*, which had been pioneered by Giuseppe Sergi (see earlier, Ch 2). In 1933 he referred to the “our Latin and Mediterranean race” as

the race that has given to the world, among thousands of others, Caesar, Dante, Michelangelo, Napoleon. It is an ancient and strong race of creators and builders, individual and universal at the same time, which has given three times throughout the centuries and will continue to give

the words that the restless and confused world awaits. (Mussolini 1934, 8: 250)

Until the mid-1930s Mussolini had made a series of rather unflattering comments about Hitler's obsession with biological racism, rejecting both the notion of 'race purity' and racial anti-Semitism (Ludwig 1933: 70). In an early interview with Emil Ludwig he had emphatically rejected biological racism as a meaningless fixation. He rejected anti-Semitism too, pointing out that Jews were represented in the ranks of the Fascist movement and the armed forces. When Hitler was appointed chancellor, he gave an interview to the *Berliner Tagesblatt* in which he declared that anti-Semitism was "alien" to the Fascist doctrine.⁸ In 1935 he reacted with disapproval to the introduction of the 'Nuremberg laws' in Germany, again on the same basis.

Yet, this apparent rejection of racial-biological theories by Mussolini until the mid-1930s did not stop the Italian authorities from pursuing ruthless 'cleansing' policies in their other colonial possessions in Africa. Particularly in Libya, the Italian Fascist regime displayed a level of murderous brutality that barely matches the conventional portrayal of Mussolini's regime as a far less radical and aggressive fascist regime. The Duce inherited an unstable situation in the Italian colony (since 1912), where the local population challenged the Italian colonial administration and forced them on the defensive. Starting in 1923 the Fascist regime initiated military campaigns for the restoration of Italian control over the two main coastal provinces of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica but was soon forced to fight a difficult and largely ineffective guerrilla war against the local Sanusi bands. In 1929 Mussolini dispatched General Rodolfo Graziani with far superior military forces and equipment to 'pacify' the most troublesome pockets of resistance in Cyrenaica. Gradually Graziani turned the operation into a war of attrition aimed at starving the Sanusis and thus forcing them into submission. By cutting off the rebels' supply line with the coast, as well as by slaughtering their animals and destroying the water reservoirs, Graziani's forces managed to crush the Sanusi resistance by 1932. Many were killed by the Italian troops but many more perished as collateral victims of the indirect genocidal policy adopted by the Italian Fascist authorities. The leader of the Sanusi rebellion, Umar Mukhtar, was captured and hanged on Graziani's orders (Salerno 2005; Del Boca 1988; Segrè 1974). Similar, though not as extreme, methods had been employed in the context of earlier Fascist operations for the 'pacification' of the other east African colonies—Eritrea and Somaliland. But it was during the major colonial campaign in the history of Italian Fascism—the war against Ethiopia (1935–36)—that the regime went even further in its efforts to score a military victory and stamp out dissent. The catalogue of war crimes committed by the Italian military forces under the command of Marshall Pietro Badoglio, and later by Graziani again, is long and well-documented. The Italian troops made extensive use of poisonous mustard gas against their opponents, mistreated

prisoners, bombed hospitals, razed villages to the ground, massacred civilians, and summarily executed rebels before entering the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa in May 1936 (Rochat 1988; Pankhurst 1999). What followed the proclamation of the Italian *impero* on 9 May 1936 was the introduction of racial segregation measures against the indigenous population in the Ethiopian colony. With this Mussolini appeared to condone some of the main premises of biological racism—primarily the belief in the detrimental effects of miscegenation and in the benefits of defending the purity of Italian ‘blood’ against an allegedly inferior African people (Del Boca 1995; De Grand 2004; De Donno 2006).

The racialist legislation introduced in Ethiopia after 1936 presaged a fundamental shift in Mussolini’s overall attitude to ‘race’. By 1938 the Fascist regime had masterminded the publication of the ‘Manifesto of the Racial Scientists’,⁹ introduced anti-Jewish legislation (Sarfatti 2001, 2001b), and claimed an ‘Aryan’ descent for the Italians using arguments and language that borrowed heavily from the Nazi paradigm. The crucial influence of the alliance between Fascist Italy and NS Germany on these developments cannot be exaggerated. By this I do not refer to any direct German pressure on Mussolini to introduce racial measures along the lines of those legislated in Germany, simply because there was not any (Michaelis 1978: 24–41; Sarfatti 2005). Instead, the influence had to do with the way in which Mussolini himself perceived Italy’s (and his regime’s) position in this fascist alliance (Kallis 2000: Ch 6). For the Duce was both eager to promote a closer alignment with NS Germany and aware that he had to work hard to establish the ‘racial’ credentials of his own nation vis-à-vis the Nazi ‘Nordic-Aryan’ paradigm. As a result, he decided to jettison the belief in the ‘Mediterranean’ descent of the Italians in favour of a new paradigm that recast Italians as ‘Aryans’. The previously much-glorified *stirpe/razza mediterranea* was vehemently rejected; relevant theories were now branded as “pernicious, establishing absolutely inadmissible relations and ideological sympathies”, and responsible for the ‘inferiority complex’ of contemporary Italians (Gillette 2001: 10). The post-1938 Fascist version of ‘Aryanism’ aligned Italy with the heart of Europe and reestablished the Mediterranean as the bulwark against allegedly undesirable racial encounters (Gillette 2002: Chs 5–6).¹⁰

For the relatively small Fascist constituency of *germanisti* (admirers of Germany generally and of National Socialism in particular—see earlier, Ch 5) this was the moment of vindication and the beginning of their rapid, albeit ephemeral, ascendancy. In the 1930s they had largely prefigured the shift towards ‘Aryanism’ and biological racism; now Mussolini could lean on them for support and legitimacy. In declaring himself a ‘Nordicist’, the Duce now offered them a *carte blanche* to exercise scientific and intellectual hegemony over the ‘race’ debate. Although he was eager to present his change of heart on the matter of race as original and congruent with the spirit of Fascist ideology, his attempts to justify it borrowed heavily from the NS paradigm:

We need to keep in mind that we are not Hamites, that we are not Semites, that we are not Mongols. And if we are not of these races, we are evidently Aryans, coming from the Alps, from the North. So *we are pure Aryans of the Mediterranean type*. (in OO 1959, 29: 185–96, emphasis added)

This was exactly where the parallel adoption of biological racism, 'Aryanism', and anti-Semitism by Mussolini intersected (Bernardini 1977: 431–5). Even if one accepts the most likely interpretation for the change of policy as emanating from primarily domestic considerations (i.e., the acquisition of a colonial empire and the need to instil a stronger sense of unity into the Italian people—Ben Ghiat 2000), the new racialist policy was also an integral facet of the new geopolitical alignment of Fascist Italy with NS Germany. Through it Mussolini anxiously tried to compete against NS Germany in the highly influential domain of racial politics, and to match the dynamism of the German regime in the eyes of international supporters (Paxton 2004: 164–9; Rodogno 2006: 37). Thus, the introduction of the 1938 legislation formed part of an awkward attempt to reclaim the limelight of international publicity and reestablish his regime's radical credentials. In so doing the Duce was also hoping that the conventional derisory comments of many NS racialist thinkers vis-à-vis the biological quality of modern Italians would cease (Kallis 2005: 158–9).¹¹ At the same time, he was desperate to justify the ongoing rapprochement between Rome and Berlin to a largely unconvinced audience, both within his party and amongst Italians as a whole (Kallis 2000: Ch 5). The only way that Italian Fascism could develop a convincing racialist ideology was to adapt the dominant Nordic paradigm and claim that the Axis alliance was the result of a much deeper historic-racial affinity between the two nations and countries. Immediately after the introduction of the anti-Jewish racial legislation, the Italian Ministry of Popular Culture (*Ministero della Cultura Popolare*, MCP) orchestrated a propaganda campaign that sought to establish continuities in Duce's racial thinking before and after the 1938 terminus. Thus, the U-turn was presented as the result of a carefully theorised evolutionary approach rooted in fundamental Fascist values—not a break with the past or imitation of NS similar thinking as many outside and within Italy were claiming.¹²

The plan backfired, however. As the regime was trying to drum up support for its racial laws and capitalise on the approval of the initiative by international experts, the public endorsement of the 1938 racial platform by Nazi figures and German eugenicists (amongst them Eugen Fischer) did little to allay the impression of slavish imitation.¹³ To the dismay of the MCP officials, rumours began to circulate that a committee of German racial experts had been dispatched to Italy in order to mastermind the diffusion of anti-Jewish propaganda and streamline the regime's legislative measures against the Jews.¹⁴ The ever-closer partnership between Italy and Germany enraged many prominent Fascist leaders who were even less impressed by the post-

1938 racist legislation (Kallis 2001: 82). Italo Balbo, one of the most prominent *fascisti della prima ora* (old fighters) and by that time governor of Libya, went as far as accusing Mussolini of “licking Hitler’s boots” (Segrè 1987: 357)! A number of scientists too reacted angrily to the Manifesto’s ‘Aryanist’ basis and to its blatant attempt to emulate the basic formulations of NS racism. The regime was clearly worried that any initiative pointing to the direction of a closer Italo-German alignment on the matter (for example, the visit of Dr Leone Franzì in Germany to study the evolution of NS racial policy in 1938) could provide ammunition to the numerous prominent opponents of the 1938 legislation (Franzì 1939).¹⁵ Whilst the *Uffizio Razza* of the MCP under the young Guido Landra continued throughout 1938 to spearhead support for the Manifesto (Gillette 2001; 2002: 139),¹⁶ the General Directorate of Demography and Race of the Ministry of the Interior remained open to ‘Mediterraneanism’; and so did the High Council for Demography and Race (Sarfatti 1988: 69).¹⁷ Mussolini’s unpredictable initiatives and comments on the subject of ‘race’ continued, largely reflecting on each occasion the state of German-Italian political relations and his personal volatile mood (Gillette 2002: 95ff). A lessening of the regime’s ‘Aryanist’ stance became evident from 1939 onwards, with the Manifesto coming under increasingly vocal criticism, particularly by well-respected scientists like Nicola Pende, and educated members of the PNF elite like the economist Giacomo Acerbo (Raspanti 1994: 76). In February 1939 the seemingly unassailable Landra was dismissed and replaced by Sabato Visco—a staunch ‘Mediterraneanist’ and critic of the Manifesto.¹⁸ Although ‘racial matters’ had appeared a promising terrain for Italo-German cooperation in late 1938, the only outcome was the creation of a joint ‘Committee on Racial Questions’ that met in December but ran aground shortly afterwards (Gillette 1997).

None of this of course had any real implications for the fate of the Italian Jews, who were sacrificed by both groups for different reasons—by ‘Mediterraneanists’ as an anomaly to their attempted racial alignment of the Mediterranean with Italy and Europe; and by the ‘Nordicists’ for the same reasons that led to the Jews’ persecution and eventual extermination under the aegis of the NS ‘new order’. A stream of anti-Jewish laws and unfavourable revisions of the original 1938 legislation caused a sharp deterioration in the living conditions of the Jewish community in Italy (De Felice 1988: 344–57). The first roundups took place in 1940, involving overwhelmingly Jews of foreign nationality who were sent to special concentration camps across the country (Capogreco 1991, 2004).¹⁹ In addition, more than 5,000 Jews chose to emigrate prior to the summer of 1943, and a slightly higher number decided to cut their ties with their community in order to avoid the escalating persecution, either by converting or by evading identification—in total, one-fourth of the country’s pre-1938 Jewish population (Zimmermann 2005: 7). In the Italian-occupied territories of the Balkans and France the Italian authorities followed an unsystematic policy, sometimes offering shelter to

Jews fleeing persecution by the Nazis or their regional allies (e.g., the Ustaša in Croatia—see following, Ch 8) but often detaining and then expelling them (Rodogno 2006: 365). There is little doubt that, as De Felice (1988) and Michaelis (1978) argued, the Italian regime did not embrace the full nightmarish eliminationist vision pursued by their NS allies across Europe until 1943. The fate awaiting the remaining Jews in Italy after the summer of 1943, when the NS authorities assumed control of large parts of the Italian state in the aftermath of the coup against Mussolini, was undoubtedly far harsher than anything they had experienced in the previous five years (Villani 2005; Corni 2005: 54). Nevertheless, the Fascist regime's incongruous introduction of racial anti-Jewish legislation in 1938 is indicative of the sway that the Nazi racial paradigm—and the NS regime itself—had come to exercise across Europe by the late 1930s, particularly amongst fellow fascist regimes and circles, even in the absence of a strong indigenous tradition or momentum to that effect. The constantly shifting debate about the origins of the Italian *stirpe* that took place in Italy under Fascist rule reflected anxieties and attempts at overcompensation that had mostly to do with the precarious position of Italy (and of Italian Fascism) in the international geopolitical context of the 1930s and early 1940s: between south and north, between the Mediterranean and the heart of Europe, between its (increasingly desperate) efforts to play an autonomous, central role in the Axis alliance and its increasing absorption into the NS 'new order' (Rodogno 2006: 37–41).

THE NS EMPIRE (1939–45): 'AGENTIC ORDER' AND THE 'LICENCE TO ELIMINATE'

As in the case of Italy, there is overall little and partial evidence of initial *direct* German pressure on other friendly governments to emulate the NS eliminationist model. Undoubtedly the perceived political dynamism of the Third Reich and the threat of its military power would have functioned as incentives for an alliance with NS Germany that *could* involve cooperation on the goal of creating a *judenfrei* Europe. It is also true that pressure on some allied states and collaborationist regimes did become noticeable after 1942 (see Chs 9–10). This was the crucial turning point, as it was then that the NS industry of mass murder was set in full motion, the goal of a 'racially pure' Europe became more tangible to the architects of genocide—reaching proportions of a 'total genocide' and potential 'omnicide' (Melson 1992: 26; Lang 1999: 15–26, 40–64), and military reverses gave a sense of urgency to the NS undertaking. The eagerness, however, with which many governments, institutions, and individuals embraced the vision and methods of the NS eliminationist paradigm and sought to implement them in their own national contexts is indeed striking and cannot be explained away as the result of coercion or passive conformity. We have already reviewed a number of countries that had embraced an eliminationist paradigm vis-à-vis their

'contestant others' (primarily the Jews) long before 1933 and *chose* to escalate it before the outbreak of the war. These countries borrowed heavily from the NS legal and political precedents. Most of them refrained from subscribing to the racial-hygienic facet of the NS eliminationist model; but they had little trouble in re-deploying its ultramodern biological stipulations against their racial-anthropological 'others' and troubling minorities. This shift from ethnic to 'racial' definitions for these groups was noticeable after 1937, again without any visible NS political interference or coercion. In addition, even countries that at that stage had refrained from introducing legislative arrangements in order to restrict citizenship rights for their Jewish communities—such as Italy and Bulgaria—started adopting a noticeably stronger eliminationist attitude against foreign Jews under their jurisdiction.²⁰

By 1942 NS Germany had reached the apex of its geographic expansion, military might, and political kudos. Territorial acquisitions since 1936–38 and impressive military victories between 1939 and 1941 had created a true NS empire, stretching from the Atlantic to the Crimea and from Narvik to Crete and North Africa. In order to administer and streamline this newly acquired empire NS Germany deployed a three-tier system of territorial and political control: territories annexed to the Reich; directly occupied areas, whether ruled by the Reich through civilian/military administrations or placed under the control of unflinchingly loyal collaborationist regimes; and allied (members of the Axis bloc) or friendly states that still maintained their autonomous existence and nominal sovereignty (i.e., neither annexed nor occupied) but adopted a fully cooperative stance vis-à-vis the fascist 'new order' in Europe (Röhr 1994). Taken together, these three layers of the NS wartime bloc amounted to a *sui generis* empire bound together by different ties and division of functions, but operating under the (real and symbolic) authority of NS Germany (Corni 2005: Ch 2).

If, however, direct annexation and occupation were old, tried-and-tested strategies of directly extending power, the network of willing *state collaboration* made up from semisovereign states across Europe encompassed a spate of further agencies that proved equally conducive to the extension and escalation of elimination during WW II. It was the sway (psychological and political) that the NS regime had come to exercise over this much broader network of friendly allied states that held this informal empire together, facilitated their individual eliminationist projects, and transformed them from individual 'cleansing' campaigns against particular 'others' into a continent-wide crusade for a 'new order'. In fact, the putative sovereign status of these states ensured their crucial dual function within the NS empire—autonomous actors pursuing their own particular nation-statist/'cleansing' aspirations independently, albeit empowered by the German precedent and the opportunities for radical action generated by its own policies; and, in so doing, *agents* of the wider NS history-making project of a revolutionary territorial, political, and anthropological refounding of the continent. The former function enforced and facilitated the latter and vice versa; for,

by acting independently in their own sovereign domain yet along the lines envisaged (and made possible) by NS Germany, these states were at the same time advancing their own extreme nation-statist utopias *and* contributing to the devastating escalation of the Nazi racial-anthropological 'cleansing' crusade.

In order to understand how the Third Reich had by 1939–41 ceased to be a mere biopolitical sovereign state and become the supreme source of 'total' biopower across the continent, exercising a form of crucial symbolic authority over such a wide array of states and populations, we should reflect on the nature of power and authority within the NS wartime empire. These issues were explored in one of the most famous psychological experiments of the twentieth century. Starting in 1961 the Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram conducted his famous experiment involving a laboratory-based study of attitudes to authority in extreme circumstances involving the administering of violence (Milgram 1965, 1974; Elms & Milgram 1966). Milgram re-created a polarised environment of power relations in which the participants were divided into 'teacher'-'learner' pairs. The former were given the authority to inflict electrical shocks in the event of a wrong answer to their question by the latter. They were instructed to increase the voltage gradually from an initially innocuous level to shocks that were progressively uncomfortable, painful, harmful, and eventually even lethal. Essentially, the experiment was an exercise in staged duplicity: no actual electric shock was administered; the 'learners' were actors who emulated convincingly the effects of electrocution in order to deceive the 'teachers'. But this deception served a dual purpose: avoiding any harm to the subjects and targeting the study on the 'teachers' who—unaware of the hoax—were authorised to behave in an indirectly violent manner. Not only were they given a full mandate to punish their subjects with their 'shock generator', but they had no illusions as to the effects of their actions. The generator panel in front of each of them was clearly labelled with descriptions such as 'intense' and 'danger: severe shock', corresponding to increasing levels of voltage.

The results of the experiment were astonishing. The majority of the 'teachers' experienced varying (but escalating in correspondence to the increase in voltage and the reaction of their allocated 'learner' whom they could hear) degrees of discomfort with the discharge of their duty. The overwhelming majority of them, however, continued to adhere to the rules of the experiment, even when it came to levels of electrocution clearly marked as 'severe' or 'dangerous' on the device (Newman 2002: 47). By contrast, the number of 'teachers' who engaged in the punishment with enthusiasm was noticeably low and often decreasing as 'learners' demonstrated increasing levels of discomfort and pain. Clearly, as Milgram himself noted, the key factor behind complicity was *obedience to authority*—a sense of duty powerful enough to override personal cognitive and moral conflicts, pushing the 'teachers' into a grey zone of behaviour that they would have otherwise not considered either acceptable or accessible.

The experiment conducted by Milgram (as well as the famous ‘prison’ experiment by the Stanford psychologist Philip Zimbardo a decade later; Zimbardo 1969, 1971, 1971b; Zimbardo, Maslach, & Haney 2000) highlight the significance of behavioural (that is, universal and therefore ahistorical) factors in understanding the mechanisms that may render extraordinary evil possible and real. They both involved participants with unexceptional social, cultural, and personality qualities. In various ways and forms the results emphasised the power of the ‘obedience paradigm’. Milgram’s laboratory and Zimbardo’s prison were environments in which authority was clearly entrenched, legitimised, and recognised as such by the participants. Such authority convinced the latter to commit themselves to decisions and actions that they would consider inappropriate or at least problematic by accepting the notion of duty in lieu of individual responsibility or, in the case of Zimbardo’s test, by abusing the power bestowed on them. The conclusion that the two social scientists drew from their experiments was in their eyes unequivocal: anyone is capable of inflicting exceptional pain on fellow human beings—but this capacity is crucially enhanced in specific circumstances of obedience to, and empowerment from, a legitimate and accepted authority. The validity of this finding, they claimed, was universal rather than confined to particular historical or cultural backdrops (Blass 2002: 94). Subsequent studies of patterns of obedience in violent environments conducted in other countries (e.g., Fatouros-Haritos’s work on the psychology of torturers employed by the 1967–74 Greek military junta [Gibson & Haritos-Fatouros 1986; Haritos-Fatouros 2003]) corroborated Milgram’s hypothesis that the capacity for extraordinary evil was more or less inherent in every human being but in the overwhelming majority of cases required an external facilitation and authoritative empowerment in order to be activated and enacted (Staub 2003: Ch 23).

An aspect of Milgram’s experiment that has received less attention than its staggering behavioural findings was that of financial reward promised to the participants. It is thus conceivable that a number of the teachers acquiesced and stayed in the experiment because of a *rational* decision to reap material benefits in spite of their individual misgivings about the propriety of their actions. Thus, in addition to agreement with the act (or its results), obedience to authority, and psychological facilitation, an individual or a group may choose violence against ‘others’ through a cold-blooded rational channel that promises tangible gains, even if they still feel uncomfortable with the violent act per se. Furthermore, Milgram’s environment contained an ‘opt-out’ clause at any stage of the exercise. This was a luxury that, if not de facto unavailable, was less accessible by those operating in real-life situations of chain of command, and even more so during a military conflict. Even in those circumstances where individuals were recruited voluntarily for carrying out ‘cleansing’ operations (and this was largely the norm with regard to local populations in the Nazi wartime empire) or given the choice to participate in a particular task (as Browning [1993b] has shown, this

was sometimes the case within NS police battalions), there were powerful psychological incentives in operation that effectively militated against real choice. This was also mirrored in Milgram's experiment. At any stage when 'teachers' experienced doubts and discomfort, they were showered with psychological incentives that ranged from requests ("please go on") to pressure ("you must go on") to psychological blackmail ("the experiment requires that you go on", 'it is essential that you continue'). The implications of each of the above verbal/psychological interventions were fundamentally different, even if they all fell into the broad logic of the 'obedience paradigm'. Whilst the first was a standard exhortation, the second emphasised crude authority, and the third appealed to a sense of significance for the participant's contribution, involving the particular set of teacher-learner into the context of a wider, much more important action ('experiment') that allegedly served a noble goal in spite of its unpleasant aspects. In this context, a particular action acquired a new, far more portentous meaning and significance that diluted either the problematic nature of the action itself or the agency of the individual involved in it. As we will see, such indirect techniques of pressure were used alongside more forceful measures by the NS regime towards its allies, particularly in 1942–44 (see following, Chs 8, 9).

Milgram's and Zimbardo's experiments underlined the crucial link between accepted authority, psychological empowerment/facilitation, and the discharge of extraordinary evil. Such authority convinced the participants to commit themselves to decisions and actions that they would consider inappropriate or at least problematic by accepting the notion of duty in lieu of individual responsibility and primary agency. Milgram interpreted this substitution of primary individual responsibility as the result of an *agentic state*. He defined this as the psychological situation in which individuals perceive themselves as integrated in a hierarchy, serving or assisting the latter's vision, and executing its wishes, both in the short and in the long term (Milgram 1974: 133; Blass 2000, 2002). In contrast to autonomous agency, the participant in the 'agentic state' accepts a subordinate, ancillary position in the order and abdicates direct personal moral responsibility for their actions. According to Milgram this state leads to patterns of behaviour dominated by (willing or enforced) obedience, not personal conscience and autonomous reasoning—a situation of psychological 'doubling' that disengages the performed act from its moral implications for both the victim and the individual agent. Thus, the 'agentic state' is a crucial mechanism of personal moral disentanglement and abdication of ethical responsibility. Both these conditions are crucial for resolving the troubled state of individual or collective 'cognitive dissonance' (see earlier, Ch 4) and may crucially facilitate violent action (Harmon-Jones & Mills 1999; Russell & Gregory 2005).

In its original formulation the 'agentic state' conformed to Milgram's rigid perception of obedience in a more or less *coercive* environment. It involved the perpetration of acts that were directly harmful in a highly personalised

setup (teacher-learner) and did not emanate from specific cultural or ideological predispositions, given that the participants were randomly selected and had no prior involvement with each other. It also referred specifically to *individual* responses to patterns of authority and did not touch upon the behaviour of groups, such as the members of a nation, institution, or community. How useful then is this model for analysing violent eliminationism and genocide in the 1939–45 period on so many levels, ranging from state complicity to group violence to individual motivation? The key to the adaptability of Milgram's 'agentic state' lies in a reinterpretation of its basic components:

- a. *The notion of 'order' and 'hierarchy'*. By 1939 'fascism' constituted a primary pole of loyalty in the highly polarised ideologico-political environment of interwar Europe, particularly in the context of the struggle between socialist internationalism and nationalism. NS Germany was unique amongst 'fascist' movements and regimes in perceiving its role in universal and metaphysical 'missionary' terms (O'Sullivan 1983: 131; Kallis 2003: 245; see also earlier, Ch 3). In other words, National Socialism—alone—moved from the resolution of its domestic issues to an international, pan-European vision of rebirth and total assault on every form of decadence. At the same time, by the late 1930s NS Germany had largely eclipsed Fascist Italy as the primary paradigmatic model for kindred movements, parties, and regimes, becoming the main template for 'fascism'. Ideas and policies pioneered inside the Third Reich had become political commodities, emulated (after varying degrees of adaptation) by many regimes and movements/parties across Europe. Nazi stylistic, ideological, and political features were borrowed profusely by existing parties and stimulated the emergence of new ones (Payne 1980: 14–25; Griffin 2004). Finally, the formation of the Axis alliance in 1938 and the outbreak of war in September 1939 added a tangible diplomatic and military dimension to the ideological core of the 'fascist' bloc (Wiskemann 1949; Deakin 1962). Therefore, 'fascism' in general, and NS Germany as its most radical, authoritative political incarnation, acquired the status of a *sui generis* authority, dominating a *de facto* international partnership of hypernationalist and anti-Bolshevik forces in the continent. In the course of WW II the 'either-or' situation created by the 'total' conflict increased pressures for conformity and resulted in the establishment of a far more rigid hierarchical model within the 'fascist' alliance. Evidence of this transformation may be found in Germany's arbitrary political and military decisions (invasion of the Soviet Union without any notice given to her allies; dissolution of Vichy France in 1942; control of Fascist Italy after July 1943, etc). The impression of German military invincibility that lasted until well into 1942 boosted the appeal of an alliance with the NS regime—and, through it, of preemptive integration in the

NS 'agentic order'. Thus, the NS 'new order' was the product of a multitude of factors, ranging from direct coercion and military occupation to genuine ideological agreement to opportunistic calculations about gains from an eventual NS victory. It inspired awe, fear, fascination, and a sense of 'history-making' enthusiasm to others across the continent (Roberts 2005: Chs 7–8)—all of which contributed both to its authoritative status and to an indirect pressure for conformity on others.

- b. *The 'agents'*. Rather than limiting Milgram's model of the 'agentic state' to individuals, we could transfer it to the level of collective complicity and obedience. As we will see (Ch 9), fascist movements across Europe epitomised this 'agentic' spirit, perceiving themselves as veritable 'soldiers' of the international fascist cause. In addition, fascist, 'para-fascist', and collaborationist regimes proved willing 'agents' in the execution of the NS project of 'cleansing' Europe of its alleged racial foes. This—it has to be repeated one more time—in most cases did not involve direct pressure to implement eliminationist measures or adopt the minutiae of the NS 'racial revolution'. On some occasions 'agents' proved unwilling to make the transition from legal eliminationism to physical elimination, refused to deport their own victims, and even defied bullying by the NS authorities (see following, Chs 8, 9). But pressure to conform derived from the psychological structures of the 'agentic order' itself, with individual governments willingly contributing to the overall project of elimination within their own jurisdiction. The perception that the NS programme of 'cleansing' was part of a peerless revolutionary history-making moment increased the temptation to play a role in the undertaking, whilst at the same time offering a unique window of opportunity to enact an extreme nation-statist utopia by eliminating particular 'contestant others' in each domestic context. This exhilarating sense of being part—as 'agent'—of a far larger, momentous task meant that complicity was not simply an issue of cold-blooded opportunism or the result of coercion. Instead, as we will see, it also unfolded as a largely voluntary undertaking, often exceeding any NS requests or demands. With the exception of those—few and later—cases that witnessed direct NS pressure or intervention to enforce eliminationist policies, the NS agency was indirect but profoundly empowering. National governments, institutions, local authorities, and even communities seized the momentum unleashed by the NS 'cleansing' operations, felt justified to emulate practices followed elsewhere, and legitimised their domestic actions as part of the wider project already underway in the NS *Neuordnung*.
- c. *Mechanisms of complicity*. Operating as both individual (independent) actors and as 'agents' in the context of a 'fascist' order, governments saw the opportunity in stepping up a gear in their own eliminationist policies or introducing them as a matter of historic urgency, taking

advantage of the atmosphere of permissibility provided by the war and the dynamic NS project of large-scale 'cleansing'. In some instances indigenous fascist authorities took it upon themselves to fulfil their own programme of elimination. In the majority of cases, however, states acted as subordinate (though no less willing) 'agents' by identifying, concentrating, and handing over their 'contestant others' to the NS authorities. In this respect, Bauman's and Hilberg's description of a highly modern, bureaucratic method of destroying human life en masse without personalising the discharge of evil may be applied both to the system pioneered by NS Germany and to the ad hoc network of state collusion in genocide across Europe during WW II (Hilberg 1985, III: 47–53). This system ensured ethical disengagement from the most extreme act of genocide, short-circuited concerns about the morality of the act of mass murder, and bolstered the sense of a NS 'agentic order'. In this psychological context every eliminationist action or project was also conceived, facilitated, and carried out as part of an infinitely more consequential campaign of 'cleansing' the continent, spearheaded by the NS regime and the Axis war. And it was precisely this latter aspect that diminished individual responsibility but added a sense of wider, cumulative legitimising significance to separate actions.

Therefore, the 'licence to eliminate' that was taken up willingly by governments, local authorities, movements, and 'ordinary people' across the 'fascist' bloc was crucially facilitated by the perception of such an 'agentic order' dominated by the authority of NS Germany. In this context responsibility was diffused, moral disentanglement was readily available when required, results were guaranteed, and a sense of an allegedly historic opportunity was celebrated. This deadly 'licence' operated, directly or implicitly, in four main forms. First, it was seized by friendly governments across the fascist *Neuordnung* in Europe, empowering them to implement a violent policy of 'cleansing' against particular 'others' inside their borders. In turn, these regimes delegated this 'licence' to their own state institutions and finally to their populations, who could now become 'agents' in the project of elimination without facing legal sanctions. Second, inside a number of countries there were networks of individuals and parties that favoured a wholesale ideological and political collaboration with the NS empire. Fascist leaders and movements perceived themselves as the true representatives of the NS 'agentic order' in their countries, putting loyalty to the missionary fascist cause above allegiance to their state authorities. Either on their own initiative or acting on the basis of NS encouragement, they kept pressing for more radical solutions, often taking the lead against or beyond the will of their national government. Third, and particularly in occupied areas or territories under military administration, local collaborators were recruited directly by the NS authorities and were given a direct 'licence' to discharge violence against specific 'others'. Lastly, individuals and groups seized a 'licence

to kill' directly, without any exhortation or pressure by either NS or local authorities, thereby becoming willing and voluntary 'agents' within their local communities. The following three chapters examine how this 'licence' facilitated, radicalised, and catalysed the pandemonium of eliminationist violence across Europe during WW II. Each chapter deals with a particular category of 'agent': fascist/para-fascist regimes (Ch 8); fascist movements acting as 'agents' of international fascism within their countries (Ch 9); and, finally, 'ordinary' individuals and communities across the NS wartime empire (Ch 10).

8 The Fascist State as ‘Agent’ State Collaboration and Genocide in WW II

A large body of literature on fascism and genocide in the 1940s has focused on the subject of *collaboration* with NS Germany in WW II Europe. Stanley Hoffmann (1968) introduced a distinction between the institutional collaboration of state authorities in wartime Europe with the occupying forces, largely motivated by pragmatic and rational considerations (*collaboration d'état*), and a far more profound culture of *collaborationism* that was triggered by ideological agreement. Although Hoffmann was referring to Vichy France, making a distinction between conservatives and fascist sympathisers (Hoffmann 1974: 3–25; Gordon 1995: 499), he did draw attention to the problems of generalising about state and population complicity in the NS wartime empire. Fascism may have operated as a form of ‘political religion’ (see earlier, Ch 3), demanding unconditional loyalty and ruthlessly stamping out dissent, but this does not mean that *any* form of complicity was driven solely by ideological fanaticism and full agreement. Other factors, such as rational assessments of security and status, conformity, fear of reprisals, or even opportunism and greed, were powerful incentives for collaboration, both on the institutional and on the individual level.

Perhaps Hoffmann’s distinction was a bit too tidy. Broad ideological agreement did not automatically imply unconditional endorsement of the full NS *Weltanschauung*; similarly, pragmatic collaboration did not preclude a modicum of ideological accord with the goal pursued by the Nazis. On many occasions ideological support for the goal of ‘racial cleansing’ and/or the defeat of ‘Judeo-Bolshevism’ coexisted awkwardly with reservations on the part of indigenous governments vis-à-vis a closer alignment with the Third Reich or a leap into the abyss of mass murder. Conversely, this closer alignment with NS Germany could be pursued further (and in spite of ideological agreement) due to pragmatic concerns—in particular, geopolitical security and fear of losing out in a future reorganisation of Europe. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that racialism (and anti-Semitism in particular), anti-Bolshevism/anticommunism, antiliberalism (also manifesting itself as opposition to Western powers), and hypernationalism/nation-statism constituted the potent nucleus of ideological, political, or social accord with the NS ‘new order’ in the 1930s and early 1940s. In this increasingly polarised

atmosphere agreement with these objectives was usually enough to override other reservations, especially since the NS authorities did not seek to fully export their domestic model to other allied states.

In the NS 'agentic order' collaboration was a choice or a perceived necessity, although in many cases it resulted from a varying combination of both (Gross 2000; Haberer 2001). But the freedom to choose was analogous to the power and status of each 'agent' in this order. In theory, state authorities possessed the sovereignty to choose an alliance with the Axis. They could determine their policy vis-à-vis the NS project of racial 'cleansing' given that, as mentioned in Chapter 7, there was little or no initial pressure on them from Berlin. It was also the modern state, with its enhanced power over the lives of its citizens and its monopoly of 'legitimate' violence, that could instigate action against 'others' or authorise its repressive institutions to do so. Thus, in theory again, a sovereign state could pursue an eliminationist course of action inside its political domain or refrain from it. It could sanction aggressive measures or draw a line somewhere and refuse to do so beyond that point. It could carry on along the lines of radicalisation or decide to reverse its earlier policies. Yet, sovereignty is much more than a legal concept; its exercise is de facto enhanced or limited by the relative power of one state vis-à-vis others. Military might, political authority, and economic strength may increase or diminish a state's ability to assert its sovereign powers. Discrepancies in all these areas create a situation of disequilibrium that restricts the freedom of the weaker. During WW II the NS 'agentic order' rested partly on ideological commitment and partly on such a realisation of power disequilibrium between the formidable Third Reich and the relatively weaker members of the fascist/anticommunist/antiliberal bloc. It was the latter realisation that restricted the margins of choice of otherwise formally sovereign regimes and established a de facto source of (indirect) higher authority to which the latter were drawn because of a sense of awe—admiration, respect, devotion, and fear.

This is why I have chosen to focus on this category of regimes in this chapter. I have adopted the term *semisovereign* (see also earlier, Ch 7) in order to distinguish them from the unconditional sovereignty of NS Germany, on the one hand, and from the only nominal sovereignty of the so-called 'puppet' collaborationist regimes installed directly by the Nazi occupiers. The latter had exchanged their autonomy for the mere prize of power and thus operated as pure 'agents' of the NS regime. The same applied to an even greater extent to the installed civilian and, even more, military administrations directly accountable to the occupiers without even the semblance of indigenous sovereignty. By contrast, semisovereign regimes maintained an intriguing dualism of restricted (politically and territorially) sovereignty and 'agentic' status in the context of the Axis alliance during WW II. Here the interplay between autonomy and authority became evident in all its possible combinations. On the one extreme we witness Bulgaria, which successfully resisted German pressure for the deportation of the country's Jewish populations until

the end. On the other extreme there is Hungary, whose assertion of sovereignty against Nazi interests (not deporting Jews and seeking an armistice in 1943–44) provoked the wrath of Hitler's regime, resulting in the military occupation of the country in 1944 and the neutralisation of the entire political elite in two stages. In between these two extremes there were regimes that sometimes resisted NS demands, sometimes met them reluctantly, and often matched or exceeded them voluntarily or even with overzealous devotion.

What follows is a brief examination of the policies implemented by three wartime fascist states—the Independent State of Croatia, Slovakia, and Romania. Individually these three case studies represent different examples of integration in the NS 'agentic order'. All three case studies examined here belong to the category of (semi)sovereign states working within the NS 'agentic order', whose governments collaborated closely with the German authorities whilst maintaining their nominal jurisdiction over their respective states and populations. While the wartime Romanian state operated in continuity with the prewar one, Slovakia was the product of the NS dismemberment of Czechoslovakia (1938–39), and Croatia ended up being a gift to the fascist Ustaša in the wake of the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia in spring 1941. In addition, the nature and role of the 'fascist' component in each case varied considerably. The Ustaša movement was in full control in the newly created Croat state. By contrast, the genuine expression of fascism in Romania—the Iron Guard—briefly participated in the 'National Legionary' regime headed by Ion Antonescu in 1940–41, having been banned before and violently suppressed afterwards (see earlier, Ch 7). In the case of Slovakia, where the ruling nationalist party can be described as 'clerico-fascist' (Laqueur 1995; Eatwell 2004) due to its strong ties with the Catholic church and overall clerical orientation, a 'fascistised' faction emerged amongst its ranks, causing an escalating internal ideological and political friction, particularly with regard to anti-Jewish and foreign policies. Of the three case studies only the Slovak regime, headed by the Catholic Monsignor Josef Tiso as leader of the Hlinka-Slovak People's Party, could claim any degree of grassroots support and legitimacy, given the prominent role of the party in Slovak political life throughout the interwar period. The Antonescu regime seized power after the humiliating territorial concessions that Romania was forced to make in the summer and autumn of 1940, leading to the abdication of King Carol (again see earlier, Ch 7). As for the Croat Ustaša, it remained a small and largely unpopular fascist movement throughout its history, seizing power as a collateral result of the NS military campaigns in the Balkans.

THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA (NDH) AND THE USTAŠA

The case of the Ustaša-led regime in the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH), which was formed in the aftermath of the

NS invasion and dissolution of Yugoslavia in the spring of 1941, may be regarded as an ideal case of extreme complicity (Steinberg 2002: 23). A movement with clear 'fascist' credentials (Payne 2006), the Ustaša, under the leadership of Ante Pavelić, was formed in the late 1920s, and its members spent most of the decade in exile and detention, as the organisation was formally banned. However, this neither destroyed its organisational structures nor tamed its hypernationalist vision (see earlier, Ch 4). When the Nazis implemented their plans for the reorganisation of Yugoslavia in 1941, the Ustaše (as the group's members were called) resurfaced from exile and vied for power over the areas of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Yet, NS Germany had initially different plans. As happened in other cases (e.g., Romania, Hungary), the NS authorities preferred a less extreme, more dependable and controllable government solution for the new Croat state to the one epitomised by the extreme Ustaša, in spite of the latter's fascist credentials (Hory & Broszat 1964: 72). This explains why in early April they approached the leader of the Croat Peasant Party, Vladko Maček, as the best candidate to head the new government (Rivelli 1998: 34). When, however, the latter turned this offer down, the leader of the Ustaša movement, Ante Pavelić, emerged as the obvious alternative. The movement's deputy leader (and only major figure at the time in Croatia), Slavko Kvaternik, proclaimed the Independent State of Croatia on 10 April 1941 over the radio and then obliged Maček to pledge his support for the new regime. Armed with German and Italian support for the new state and regime, the Ustaša movement emerged from exile and the underground to form the necessary politico-ideological force for the transformation of the NDH into a 'fascist' satellite with Pavelić as its leader (*Poglavnik*; Jelavich 1983, II: 282; Jareb 2006: 459).

However, the Croat-Ustaša regime displayed some idiosyncratic features that set it apart from most other states within the wartime NS 'new order'. First, immediately after its establishment in April 1941, the new NDH leadership provided a full 'licence' to its police and paramilitary forces to launch a terrifying war of 'cleansing' against a large array of 'contestant others'. The regime interpreted the opportunity to create a homogenous nation-state expansively, as one that related not just (or even predominantly) to Jews or Roman but also to particular ethnic-religious 'contestant others'—in their own case the nearly two million Serbs residing in the NDH territories and making up about 30 percent of the state's total population (Jelinek 1980b). Second, unlike most collaborationist regimes, Pavelić and his Ustaše did not restrict themselves to the rounding-up of unwanted 'others' and handing them over to the NS authorities, as the majority of allied and collaborationist regimes did. Instead, they engaged in a veritable bedlam of direct eliminationist violence—a lethal blend of organised mass deportations, mass forced conversions, and direct murder, constructing their own infrastructure of annihilation. Starting with the Danica camp in late spring 1941, a network of concentration and killing facilities expanded across the territories

of Croatia (Tenje, Lobergrad, Jadovno, etc). The most infamous of these NDH camps, the large death camp complex at Jasenovac south of Zagreb, was established in August 1941 and continued to expand in the following years (Dedijer 1991).

The Ustaša regime wasted no time in taking full advantage of the authority granted to them after the Axis invasion and the delineation of spheres of influence in what used to be Yugoslavia. ‘Cleansing’ operations, particularly in areas with sizeable Serb communities, were reported only days after Kvaternik’s founding proclamation of the NDH. They were also fuelled by an agreement that involved the displacement of ethnic Serbs from the NDH in order to make space for the Slovenes expelled from the territories directly annexed to the Third Reich (Goldstein 2006: 420). These were followed by a series of legislative arrangements that set the tone of the regime’s aggressively ethno-exclusive future policies, particularly with regard to the Jews but also the Serb minority (e.g., the introduction of a blue band with the letter P to be worn by all Serbs inside the NDH, similar to the yellow equivalent for the Jews—Rivelli 1998: 38). A decisive step was taken with the ‘racial’ definition of who would be considered ‘a Jew’. The definition was more far-reaching than the NS Nuremberg stipulations, making substantial inroads into the categories of half-Jews (*Mischlinge*), illegitimate children, offspring of unmarried Jewish women, and spouses of ‘Jews’ regardless of their own ‘racial’ makeup. But it also introduced a distinction between Jews born in the territories of Croatia and/or by parents residing there and those who were not. This distinction—effectively one between indigenous and foreign Jews—would become very popular across wartime Europe (see earlier, Ch 6). The NDH, however, codified legally the distinction between Croat-born and foreign Jews, making the April 1941 Croat definition a *sui generis* hybrid of racial, religious, and nationalist norms (Kolanovic 1998). This definition enabled a full assault on the rights of the Jewish population within the NDH zone: regulation of marriage and sexual relations between Jews and Croats, removal of the former from any profession, and confiscation of their assets (Hilberg 1985 III: 710). A similar fate awaited Croatia’s Romani community, whose members were placed at a similar position with the Jews in terms of citizenship rights, were forced to register, and lost their possessions (Reinhartz 1991: 86). Other measures introduced swiftly included confiscation of property for Serbs and Jews, marriage regulations following a mixture of religious-ethnic-racial ideas, and restrictions in their movements and freedom of worship (Rivelli 1998: 45). As Jonathan Steinberg (1996: 179; 2002: 29) noted, “in the months of May and June 1941, it [the Ustaša regime] passed the laws that the Nazis had taken years to work out”.

But by far the most extreme manifestation of the Ustaša regime’s eliminationist intentions was the unleashing of a violent campaign of elimination against all its ‘enemies’—racial/ethnic and political. Pavelić met with Hitler in early June 1941 and elicited from him the ‘licence’ to follow “a

nationally intolerant policy [towards 'alien' minorities . . . that] must be pursued for fifty years, because too much tolerance on such issues can only do harm" (Trifkovic 1988: 139). How liberally this was interpreted by Pavelić became evident to both Germans and Italians in the weeks following the meeting. Italian and German occupation authorities watched the violence unfold and escalate with growing concern and disapproval (Gumz 2001: 1024; Kostich 1981: 13). The situation got out of control from the first moment of Croat independence, with the Axis authorities becoming increasingly pessimistic about the chances of restoring even a semblance of order in the Croat-administered sphere of the Axis empire in the Balkans (Scotti & Viazzi 1987). Officials in the Italian Army headquarters and in the foreign ministry in Rome were flooded by graphic descriptions of widespread brutality against Serbs and Jews throughout Croatia, to which they responded with disdain and often genuine revulsion (Steinberg 2002: 30; Rodogno 2006: 186–203). The initial inertia of the Italian authorities in the face of the Ustaša-driven eliminationist violence, and the attempt to maintain a policy of equidistance vis-à-vis Croats and Serbs, soon gave way to tentative protection granted to refugees flooding the Italian zone and growing unwillingness to cooperate with authorities in Zagreb and Berlin regarding the handing over of Croat Jews (Steinberg 2002: 50–134). Little by little the Italians started to provide refugee camps, food, and sanitation, but above all a respite from the escalating Ustaša-led violence just across the Italo-Croat border in Dalmatia.

By contrast, the NS authorities were troubled by something very different. Whilst in broad agreement with the Ustaša project of violently eliminating the Jewish and Romani population of Croatia, the Germans objected to the wanton nature of violence by unruly Ustaše squads—particularly against the Serbs, whose alleged racial 'defects' they acknowledged but did not consider as anywhere near proportional to the brutality of Ustaša violence—and to the wildly undisciplined nature of the operation (Gumz 2001: 1035–8).¹ The Wehrmacht High Command held strong anti-Slav prejudices that predated the rise of National Socialism but were nurtured further in the 1930s (Manoschek 2000: 164). They were eager to punish the Serbs for their 'treachery' back in 1914 that had cost so many German lives, for their noncooperation in the Axis plans (a situation that had prompted NS Germany to intervene militarily in the first place), and for their mounting resistance activities, particularly in the form of Chetnik (*četnici*) guerrilla warfare that intensified during the summer and autumn of 1941 (Milazzo 1975; Tomasevich 1975; Browning 1990; Shelah 1990). But the unsystematic, wild, and disorderly nature of the Ustaša operations clashed with the German army's more pragmatic and functional approach to the management of 'alien' non-Jewish populations and its methods of dispensing violence (Geyer 1986: 547; Gumz 1998, 1999). Numerous reports to and from the Wehrmacht general plenipotentiary in Croatia, Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, underlined in graphic terms the sheer brutality of the Ustaše squads

and identified the regime's state police commissioner, Eugen Dido Kvaternik, as the main culprit (Ramet 2006: 128).² The Ustaše were presented as a small group of exceptionally violent and unruly bandits whose behaviour contrasted sharply to that displayed by the rest of the NDH population, even amongst those groups that had no sympathy for the fate of the Serb minority (Gumz 2001: 1032; Goldstein 2006: 424). As the Axis authorities failed to curb the Ustaše excesses, relations between the Germans and Pavelić's regime deteriorated rapidly, nurtured by the intensification of rebel activities that the Germans saw to a large extent as the side-effect of the NDH's failure to control the situation (Hory & Broszat 1964: 72). Increasingly more vocal complaints started to reach Berlin, sometimes directly to Himmler or Ribbentrop,³ filled with evidence from a vicious circle of brutality (Hory & Broszat 1964: 120–6). Wehrmacht reports criticised Ustaše actions as “inhuman”, “animal-like”, and “in defiance of the laws of civilisation”!⁴ It was only Hitler's support for the regime (and Pavelić personally), his lack of any direct strategic interest in what was happening inside the NDH, and his indifference to the fate of the Serbs that shielded the regime from the vocal complaints of almost every other German agency and officer with knowledge of the situation in Croatia (Gumz 1998).

One should not of course exaggerate the differences between the Wehrmacht and the Ustaše in terms of violent behaviour during WW II (Steinberg 1996: 189). Nevertheless, the wealth of evidence pointing to a strong sense of revulsion experienced by Wehrmacht authorities at the practices of the Ustaša squads is indicative of a fundamental divergence between the two sides. Whilst Wehrmacht forces were perfectly capable of engaging in exceptionally brutal acts of mass murder against their enemies and were often motivated by ideological fanaticism, their use of violence was guided by specific jurisdictions and contained penalties for excesses that they regarded as unjustified or unwarranted (Reemtsma 2002). This dual nature of NS violence was manifested eloquently in Yugoslavia during the summer and autumn of 1941, when the German forces launched an exceptionally brutal reprisal operation against Jews in Serbia in response to the escalating partisan campaign by Serb guerrillas (Manoschek 1993, 2000). The introduction of a quota of 100 (Serb reprisal killings) to 1 (German victim) resulted in the summary execution of most male Serb Jews detained by the German forces, as well as of many interned Serbs (partisans and communists) and Roma—a total figure of around 20,000–30,000 casualties by the end of 1941 (Browning 1991: 44–7; Manoschek 2000, 2000b). Yet, whilst showing little evidence of moral scruple in authorising the merciless elimination of foes, the Wehrmacht guidelines for the implementation of the reprisal measures were obsessed with the prospect of unauthorised excesses, stipulating harsh punishment for any such eventuality. By contrast, the character of Ustaše eliminationist violence was far more rooted in Balkan traditions of banditry and ritualised revenge, with little respect for authority and imperious to any form of bureaucratic regulation (Carmichael 2002: 5). The

Ustaša regime had declared its determination to solve the 'Serb problem' through a combination of eliminationist measures (murder, ethnic cleansing, forced conversion). Judging from population statistics at the end of WW II, the Ustaše regime made horrifying progress towards its goal of total ethnic-religious purity in the three and a half years of its existence. But the policy of annihilation against Serbs continued to intensify in 1942–43, in response to the latter's refusal to convert, as a result of gathering momentum from earlier policies but also because of the intensification of resistance inside the NDH and Yugoslavia in general (Fein 1979: 102; Shelah 1990: 76).⁵ This, and the seemingly indiscriminate targeting of Serbs, rather than the intensity of violence per se, was what appalled the Germans. By contrast, the NS authorities in Yugoslavia could not conceal their satisfaction with the contribution of Pavelić's regime to the project of eliminating the Jews (Steinberg 2002: 45).

The atrocities committed in the massive death camp complex of Jasenovac demonstrate the extreme nature of the 'licence to eliminate' that the Ustaša regime claimed for itself in order to fulfil its extreme nation-statist vision (Hory & Broszat 1964: 102; Marrus 1989: 75). Of the total of approximately 500,000 Serb victims, up to tenth perished there, along with up to 20,000 Jews and 15,000 Romani, under conditions of utmost cruelty (Okey 1999: 263–79). In addition to those either directly murdered by the Ustaše squads or annihilated in the camps of the NDH, the regime came to an agreement with the NS authorities to deport the remaining Jews at a price of 30RM per person, starting late in the summer of 1942.⁶ This action, according to Mann, was the "price exacted [by the NDH] for being allowed to run their own state"; and it was a price that the NDH authorities had no problem in paying for their high-level connivance with the NS authorities, having themselves engaged since April 1941 in a pandemonium of eliminationist violence against their Jewish population (Mann 2005: 298). In other words, collaboration in the context of the NS 'agentic order' entailed an automatic endorsement of, and participation in, the project of Jewish elimination. Given the diffusion of anti-Semitism across Europe and the strong anti-Jewish feeling in so many countries, this implicit condition was anything but onerous to the authorities of these states, the NDH included. But the 'cleansing' of Serbs from the NDH territories demonstrates how empowering and potentially extreme the broad NS 'licence' could be, as well as how it could be interpreted as a political *carte blanche* for any form of 'cleansing' against a wide array of national 'others'. In fact, the intensification of Ustaša violence against the Serbs took place *in spite*, not because of the presence of NS forces. In many areas the withdrawal of Wehrmacht and SS forces coincided with the unfolding of the most terrifying violence. The same was observed in those areas which Italian divisions had initially occupied but then left in the summer of 1941 (Rodogno 2006: 189). In all cases, Ustaša eliminationist violence was raw, extreme, and fully cognizant of the unique opportunity of permissiveness that accompanied the

NS 'new order' in Yugoslavia. Yet, whilst being perfectly in accord with the Nazi plans for the Jewish 'final solution'—as a dependable 'agent' in a much wider undertaking—the NDH regime demonstrated a kind of autonomous, hard-to-control, and extremist agency that set it apart from most other state collaborationist 'agents' of the NS wartime empire.

SLOVAKIA AND THE SLOVAK PEOPLE'S PARTY (SLS)

If the case of the NDH provided the most extreme example of interpreting and implementing the 'licence' in the NS order, Slovakia presents a rather different picture regarding the relationship between fascism and genocide on the level of state collaboration. A constituent part of Czechoslovakia after WW I, during the interwar period Slovakia witnessed the emergence of an independence movement, spearheaded by an alliance between conservative nationalists, the Catholic clergy, and a constituency of indigenous 'fascists'. In the aftermath of the Munich agreement in September 1938, Slovakia acquired autonomy within the territorially disfigured Czechoslovak state and gained its full independence in March 1939 as a result of yet another NS coup in the region (Y Cohen 1989: 5–51).⁷ Like the NDH, independent Slovakia became a NS satellite state (Hilberg 1985, II: 719–42), but one in which the tensions between sovereignty and 'agentic' status, as well as between radical and more moderate approaches to internal 'cleansing', were far more pronounced.

The vehicle for the 'fascistisation' of Slovakia was the Slovak People's Party (*Hlinka Slovenská ľudová strana* or SLS, *Hlinka SLS* since 1925). It was founded by the Catholic priest Andrej Hlinka before WW I and became the main political pole of the pro-independence nationalist movement in the interwar period. The SLS was an ultranationalist, socially conservative, strongly anticommunist and anti-Semitic (albeit in the rather conventional 'anti-Jewish/Bolshevik' form) Catholic political movement that espoused the unity of nation and religion. In the 1920s it became increasingly critical of the centralism of the Czechoslovak state, as well as of the very notion of a political coexistence between Slovaks and Czechs ('Czechoslovakism'). As a result, it remained the most vocal representative of Slovak secession from the state and of full independence. After the declaration of autonomy in late 1938 and the de facto dissolution of Czechoslovakia in the wake of the March 1939 NS coup, the Hlinka SLS became the de facto governing party of the new independent, single-party state (Jelinek 1980; S Kirchbaum 1983; Crosby 1986).

The 'fascist' credentials of the party have been both acknowledged and questioned by the available literature on Slovakia (Zacek 1971; Vago 1975: 73–113; Payne 1997: 402). The 'fascist' ideological-political tendencies of the SLS unfolded gradually in the 1930s, through the party's increasingly closer links with the NS regime in Germany and its proceeding 'fascistisation'

in terms of style (the formation of *Hlinka Guard* as paramilitary formation; cult of leader; one-party system) and politics (ultranationalism, anti-Semitism leading to the deportation of the Jews). Its strong clericalism continued under the leadership of Monsignor Josef Tiso after the death of Hlinka in the summer of 1938, and was fused with ultranationalism (geared towards independent Slovak statehood) to provide the basis for an intriguing dialectics between *political religion* and *religious politics* (cf. Steigmann-Gall 2004: 88). One of the party's main slogans since the 1920s—"for God and Nation"—betrayed its fundamental belief that (ethno-exclusive) nationalism and Catholicism were the two interrelated pillars of the Slovak claim for 'rebirth' through independent statehood. The other post-1938 slogan—"Slovakia for the Slovaks"—appeared like a replica of so many other similar ultranationalist mottos espoused by (para-)fascist movements or regimes in the interwar period (e.g., Latvia and Estonia). But, taken together, the two SLS slogans betrayed a tendency towards political 'messianism' that made them willing participants in the NS history-making project of an alleged pan-European regeneration (Nižňanský 2004: 205–30).

To a large extent the radicalisation of the SLS's political agenda in the 1930s and particularly in the early 1940s resulted from the dynamism of NS Germany and from the sway that it held on many prominent members of the Slovak regime—most importantly, Interior Minister Alexander Mach and Prime Minister Vojtech Tuka. In this respect, one may speak of 'fascistisation' of a conservative-authoritarian-religious platform from within/above (Nedelsky 2001; Kallis 2003b) rather than of the genesis of an independent fascist constituency in Slovakia. From the first steps of the independence movement, Christianity and ultranationalism populated the nucleus of Slovak identity and attempted to reconcile the modern 'political messianism' of the latter with the theological messianic spirit of the former. In fact, unlike the Croat Ustaša, the SLS leadership perceived the state as an ancillary organisation to religion, rather than the other way round (Jelinek 1976: 80–90).

This dualism between Christianity and sacralised nationalism was reflected in the organisational development of the SLS. Initially, the creation of a paramilitary arm inside the movement (*Rodobrana* or Home Guard between 1923–27; then *Hlinka Guard*, HG) was intended to supply an internal defence force for the party under the command of the SLS leadership. This was officially reiterated in the October 1938 decree that institutionalised the HG as the only paramilitary organisation in Slovakia. But from March 1939 the HG became an increasingly autonomous group inside the SLS, placed under the control of Interior Minister Mach. Mach was a radical figure of the party, a Nazi enthusiast who advocated increasingly closer ties with Hitler's regime, and a vehement anti-Semite mesmerised by the radical 'cleansing' solutions of the NS regime. He and new PM Tuka, who officially headed the HG after 1938, formed a radical pole inside the new regime, challenging the more conservative-moderate line of the party's

clerical wing represented by Tiso. Tuka, who had been the inspiration behind the creation of Rodobrana in the 1920s, was also a leading figure of the *Nastup* faction within the SLS. The latter's radicalism led its members to see the party as part of a wider 'fascist new order' in Europe and to endorse biological criteria for both membership of the Slovak nation and 'cleansing' of others—particularly Jews, who made up roughly three percent of the Slovak population according to the 1941 census (Jelinek 1976: 63; Felak 1994: 125). In the end, the *Nastup* faction was absorbed by the HG, but it continued to represent a very different, far more radical and 'fascistised' ideological-political scenario for the SLS and the Slovak regime. Unlike the pole around Tiso, Catholicism for the Guardists was a facet of an ultranationalism that would not be compromised by the former's traditional ethical values. This explains why Mach, Tuka, and the HG became both the most vehement proponents of a 'final solution' to the 'Jewish question' in Slovakia and the main driving force behind the political/legislative decisions of 1940–42 that resulted in the mass deportation of Jews from the country (see following).

The competition between the two main factions within the SLS was actually given formal endorsement with the so-called 'Salzburg compromise' agreed between the Slovak and the NS regimes in July 1940. Apart from formalising the satellite status of Slovakia in the NS 'new order', the agreement stipulated that the single-party Slovak regime based on the full authority of the SLS would accommodate a dual-command structure, with the HG remaining largely autonomous from the political centre represented by Tiso. This marked the beginning of a further radicalisation of the HG's political stance. Even more radical factions within it emerged—for example, *Náš Boj* (Our Struggle), clearly emulating NS stylistic and ideological principles, with training often provided in Nazi camps directly by SS personnel (Kirschbaum 1970: 260). Tensions came to the fore with regard to the policy towards the Jews. Tiso was by all standards an advocate of anti-Jewish legislation, intent upon promoting a 'solution' from the first moment that he became leader of the SLS. But the Slovak state moved slowly towards the resolution of the 'Jewish question', labouring over legal arrangements and definitions until the summer of 1941.⁸ Typically for that (early) period, the NS authorities chose not to exercise direct pressure on the Slovak government for a speedier solution on 'racial' grounds. But privately they could not conceal their frustration with the slow pace of *Entjudung* followed by Tiso. As a party/state with strong clerical roots, the Tiso-led faction of the SLS initially favoured a formula of discrimination based on religious affiliation and nationality (i.e., the criterion of residence in Slovakia since 1918) but avoided 'racial' definitions in fear of appearing too close to NS Germany or touching upon the thorny issue of the 'Slavic race', to which Slovaks were considered to belong.⁹ Nevertheless, in spite of this seeming caution and restraint, a stream of eliminationist measures were introduced in a piecemeal fashion between 1939 and 1941: removal of Jews from the press (3.1939),

from civil service and the military (4 and 7.1939), from ownership of land (6.1939), from state education (9.1939); introduction of low quotas for the 'cleansing' of the allegedly overrepresented Jews in professions (7-9.1939; Nižňanský 2004: 212).¹⁰ A few months later, in April 1940, the *Entjudung* of the economy became state policy, but once again the tempo of change was both slow and uncertain, particularly in the absence of a clear legal definition of who was considered a 'Jew' by the Slovak state (Hilberg 1985, II: 723). Unsystematic implementation and enforcement of the measures, corruption, and a relative lack of popular enthusiasm resulted in a situation where, in the words of contemporary NS reports, "not very much happened" for the Slovak Jewish population.¹¹

All this was set to change. In the aftermath of the Salzburg compromise (7.1940), responsibility for the anti-Jewish measures passed to Mach—from a German point of view, a far more dependable and committed agent than Tiso and his faction. The results were both immediate and devastating.¹² The pace of economic 'nationalisation' (a euphemism for the removal of Jewish influence from Slovak economy) picked up (Rothkirchen 1998). In the autumn of 1940 the regime attempted to resettle the (more than 15,000) Jews of Bratislava (Pressburg) and a little later tried to introduce the 'yellow star' in east Slovakia, but protests from church authorities and the local population forced the withdrawal of the latter measure. Mach endeavoured to build up a genuine anti-Jewish momentum by introducing more eliminationist measures (restrictions for parks, markets, streets; curfew) and by establishing two special work camps for Jews in July 1941.¹³ But the real turning point came with the introduction of a legal regulation of Slovak citizenship that became known as the 'Jewish Codex' and came into effect in September 1941. The Codex contained almost three hundred specifically anti-Jewish regulations. It followed the Nuremberg 'racial' precedent very closely but also incorporated religious principles that were more in line with the clerical roots of the SLS. In so doing, however, the actual definition went much further than the Nuremberg one, including not only more 'half-Jews' but also those with only one Jewish grandparent, so long as they had continued to practise the Jewish religion until April 1939. It also cancelled the—much-favoured amongst Catholic circles—distinction between practising and baptised Jews (Reitlinger 1953: 385–8; Nižňanský 2004: 215). This shows eloquently how the adoption of more conventional religious anti-Semitic principles in legislation could outdo even the NS anti-Jewish eliminationist agenda in its scope of persecution. In the case of wartime Slovakia the conjunction of a NS-inspired 'racial' platform with a more conventional (but highly restrictive) religious basis for defining who was a 'Jew' pushed the country's Jewish community into a dual 'negative space'—as both religious and racial outcasts—and facilitated the escalation of subsequent eliminationist measures.

The radicalisation of Slovak 'racial' legislation from 1941 onwards was driven by the fanaticism of the HG and of the Mach-Tuka faction. With the

introduction of the ‘Jewish Codex’ this group was clearly gaining the upper hand, against the backdrop of a more timid and less fanatically enforced policy of gradually disenfranchising and socio-economic marginalisation that Tiso had overseen in 1939–41. In March 1941 the SLS party publication *Slovak* set the tone for the radicalisation of eliminationist attitudes within the SLS by arguing that

[the church] will appreciate the opinion of objective science, which had to be recognised by our, as well as any, national legislature. In the definition of the racial question, one must not raise religious motives where there is no room for them, and which the Church rejects. (*Slovak*, 23.3.1941, in Jelinek 1976: 87)

Tiso was not at ease with this kind of language and reasoning. He did not attempt to arrest the evolution of anti-Semitic legislation in Slovakia during the crucial 1939–41 period, but he was also willing to grant thousands of ‘presidential exemptions’ to Jews. German documents reviewing the situation of Jews in Slovakia are replete with statements of exasperation at what Berlin perceived as self-subversion of the legislation by the Slovak church, the government, and sections of Slovak society. The main difference between the Tiso and the Tuka-Mach factions was not one regarding the desirability of the Jews’ elimination from Slovakia; it was instead a difference of speed and method—but a rather significant one for that matter.

The introduction of the Codex in the autumn of 1941 proved instrumental in another crucial way. It accelerated the process of asset confiscation (Nižňanský 2004: 216) and opened up the way for the resettlement of the entire Jewish population residing in Slovakia. The operation started in October from Bratislava and drew the attention of the NS authorities in Berlin and Vienna. Without exercising any pressure on the SLS regime Germany raised the question of ‘deporting’ the small group of Jews with Slovak nationality from the Reich. This initiated a discussion that resulted in an agreement to hand over Slovak Jews to the Third Reich. The initial accord, signed in March 1942, involved the deportation of 20,000 Slovak Jews to the NS eastern occupied territories, as requested by Himmler himself. The NS authorities managed to exact an extortionate charge of 500RM per deportee (as Hilberg noted, a hugely inflated price when compared to the equivalent rate paid by the Croats—30RM; see earlier—and amounting to nearly four-fifths of the income generated through Jewish taxation—Hilberg 1985, II: 728), which, however, the Slovak government accepted.¹⁴ Once logistical issues about transport arrangements had been settled, the operation started in April and picked up speed in May. When informed of the content of the agreement by Mach towards the end of March 1942, Tiso stressed that he “did not want to know anything about it, but [he] will do nothing against the action”.¹⁵ Three days later, however, he appeared to have undergone a change of heart (which even the Germans described as

“incredible”), declaring himself fully in favour of the action, in spite of the open condemnation of the project by the Vatican authorities and by their delegate in Bratislava, Giuseppe Burzio (Morley 1980: 71–101; Blet 2000: 172).¹⁶ By mid-May the German authorities were reporting satisfactory progress, with more than 25,000 Jews already deported and as many scheduled to be transported in the following month.¹⁷ In the following August the figure reached 67,000, including 8,000 Hungarian Jews who were deported to Hungary.¹⁸ On 2 October 1942 Mach announced excitedly that the “Jewish question in Slovakia [had been] solved” through deportation, “humanely” [and] “without doing violence to Christian principles”!¹⁹

News of the deportation agreement generated protests from Slovak church authorities who were eager to exempt baptised Jews, even if the 1941 Codex had removed any favourable clause for their protection. Formally the Slovak government had to pass a new constitutional law through the parliament in order to authorise the deportations. This took place on 15 May 1942. But the law contained a surprise: a redefinition of ‘Jewish’ status in the direction of exempting from deportation those baptised before 14.3.1939.²⁰ Evidently, this reformulation was a compromise solution between the hard line advocated by Mach, the increasingly vocal concerns expressed by the Slovak church and Vatican authorities (Rothkirchen 1967), and Tiso himself, who continued to occupy an awkward, often incongruent middle position. But by early 1943, with the NS machinery of genocide in full motion, this exemption became a glaring anomaly, especially since it was upheld in a NS satellite country. This time Berlin started exercising indirect but genuine pressure on Tiso to conclude the ‘solution to the Jewish question’ by deporting the rest (by that time around 25,000) of Slovakia’s Jewish population. Once again Mach preempted his president by announcing the resumption of transports in April 1943.²¹ Tiso continued to waver until the end of 1943, but he relented after a veiled threat from the German Foreign Office emissary Edmund Veesenmayer that Hitler himself was about to make a compelling “intervention” in the discussions (Hilberg 1985, II: 738). The final roundup of the remaining Jews in Slovakia took much longer to implement than the Tiso-Veesenmayer agreement had anticipated. It finally took place in October 1944, after NS Germany had assumed *de facto* control of its former satellite and in spite of the growing hesitations of the Tiso government. This time it involved 14,000 Jews, bringing the total number of deportees to more than two-thirds of the estimated 90,000 population in 1939.²²

Thus, wartime Slovakia was integrated into the NS ‘agentic order’ through a combination of willing state collaborationism, internal pressure from a radical ‘fascist’ faction led by Mach and Tuka, as well as subsequent NS coercion in terms of escalating what had already started as a voluntary undertaking (Tönsmeier 2003). Tiso’s position became increasingly untenable, particularly since he continued to operate in the context of two ‘agentic orders’—not just the NS one but also the international Catholic order headed by the Vatican and replicated inside Slovakia by the indigenous

church institution. His regime took up the NS ‘licence’ to eliminate the Jewish presence inside Slovakia but shied away from annihilating them directly (as the Croat NDH authorities did), opting in the end for the readily available—and less morally troubling—solution of deportation to the Reich. At the same time, pressure from the Vatican was far more pronounced in the case of Slovakia, since the regime was headed by a cleric and had strong Catholic roots, both historic and social (Wells 1998: 106; Wistrich 2001). This explains the repeated diplomatic interventions of the Vatican authorities between 1941 and 1944, directly to Tuka and Tiso or via Slovakia’s minister at the Vatican Karol Sidor, condemning the policy of deportation as “un-Christian” and pleading with the Slovak government to halt them.²³ Until the summer of 1941 the SLS regime had appeared to be following the softer path to eliminationism, modelled according to the NS pre-1939 triptych of civic-economic-social marginalisation but also with some vestiges of the traditional ‘*numerus clausus*’ approach. But the escalation of Slovak policy vis-à-vis the Jews was driven first from inside the ranks of the SLS and then intensified through pressure from Berlin. In this respect, the Slovak case study may serve to highlight how the initially empowering NS ‘licence’ could in fact at the same time enhance and restrict the autonomy of indigenous agents. In the case of Mach, the ‘agentic order’ offered an opportunity to implement legislation voluntarily and a ‘licence’ to overcome any hindrances, whether political (e.g., Tiso’s hesitations) or ethical. In the case of Tiso, the ‘licence’ transformed itself into an increasingly burdensome and troubling commitment from which it proved extremely hard to disengage at a later stage.

WARTIME ROMANIA: ION ANTONESCU AND THE IRON GUARD

The case of Romania under Antonescu provides another example of how the political and moral ‘licence’ could empower indigenous state authorities within the NS ‘agentic order’, and how it could be administered locally for the more effective elimination of undesirable ‘others’. We saw earlier (Ch 7) how General Ion Antonescu assumed power in the aftermath of King Carol’s abdication in September 1940 and immediately established a new ‘Legionary’ regime in alliance with the remnants of the Iron Guard. After the unsuccessful Legionary coup of January 1941 and the purging of the fascist Iron Guard, the Antonescu regime continued to issue and implement new restrictive legal regulations aimed at the elimination of Jewish influence on Romanian life whilst doing little to protect Jews from low-level (local and spontaneous) intimidation and assault. But it was the launch of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941 that offered the lethal momentum for the desired settlement of the Jewish question in Romania. Of all Axis leaders Antonescu was the only one who had been informed by Hitler personally of the plan

to invade the Soviet Union (Ancel 2005: 252; 1986, IX: Doc 162). This also explains why the Romanian government decided to remove Jews from the northern frontier zone in anticipation of the attack, allegedly as a precautionary national security measure. Implicit in this measure was the veiled allegation that the Jews were untrustworthy in a war against Bolshevism—in other words, that their loyalties lay more with the Soviet state than with Romania (Ioanid 2000: 63).²⁴ As the Axis attack in Bessarabia faltered during the first days and the inhabitants of the frontier zone were exposed to destructive raids from the Soviet air force, insecurity and tension led to a predictable anti-Jewish outburst at Iași on the night of 25 June. Rumours that the devastating Soviet air raids had been caused by signals given by local Jews and that shortages of food were the result of Jewish profiteering activities were released by local authorities but spread and acquired their own momentum through word of mouth amongst people on the street. Government and local authorities fuelled public rage, channelled it dexterously, and did nothing to contain it when it went out of control. Legionary squads spearheaded public scenes of violent intimidation and murder, openly exhorting those who had gathered to participate (Mann 2005: 304). Thus, the arrested Jews were delivered to the senseless wrath of the crowd. As the pogrom escalated on 29 June, the purported guardians of civic order watched gleefully. The atmosphere of ‘anything goes’ produced a situation where the desensitising effect of mass wanton violence perpetrated in front of the authorities encouraged wider participation and bred a further escalation of cruelty. When the authorities eventually decided to step in and organise the deportation of the remaining Jewish prisoners, it was already far too late for the majority of the local Jews. More than 8,000 Jews were murdered—on the spot, during their internment at local police headquarters, or during their ‘evacuation’ from the area. In the following days, violence also spread throughout the region, with unruly groups wreaking havoc in villages with Jewish communities (Ancel 1987; Florian 1997; ICHR 2004: 18).

The Iași pogrom offers a chilling example of how the eliminationist ‘licence’ was transferred from the state to regional authorities and, through them, to local populations. The latter aspect will be discussed in more detail in the final chapter of the book (Ch 10). What concerns us at this stage, however, is the degree of state collusion in this enterprise. As early as January 1941 Antonescu had extended a murderous ‘licence’ to the Romanian military forces to “carry out your duties with your heads held high; and *you should not fear the day of judgement, when it comes . . . Your struggle is just*” (emphasis added).²⁵ The Antonescu regime capitalised on its advance knowledge about the NS plans against the Soviet Union and planned a genuine war of elimination against the Jews. The opportunity arose out of the envisaged reoccupation of Bessarabia and north Bukovina (territories ceded to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940—see earlier, Ch 7) by the Axis forces and the restoration of Romanian sovereignty over them. To that effect mobile detachments of the Romanian Secret Intelligence Service (SSI) were

dispatched to the north a few days before the invasion of the Soviet Union was scheduled to start, armed with information about the whereabouts of the Jewish population, and authorised to act with the utmost ruthlessness against them (Carp 1994: 121). Also, the whole ‘evacuation’ operation in Iași resulted from a combination of local initiative and state authorisation. Antonescu himself spoke two weeks later about the “historic opportunity” to rid Bessarabia and north Bukovina of its Jewish population (Carp 1994: Doc 5). With the improvement of the military situation on the eastern front in early July, Romanian authorities started arresting Bessarabian Jews and—in the margins of this operation—Romani with a view to expelling them across the river Dniester and, ideally, further away into the western provinces of NS-occupied Ukraine. This project had clearly nothing to do with the Germans, who were happy to cooperate with the Romanian gendarmerie in ‘cleansing’ the Jewish population of reconquered Bessarabia but could do without the concentration of a large number of Jews in an area that was still considered crucial in military terms for protecting the rear of Operation Barbarossa’s southern front (Hausleitner 2004: 137–48).

The following months showed how expansively the NS ‘licence’ had been interpreted by both the Wehrmacht and the authorities at Bucharest. During July and August 1941 more than 20,000 Jews were executed by either Romanian soldiers or members of Ohlendorf’s Einsatzgruppe D (Ioanid 2000: 108). At the same time, Romanians and Germans were locked in an indirect confrontation over the traffic of Jewish evacuees—the former continuing to devise ways to transport the Jews across the river, the latter erecting barriers and trying to halt the operation (Hilberg 1985, II: 769–72). Antonescu had elicited Hitler’s authorisation to proceed ruthlessly with this operation when he met with the German dictator ten days before the launch of Barbarossa (Kershaw 2000: 383; Deletant 2004: 2). But he was already looking further than a mere operation of eliminating Jews from the Romanian lands. On the advice of the director of the National Statistical Institute, Sabin Manuilă, he was dreaming of a much more extreme plan for creating a homogeneous Romania, involving the expulsion of every minority group (Romani, Hungarians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Russians, etc) from the acquired territories and their colonisation with ‘blood Romanians’ (Achim 2001). The NS authorities did not object in principle to such plans. As in the case of Croatia, however, they were alarmed at the disorderly, haphazard manner in which they were being executed and at the pace of evacuations. As the military situation in Bessarabia improved and the Wehrmacht was ready to move deeper into Soviet territory, an agreement was signed between German and Romanian representatives, demarcating the area between the rivers Dniester and Bug (Transnistria) as a zone of Jewish concentration transferred to the Romanian state.²⁶

Transnistria became synonymous with the extreme violence, disorganisation, and oscillation of the Romanian eliminationist policies in 1941–43 (Shachan 1996; Ancel 1997; Deletant 2004). By the end of 1943 around

150,000 Jews from Romania, alongside about 25,000 from the country's sizeable Romani community (c. 260,000 according to the 1930 census or 1.5% of the population—Crowe 1991: 69; Rimmel 1993; Deletant 2004), had already been deported there, accommodated in terrible ghettos and work camps, as their fate was still being debated between the Romanian and the NS authorities. A similar fate awaited more than 130,000 Ukrainian Jews who were driven into Transnistria during the 'cleansing' operations from December 1941 onwards (Golbert 2004). In an intoxicating mood, the regime's deputy premier and foreign minister, Mihai Antonescu, encapsulated the sense of historic opportunity:

In all our history there has never been a more appropriate, more complete, more far-reaching, more free moment for our total ethnic liberation . . . for a cleansing of our nation. . . . Let us utilise this historic moment. . . . If need be, use machine guns . . . I tell you that the law does not exist. . . . So, let us give up all formalities and use this total freedom. I assume all the responsibility and claim that the law does not exist. (in Ancel 2005: 258)

However, the already appalling situation in Transnistria was about to get even worse. In late autumn 1941, and with Bessarabia nearly 'cleansed', the Antonescu regime proceeded with the expulsion of the Jewish population from north Bukovina too.²⁷ In spite of the anticipated rapid increase in the flow of deportees into the Transnistrian reservation, the Romanian government had not formulated a coherent plan with regard to the fate of those driven out to Transnistria. As a result, thousands perished from hunger, disease, or exhaustion there whilst awaiting the conclusion of the Romanian-German negotiations (Corni 2002: 37). In any case, the Romanian regime showed very little interest in their welfare during this period, leaving them to their own meagre devices and subjecting them to random pogroms (Deletant 2004: 2, n3). The behaviour of the Romanian military and police forces was so brutal that even the NS authorities privately could not hide a sense of disapproval at their unruly and violent conduct (Shachan 1996: 218). In fact, after a sabotage operation against the Romanian headquarters at the Ukrainian port of Odessa in October 1941, Antonescu outdid the Nazis in terms of the severity of reprisals, ordering executions on the basis of a ratio of 200:1 for every officer and 100:1 for every soldier killed (Dallin 1957: 41; Mayer 1990: 261; Butnaru 1992: 126–9). This pogrom left behind more than 20,000 dead—mostly Jews²⁸—and was followed by similar actions across Transnistria. Jews from various camps in the region were transferred to facilities such as Bogdanovka, where more than 50,000 of them were murdered in the course of twenty days in late December/early January (Ancel 1986, V: 133).

The unwillingness of the NS authorities to deal with the expelled Romanian Jews, in conjunction with the absence of a clear plan of elimination at

Bucharest and the continuing flow of evacuees, created an explosive situation in Transnistria during the winter of 1941/42. The usual Nazi distinction between *Ostjuden* (Jews living in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union) and those living in 'European' states was clearly present in NS thinking vis-à-vis the fate of Romanian Jews (Ancel 2005: 260). As early as 1939 NS authorities were eager to make significant distinctions between the Jews of the old (Regat) Romania, the group of *Ostjuden* ("with typical negative qualities") residing in the territories of Bukovia and Bessarabia, as well as those Jews who spoke German and lived side-by-side with the allegedly inferior eastern Jews. This became clear to Antonescu when his attempts to deport the bulk of Romanian Jews from the pre-1940 territories of the state were met with NS protests and a demand to await the formulation of a comprehensive NS policy in the near future (Ancel 2005: 261). Thus, the wave of executions launched on the initiative of local Romanian forces was part of an improvised strategy to solve the 'problem' at minimal cost. Armed with the 'licence' from Antonescu himself and operating in the context of the wider NS 'agentive order', the Romanian gendarmerie embarked upon a ruthless policy of elimination in the Golta region, where most camps, including Bogdanovka, were situated (Deletant 2004). With epidemics rampant and under the pretext of health concerns, Romanian and Ukrainian units continued to kill at a horrifying pace throughout the first three months of 1942.

Eventually, the NS authorities stepped in to facilitate and accelerate the 'solution' to the 'Jewish question' in Transnistria in the context of a wider plan for a *judenfrei* Europe. A gradual shift of responsibility for the executions took place between the winter and the spring of 1942, marked by growing German involvement in the planning and implementation of the 'cleansing' operations. In fact, by early 1942 the NS authorities had assumed de facto control of the operation, at least partly in reaction to the terrible consequences of the Romanian disorderly management that threatened to turn into a catastrophe for the entire population of the region.²⁹ The new situation relieved the pressure on the Romanian authorities but whetted the appetite of Antonescu, who reverted to his earlier dream of a totally homogeneous, racially 'cleansed' Romania. In anticipation of a swift NS victory against the Soviet Union, the Romanian leader initiated plans for the evacuation of all Jews (at least 280,000), Romani, political opponents, and other dissidents from the remaining territories of the state, including those Jews from Regat Romania exempt from earlier 'wild' deportations. It appeared that plans to that effect were finalised around July 1942 (Hilberg 1985, II: 784; Ancel 1986, 4: no. 41).³⁰ By late September the NS authorities had also dealt with the practicalities of the transport of the Romanian Jews to the extermination camps in Poland (Ancel 2005: 203).³¹

Then, however, the Antonescu regime made a dramatic U-turn that surprised even the Germans. In October 1942 it appeared that the Romanian regime no longer desired the deportation of the Jewish population from old

Romania (Ance! 2005: 202; Butnaru 1992: 124)! This spectacular change of heart was not taken on board immediately by the Germans, given that Antonescu himself continued to pay lip service to the goal of 'cleansing' Romania, and that small-scale deportations continued to take place in the autumn of 1942. After all, the Romanian dictator had been an eminently dependable and committed ally and, as Hitler himself had admitted, "is pursuing far more radical policies . . . than we have" (Goebbels 1948: 19.8.1941). However, after months of futile German pressure to resume the planned deportations, even Himmler admitted defeat in January 1943 (Hilberg 1985, II: 790). Thus, those Romanian Jews who had survived the large-scale deportation actions of 1941–42 and remained inside the territories of Regat Romania were spared from the tragic fate that awaited other Jewish populations during 1943–44—particularly those in Hungary (see Ch 9). Even so, however, up to 280,000 Jews perished in the hands of the Romanian authorities—murdered on the spot, in ghettos or special camps, starved to death or delivered to epidemics in Transnistria, attacked by fascist (mainly Legionary) activists, and 'ordinary' people. In addition, up to 130,000 Jews from northern Transylvania (transferred to Hungary in 1940) were also murdered in 1944. As for the 25,000 Gypsies deported to Transnistria starting in June 1942, about half perished there by the end of the war.

NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND NS PRESSURE: THE (VERY DIFFERENT) CASES OF ROMANIA, BULGARIA, AND HUNGARY

Ion Antonescu's decision to halt deportations in late 1942 indicated a high degree of opportunism; by that time the earlier certainty of a German victory had receded and so had the allure of a closer alignment with the NS regime. This said, the manner in which the Romanian authorities changed their policy so dramatically and refused to give in to any NS pressures for a comprehensive 'final solution' offers crucial insight into the nature of the 'licence' extended to semisovereign collaborationist states in the context of the NS 'agentic order'. As noted earlier, wild deportations and 'cleansing' operations had been initiated eagerly by the Romanians at a time when no pressure from the NS authorities existed—to an extent even against the wishes of the Wehrmacht, the German Foreign Office, and the RSHA. By contrast, when political will had dwindled in Bucharest, no German protest or indirect coercion whatsoever could override the objections of the collaborationist state. Refusal to comply with any NS expectations or demands was a facet of the NS 'agentic order', precisely because participation in the latter was, to a crucial extent, voluntary and not the result of direct coercion. Romania, like Croatia, Slovakia, and other collaborationist states, took advantage of the NS 'licence' to advance visions of homogeneity-through-

cleansing but only to the extent that this was politically and economically expedient to them—not beyond. Their semisovereign status within the NS *Neuordnung* meant that complicity was largely voluntary and noncooperation was regarded as an option both by the regimes themselves and by NS authorities.

A similar volatile attitude was displayed by the Bulgarian authorities, who in 1943 refused to honour previous agreement with the NS authorities for the deportation of the country's Jewish population. Of course, by that time Jewish communities living in Bulgaria had already paid a terrible price. As a close ally of NS Germany, signatory to the Tripartite pact in 1940, and major beneficiary of the territorial redistribution that followed the German assault on the Balkans in the spring of 1941 (cession of territories in eastern Macedonia and western Thrace from defeated Greece and Yugoslavia), the Bulgarian government of Bogdan Filov had hardened its stance vis-à-vis the Jews during 1941–43. After dispatching a delegation from the Interior Ministry under Alexandur Belev to Germany in order to study the NS legal anti-Jewish paradigm, a new citizenship law ('Defence of the Nation') was introduced in October 1940 (Genov & Baeva 2003: 158–61). According to its stipulations, Jews defined only in religious terms were excluded from Bulgarian citizenship. The bill became official law in January 1941 after a protracted, heated debate in parliament and in spite of strong protests by deputies and sectors of the Bulgarian Orthodox church (Todorov 2001b; Reicher et al. 2006: 55–70). With the annexation of the new lands in Thrace and Macedonia in July 1941 came the decision to deprive their Jewish populations of Bulgarian citizenship. In addition, throughout 1942 Jews in Bulgaria were deprived of their assets, subjected to all sorts of social and cultural restrictions (including legislation obliging them to wear the yellow star), and saw their already depressed living standards suffer considerably.³² Then in early 1943 German and Bulgarian authorities negotiated the 'solution to the Jewish question' in Bulgaria, starting with an agreement to deport 7,112 and 4,221 Jews from the new territories of Bulgarian Macedonia and western Thrace respectively, as well as a further number of 'Jewish-Bolshevik' elements from across the country—a total of 20,000 (Oren 1968; Marrus 1989: Ch 4; Ofer 2004: 141).³³ The plan was open-ended, not explicitly ruling out the deportation of the entire Jewish population of Bulgaria at an unspecified "later stage".

And unspecified it was. Whilst by the end of March 1943 Bulgarian authorities had all but completed the roundup of Jews from the newly acquired lands and their transfer to Treblinka—and attempted to extend the operation to the town of Kyustendi, west of Sofia—King Boris III did not conceal his intention to keep the Bulgarian Jews as labour force inside the country when he met Hitler in early April (Genov & Baeva 2003: 164). Strong opposition in the parliament—headed by the chamber's vice-president, Dimiter Peshev—and across sectors of Bulgarian society, as well as a series of petitions from deputies, intellectuals, and church figures, resulted

in the temporary suspension of the action in old Bulgaria (Todorov 2001b; Midlarsky 2005: 326–30). Yet, in May 1943 efforts were renewed, this time targeting the Jews of the capital Sofia. This time protest took also the form of extraordinary public demonstrations and even more vocal condemnations of the act as barbaric. The result was the expulsion of nearly 20,000 Jews from the capital and other cities and their pauperisation—but not deportation to the camps of the GG as envisaged by the Germans. With the deterioration of the Axis military fortunes in the coming months the Bulgarian authorities followed an increasingly uncooperative stance, with Boris himself declaring to Hitler in August 1943 that Bulgaria would neither assist further the crumbling Balkan front nor deport more Jews. By October the expelled Jews were allowed to return to the cities of their residence. In August 1944 a series of major amendments to the 1941 'Defence of the Nation' law rescinded most legal, social, and cultural (but not economic) anti-Jewish regulations (Bar-Zohar 1998; Genov & Baeva 2003: 165–9).³⁴

The shielding of the Bulgarian Jews was not the only exception to the drive towards elimination during WW II. Hungary too appeared eager to restricting its eliminationist policies to the more conventional 'numerus clausus' formula. The 1941 Hungarian revision of the citizenship law (see earlier, Ch 7) in a more pronounced 'racial' direction (including approximately 100,000 baptised Jews too) did not trigger a further escalation in anti-Jewish policy. In fact, after the crushing defeat of the Hungarian forces in Ukraine in 1943 the Horthy regime was desperately trying to find a way to disengage itself from the NS 'agentic order' by conducting secret negotiations with the Allies for a separate armistice (Kertesz 1978). Notwithstanding the increasing pressure from Berlin, sometimes even exercised personally by Hitler over Admiral Horthy, for a radical 'solution' to the country's *Judenfrage* (Goebbels 1948: 18.4.43; Kershaw 2000: 582), the situation of the Hungarian Jews stabilised between 1941 and early 1944. This is not to say that the Jews in Hungary (725,000 according to the 1941 census, 40% of whom resided in the territories granted to Hungary from 1938 onwards) did not suffer in wartime. As we have seen (Ch 4), eliminationist measures dated as far back as 1920—in other words, far earlier than most other European countries. The numerus clausus model was pioneered in the aftermath of the Trianon treaty and the Béla Kun revolution at a time when no fascist 'licence' even existed and no such excuse could be invoked. Its introduction marked a dramatic shift in the objectives of Hungarian nationalism: from the expansive (if vaguely inclusive) 'Magyarisation' agenda of the post-1867 period to one of insecurity and exclusionary policies motivated by the dramatic reduction of Hungarian territory post-1918 and the recurrent fears about the 'death of the nation' (Ranki 1999: 1–2; Cole 2003: 62–64). The measures introduced by the Horthy regime in 1920–21 and post-1938 severely reduced the participation of the Jews in the socio-economic sphere. In consequence, living standards fell, dramatically so in the case of workers and professionals, who were particularly affected by the new restrictions (Don 1997). Furthermore,

complying with NS requests for labour, the Hungarian government made available thousands of Jews, many of whom perished whilst working in the Reich (Braham 1981: 39–51; Braham 1977; Spoerer 2002). The absence of a more aggressive official anti-Jewish policy and of the brutal eliminationist violence witnessed elsewhere in Europe until 1944 concealed and mitigated an uncomfortable truth that would become painfully evident after the NS invasion in 1944: that a large number of Hungarians did not have compassion for the fate of their country's Jews and would seize the opportunity offered by others to improve their own condition from the misfortune of the Jewish community (Deák 2001: 162).

In spite of all these caveats, however, Hungary's Jews under Horthy remained protected from the far worse fate that befell Jews in other satellite Axis countries. In a 1943 NS interim report about the pace of Jewish annihilation in the NS 'new order', the number of Jews still in Hungary (estimated at 750,000) was by far the largest, followed by a wider margin by Romania's 300,000 surviving Jews after Antonescu halted the deportations.³⁵ The Hungarian 'exception' until early 1944 appeared like an 'island' mainly by comparison within the NS 'new order' (Sakmyster 1994: 400; Deák 2001: 158). In September 1942 Eichmann had identified the Hungarian attitude to the Jews as a particularly weak spot in the campaign against the European Jewish population, providing a largely undesirable (to the Nazis) shelter for persecuted Jews across the continent.³⁶ In the following month the deputy foreign secretary, Martin Luther, dispatched a memorandum to the German minister at Budapest, Dietrich von Jagow, in which he reiterated Hitler's determination to 'solve' the Jewish question across Europe and authorised him to ask the Hungarian government "to drive forward on its part the measures which are necessary for this purpose" (Evans 2000: 4.3.h; Cole 2003: 52). This point was expressed even more forcefully in January 1943, this time with a veiled threat that noncooperation could not be tolerated by Berlin for much longer (Braham 1981, I: 236). However, the Hungarian government sought explicit guarantees for the "continued existence [of the Jews] in the east" in the aftermath of any deportation action, given the persistent 'rumours' about the death camps in the GG. Luther was sufficiently (and misleadingly) reassuring, but eventually the Hungarian Prime Minister, Miklós Kállay, refused to comply, invoking Hungarian sovereignty and presenting the Hungarian *Judenfrage* as an internal matter to be solved by his government alone (Reitlinger 1953: 416)! Hitler could no longer conceal his exasperation with Horthy: in May 1943 he described the situation in Hungary as "the least satisfactory" and privately accused the regent of being "tangled up with the Jews" (Goebbels 1948: 8.5.43). A few weeks later he was already talking of "more stringent measures [required] . . . to solve the Jewish question [in Hungary]" (Kershaw 2000: 584).

By late 1943 the NS authorities had also become well-aware of the Hungarian government's secret negotiations with the Allies for a separate peace, at a time when the military situation in the east was rapidly deteriorating,

especially after the Red Army's seemingly unstoppable march towards Central Europe. The situation came to a dramatic climax with the German invasion and occupation of Hungary in March 1944—not as a result of Horthy's actions but due to NS exasperation with the increasingly noncooperative stance of the Hungarian regime and the assistance of the most prominent indigenous (pro-)fascist forces. On this occasion, direct NS pressure and eventually action transformed the 'licence' into a genuine, nonnegotiable diktat. Yet, the 1944 NS forceful intervention in Hungary was the exception, not the norm. It was also authorised by Berlin a last resort, after a long time had elapsed waiting for the Hungarian government to comply voluntarily with the NS demands and largely driven by unrelated military and geopolitical considerations (see following, Ch 9).

What emerges from the analysis of these case studies is the cumulative devastating effect of two types of 'licence to kill'. The first was exercised autonomously by the semisovereign authorities in their own domain, against Jews, sometimes Romani, and on one occasion (Independent Croatia) against a particular national 'contestant other' (Serbs). This 'licence' originated in national and local government, from where it was delegated to state institutions (army, police, etc) and sometimes to the populations themselves, directly or implicitly. The second form of 'licence' had to do with the prevailing atmosphere of permissiveness that had resulted from NS agency and dynamism. It was the cumulative effect of Nazi agency elsewhere, its missionary political determination, and its function as a legitimising precedent. This type of licence was indirect and diffuse, imperceptible but omnipresent. The confluence of the two 'licences to kill' intensified the potential for elimination across Europe, unleashing national and local agencies, and resulting cumulatively in a vicious circle of violence breeding more—and more intense, brutal—violence. Yet sometimes the two licences had different limits and generated genuine tensions between NS, national, and other indigenous agencies.

Overall, semisovereign Axis-allied regimes remained far more independent and proactive 'agents' in the NS 'new order' than 'puppet' regimes under direct NS tutelage. Especially during the first half of the war, when no or very little direct NS pressure existed, they took the initiative in their own sphere of jurisdiction and embarked on realising a utopian national state without 'others', whilst at the same time presenting their actions as part of the wider NS crusade for a 'new Europe'. Ideological conviction, political opportunism, suppressed desire, and an empowering sense of unbound permissibility—all played a facilitating role in the escalation of eliminationist violence in the NS new order. These semisovereign regimes interpreted the NS licence as a fissure of history and time that supplied an opportunity to 'solve problems' with limited moral, political, or ethical accountability (Blass 1993: 30–50). They found the moment opportune to settle matters with their own 'others' inside their territories, accumulate wealth from forceful expropriations, and terrorise their opponents, sometimes against or beyond

NS wishes. By declaring their commitment (whether ideological, opportunistic, or both) to the NS-led international project of ruthless ‘cleansing’ semisovereign regimes were also staking a claim in the future redistribution of power inside the NS ‘new order’. Some regimes dutifully (if not always enthusiastically, as in Slovakia) carried out NS plans and met targets set by Berlin; a few (e.g., NDH) outdid the Nazis in scope, brutality, and targets. Other regimes refused to fully emulate NS eliminationist practices or even to succumb to the growing NS pressure in the later war years (e.g., Bulgaria, Horthy’s Hungary until early 1944). Even more interestingly, regimes that had initially demonstrated a strong commitment to the NS project appeared less willing to do the same from 1943 onwards—that is, when NS Germany lost its aura of invincibility (e.g., Romania).

This wide spectrum of attitudes to the NS ‘final solution’ underlines why a distinction between NS ‘licence’ and NS ‘agency’ needs to be borne in mind when analysing patterns of collaboration during WW II. The two often overlapped, but sometimes they developed their own independent momentum or pointed in different directions. Occasionally, NS ‘agency’ could turn ‘licence’ from a vague mandate into pressure for conformity or even threatening ultimatum. Yet, in the majority of cases, ‘licence’ did not depend on direct NS ‘agency’, allowing friendly regimes to implement policies attuned to their own ambitions and desires. The NS ‘agentic order’ did include a mechanism of bullying and coercion but only amidst an array of possible solutions, most of which depended on the willingness and initiative of (semi-)sovereign friendly regimes. That Horthy enjoyed such leeway until 1944, that Antonescu got away with his dramatic U-turn in the autumn of 1942, that Bulgaria’s refusal to deport its Jews was not overruled forcefully by the NS regime at all, and that Croatia’s eliminationist policies went way beyond what was deemed acceptable by the NS authorities encapsulate both the open-ended nature of the NS ‘licence’ and the degree of autonomy that each ‘agent’ fascist regime possessed. Whilst NS agency proved crucial in the annihilation of the Jewish communities inside the Axis ‘new order’, the fate of each country’s Jews was also largely determined by the attitude and decisions of national governments—factors that could often make all the difference between survival, persecution, and mass murder.

9 Fascist Disciples as ‘Agents’ The ‘Fifth Column’ of the NS New Order

The role of fascist movements and parties in radicalising, popularising, and legitimising a ‘licence to hate’ particular ‘others’ has already been noted (see Part II). But fascist groups also made a crucial input in the eliminationist violence that consumed wartime Europe. Participation in, or instigation of, pogroms, as well as protracted intimidation, persecution, and denigration of ‘others’, became trademarks of fascist activism during the 1920s and 1930s before being further escalated during WW II. Mostly out of ideological conviction and due to their commitment to the NS ‘agentic order’, the members of these groups were far more likely to seize the initiative in terms of inciting and discharging wanton violence against their chosen victims. Very often they outdid the official government of their states in intimidation and violence, precipitated requirements set by the NS authorities, carried them out with unsurpassable enthusiasm, exceeded targets or set their brutal agenda independently. They started pogroms or helped the occupiers carry them out more devastatingly, stepped up the intimidation of Jews, antagonised local regimes installed under the aegis of NS Germany, and even conspired with the Nazis and extremist indigenous forces against their country’s sovereignty. In the majority of cases—and with some notable exceptions, such as the Romanian Iron Guard and the Hungarian Arrow Cross—they had been unsuccessful in achieving a strong political and social presence prior to the outbreak of WW II. But when the shadow of NS occupation fell on their countries, they felt that their moment too had come. Particularly in Western Europe, where fascist and ‘national socialist’ movements had usually fared poorly in elections or failed to sustain political momentum after a good result (e.g., Léon Degrelle’s Rex movement in Belgium that polled 11.5% in 1937 but was reduced to around 4% two years later), collaboration with the NS Germany was both an ideologically driven and a pragmatic choice. By aligning themselves with the NS occupiers and professing a fanatical commitment to the NS ‘new order’ in Europe, they also hoped to exchange their loyalty with power and political domination in their countries under the NS aegis. They believed that they could offset their lack of popular support by pledging themselves wholeheartedly to the NS missionary cause and thus

capitalise on the widespread impression of German invincibility during the first three years of WW II.

This political gamble worked in some cases—and only in the short term—but failed in others. The Nazis had their own, very particular views about the future of a reorganised European ‘new order’—and these views rarely coincided with the inflated ambitions of indigenous fascist collaborationist groups. Throughout the 1930s the NS strategy of cooperation with fascist-style groups, parties, and regimes across Europe had been overwhelmingly determined by political pragmatism rather than ideological affinity. In fact, Hitler seemed to prefer established authoritarian regimes (e.g., Horthy’s in Hungary) or less radical antisystem alternatives (e.g., Goga in Romania—see Ch 7) over genuine ‘fascist’ movements, which he often considered unpredictable and untrustworthy. During WW II this attitude did not change substantially. When NS Germany occupied Norway and Denmark in 1940, the ambitions of the two indigenous fascist movements (Vidkun Quisling’s *Nasjonal Samling* in Norway, and Frits Clausen’s Danish National Socialist Workers Party, DNSAP) were thwarted by NS plans to award power to more trustworthy and politically dependable agents (Kirchhoff 1994: 104–6). Quisling headed a small, overwhelmingly unpopular fascist ‘fifth column’ (Jung 1956) that offered willing ideological collaboration to the NS occupiers and proved crucial in undermining the national government during the time of the German attack in 1940 (Hayes 1971; Petrick 1992). He had been active in establishing contacts with Berlin, including a meeting with Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg in December 1939. When Germany invaded Norway, he attempted to precipitate developments by announcing a ‘national government’ under his premiership at the same time that the NS occupying forces were negotiating directly with the Norwegian authorities. However, the Quisling coup was overruled by the occupiers, who chose one of their own people, the Gauleiter of Essen, Josef Terboven, to head the Reichskommissariat for the occupied Norwegian territories. Eventually Quisling got his hands on power—his vision for a ‘national government’ materialised in February 1942, with him as first minister. At last in power, he and his movement spearheaded Norway’s full alignment with the NS ‘new order’ and the introduction of measures necessary for the ‘final solution’ of the Jewish question in the country. By contrast, Clausen never got the power that he desired (Bohn 2000, 2005).

Nevertheless, fascist leaders and groups, whether in power or not, epitomised a very different kind of ‘agency’ in the NS ‘new order’. They kept pressing for radicalisation, precipitating NS demands and subverting the last vestiges of sovereignty afforded to their national governments. In their case, the belief in the history-making qualities of the NS-fascist project was so powerfully embedded in their worldview that they had already overcome rational, institutional, and standard moral caveats. They were by far the most ‘willing executioners’, eager to preempt or seize the merest hint of ‘licence’, ready to act with or without instigation, and exceed targets in an

open-ended campaign of eliminating their 'contestant others'. Predictably, they were overeager to pledge their support to the NS missionary cause—and not only within their own countries: as we will see, many of them joined Nazi military formations and fought alongside the Nazis from 1941 onwards. Most remained committed to the defence of the NS 'new order' until the very end, even after the mirage of a reorganised and regenerated Europe promised by the Nazis had been shattered by military developments. They often displayed a fanatical interest in NS grandiose plans, such as the prospect of resettling communities from their own countries in the occupied eastern territories. Furthermore, members of fascist movements joined voluntary police formations in large numbers, becoming the main source of such recruitment in most cases. When it came to the persecution and elimination of the Jews, there was an almost direct correlation between strength of fascist movements in particular areas of a country and extent of Jewish deportations/victims (Croes 2004: 67; 2006).

In the following section I will concentrate on two case-studies of ideological collaboration with the NS regime that took place in the margins of formal 'state collaboration'. The examples of the 'Paris collaborators' in Vichy France and of Ferenc Szálasi's Arrow Cross in Hungary are of particular significance for three reasons. First, and like the case of so many other fascist leaders and movements across wartime Europe, they became the most enthusiastic and 'willing' agents of the NS new order. Second, they operated in the context of already established pro-Axis regimes but never ceased to subvert them by pressing for an even closer alignment with NS Germany and by doing everything they could to promote it. Third, their ideas and actions had a devastating effect on the elimination of French and Hungarian Jews—in France going far beyond the already strong anti-Jewish tendencies of the Vichy regime and in Hungary undermining from within Horthy's decision not to deport Hungarian Jews to the Reich. The discussion of these two case-studies will lead to a more general assessment of ideological collaboration between indigenous fascist 'agents' and the NS regime with regard to the escalation of elimination against Jews during WW II.

THE 'SOLDIERS OF FASCISM': THE FASCIST 'FIFTH COLUMN' AS AGENTS OF THE NS NEW ORDER

One of the most striking paradoxes in the history of interwar fascism in Europe was the fact that it combined an ideological outlook dominated by ultranationalism and aggressive chauvinism with a commitment to an international crusade against common 'enemies' (communism, liberalism, often Jews, etc). This international dimension of fascism grew significantly in the 1930s, with Fascist Italy and (after 1933) NS Germany functioning as the repositories of allegiance, either in collaboration or in competition with

each other (Griffin 1994; Rodogno 2006: 44). The two paradigmatic fascist regimes followed different techniques in this respect. Mussolini always thought of his regime as the symbolic centre of the new “fascist century” (Mussolini 1932) and pursued every possible network in order to establish ideological, political, and cultural links across Europe under the tutelage of his regime. He promoted the establishment of Action Committees for the Universality of Rome (*Comitati d'azione per l'universalità di Roma*, CAUR; Cuzzi 2005; see also earlier, Ch 3) and came very close to creating a proper ‘fascist international’ to rival the socialist equivalent in his abortive 1934 Montreux conference (Veneruso 1981: 165–75). Hitler, on the other hand, had little interest in such institutional and symbolic initiatives but promoted a political alignment of kindred forces, mainly through bilateral contacts and geopolitical alliances. In 1935 the Führer authorised the creation of the Anti-Comintern pact, initially only with Japan but soon with the participation of Italy and, during WW II, other Axis countries too. Meanwhile, the Axis alliance grew from a political to a military bloc in 1939, and to a ‘tripartite pact’ with the inclusion of Japan in 1940 before turning into an even wider alliance by admitting Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria (Michalka 1985).

But fascists in other countries too perceived themselves in this dual capacity—as harbingers of national regeneration *and* willing agents of a pan-European and universal project of rebirth in opposition to established ideologies and political forces. The latter dimension was exemplified during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). This was a conflict that from the beginning attracted international attention as a symbolic proxy war between nationalism (fascism included) and socialism. Apart from the military involvement of the Soviet Union, Germany, and Italy in the hostilities, a number of fascists from different countries became volunteers in the Spanish conflict who hastened to help the cause of the Republican national government, along with others from the European left on the side of General Franco’s forces. Two prominent leading figures of the Romanian Iron Guard, Ion Mota and Vasile Marin, joined the battle and lost their lives, subsequently becoming symbolic ‘martyrs’ of both the Legionary movement and the international fascist cause. Their funeral took place in Bucharest in February 1937, attended not only by members of the movement but also symbolically by the German and Italian ambassadors in Romania (Deletant 2006: 32; Sandulescu 2007: 259–69).

Therefore, the *de facto* internationalisation of fascism in the 1930s recast indigenous fascist movements as both radical challengers to the established order within their own countries and as potential Trojan horses of international fascist subversion. Even in some countries governed by authoritarian/‘para-fascist’ governments authorities moved preemptively against more radical fascist movements in order to secure their power and avoid such a prospect of revolutionary internal subversion by the radical fascists (Kallis 2004b). In 1934 the fascist National Syndicalist Movement

(*Movimento Nacional-Sindicalista*, also known as 'Blue Shirts') in Portugal was forcefully dissolved by the dictator António Salazar (Costa Pinto 2000). A year earlier the Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss outlawed the Austrian NSDAP in fear of a joint German-Austrian Nazi coup and a forced 'union' (*Anschluss*) with the Third Reich. Dollfuss was right to be worried, for in June 1934 the coup did materialise and, even if it eventually failed, it claimed his life (Lewis 1990). For a large part of the 1930s many fascist parties—Iron Guard, Arrow Cross, the Latvian Pērkonkrusts, the Lithuanian Geležinis Vilkas/Iron Wolves, the Croat Ustaša, etc—had been officially banned, even if they maintained their organisational structures and often resurfaced under different party names.

Generally, when not directly and autonomously exercising power, fascist elements were viewed with suspicion, fear, or even hostility by state authorities due to their seemingly unpredictable radicalism and sense of international loyalty to Berlin and/or Rome (Kallis 2003c). This fear became even more pronounced during WW II, particularly in countries fighting against the Axis or following a course of neutrality. On 22 May 1940 the British government issued Defence Regulation 18B, which gave the right to the British government to detain and intern people of pro-NS/fascist sympathies, in order to avoid possible subversion from within and the spreading of defeatist propaganda, even if the danger was actually minimal and the fears exaggerated (Goldman 1973; Thurlow 1999). As a result, the leader of the British Union of Fascists (BUF), Oswald Mosley, other leading figures of the movement, as well as radical anti-Semites, were immediately arrested. At roughly the same time the Dutch government interned members of the country's National Socialist Movement (*Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland*, NSB) for the same reasons. The Belgian government too cracked down on 'fascist' groups in both the Walloon and the Flemish regions, arresting all leaders suspected of pro-German or at least anti-Belgian feelings: the leader of Rex and Verdinaso, Degrelle and Joris van Severen, respectively, were placed under detention in France until after the armistice (where the latter was killed), whilst the head of the Flemish National Union (*Vlaamsch Nationaal Verbond*, VNV) was imprisoned, only to be released shortly afterwards (Chertok 1975: 391–5).

HUNGARY, 1944: THE TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HORTHY, IMREDY'S FASCISTS, AND THE ARROW CROSS

The case of Hungary is revealing of the complex relation between semisovereign states in the NS 'agentic order', their indigenous fascist constituencies, and the NS state. As we saw in Chapter 8, relations between Horthy's regime and the NS authorities had reached a critical point by early 1944. This happened primarily because of the reluctance of the former to acquiesce

in the NS demands for the deportation of Hungarian Jews, and the anger of the latter with Horthy's wavering commitment to the Axis war (Kerekes 1966). The Germans were also unhappy with the attitude of the prime minister, Miklós Kállay, who had succeeded the pro-German László Bárdossy in 1942. A meeting between Hitler and Horthy in April 1943 took place in a poisoned atmosphere, with the Führer accusing the Hungarian regent of following "the wrong policies" vis-à-vis both the Jewish question and the Axis (Goebbels 1948: 260). Further reverses in the east, the mounting number of Hungarian casualties, and the collapse of Mussolini's regime in Italy in July 1943 convinced Kállay that it was high time Hungary moved out of the Axis alliance, albeit in a cautious manner that would hopefully not provoke German reprisals. At around the same time that Horthy met with Hitler to discuss the fate of the Hungarian Jews (April 1943), Kállay started exploring the possibility of an early negotiated peace with the Western Allies. Contacts were renewed in the aftermath of Mussolini's removal from power (July 1943), and an understanding was eventually reached that would involve the withdrawal of all Hungarian forces from the eastern front and guarantees for Hungary's postwar territorial integrity. By that time the German authorities were in full knowledge of the Hungarian contacts with the Western allies and prepared a contingency plan for the occupation of Hungary (code-named 'Margarethe I'; Fenyo 1972: 123).¹ Although the operation was planned as a fall-back solution in the event that direct diplomatic pressure failed, the Arrow Cross and other rightist forces with pro-fascist/NS leanings inside Hungary established closer links with the NS regime and offered their support for a military solution. When eventually the Hungarian government recognised the new pro-Western government under Pietro Badoglio in Italy and continued its efforts for the disengagement of Hungarian troops from the eastern front, the German disdain for Kállay reached a breaking point and Hitler decided to act along the lines envisaged by Operation Margarethe I (Kershaw 2000: 616). In mid-March 1944, and as the Red Army was advancing fast towards Central/Eastern Europe, he summoned Horthy for the last time and announced to him the imminent small-scale occupation of Hungary (Horthy 1957: Ch 20; Deák 2001: 159). The Führer accused Kállay of disloyalty and betrayal of the alliance, invoked military security issues for his decision, and promised to respect overall Hungarian sovereignty.²

Whether this was the main reason or the excuse for what soon turned into a forced *Gleichschaltung* of Germany's Hungarian ally into the project of eliminating the Jews remains a central point of historiographical controversy (Conway 1986; Cole 2003: Ch 3). Undoubtedly, the swiftness with which Eichmann and the *Sonderkommandos* moved immediately after the occupation demonstrates that the fate of the Hungarian Jews was definitely no mere footnote to the operation, even if—as many have argued—it was not the primary factor behind the timing of the German decision (Braham 1997: 37). Clearly, the subsequent operation against the Hungarian Jews,

unique as it was in its ruthless pace, could not have possibly been carried out without willing complicity at every level of the political and military administration inside Hungary (Ranki 1999; Cole 2003: 66). Within the course of two weeks the 'haven' of Hungary had been transformed into a fully 'coordinated' anti-Jewish state: compulsory wearing of the yellow star, dismissal of Jews from most professions, registration of property, *Entjudung* of the economy, restriction of movement, prohibition of many social activities, and, finally, systematic ghettoisation in five concentration areas across the country (Hilberg 1985, II: 830). Having ironed out the details of the massive logistical deportation operation Eichmann insisted that the evacuation process be started even before the completion of the rounding-up and concentration stages. With a pro-German cabinet in place since March under Döme Sztójay the machinery of elimination was now in full swing. From the time of the first transport in mid-May to the beginning of July about three-fifths of the (742,800, according to the Wannsee figures) Hungarian Jews were deported (Braham 1981 I: Ch 13; Braham 2004: 173).³ The question, however, of the Budapest Jews was allowed to fester long enough to allow Horthy time to move—this time halting the deportations under the guise of Hungarian sovereignty on 7 July and replacing Sztójay with Géza Lakatos in late August 1944 (Braham 1981 II: 797). The Germans did not retaliate immediately, but the decision to remove Horthy altogether had already been taken in Berlin. The success of the Red Army in invading Hungary during October 1944 and Horthy's increasingly desperate negotiations with the Russians for armistice only forced the pace of developments. As a result, on the 16th both Horthy and Lakatos were arrested by the NS authorities—a day after the decision to stop fighting had been taken by the Crown Council following a preliminary agreement with the Soviet Union on armistice conditions.

Enter Ferenc Szálasi, leader of the fascist Arrow Cross-Hungarist movement in Hungary. The 'Arrow Cross'—a symbol-name describing various coalitions and fusions between a plethora of ultranationalist, self-proclaimed 'national socialist', and fascist groupings, including Szálasi's 1935 (later dissolved) Nation's Will Party and his subsequent Hungarist Movement (Payne 1997: 415–7)—had continuously grown in support throughout the 1930s, reaching 25 percent of the national vote in the 1939 elections (Nagy-Talavera 1970: 140–59; Szöllösi-Janze 1989: Chs 1–3). At that point Horthy decided to intervene, banning the party and imprisoning its leader. Szálasi was released in 1940 and moved swiftly to create a 'fascist' political alternative to Horthy's regime by merging with another ultrarightist group whose name (the Hungarian National Socialist Party, under the leadership of Count Pálffy) left little to imagination about its ideological and political loyalties. In spite of the obvious allusions of the new party's name, Szálasi's fascist brand of socially revolutionary 'Hungarism' (*Hungarizmus*—see earlier, Ch 4) was less avowedly pro-Nazi than other elements of the Hungarian fascist right, such as the heirs to the

‘Szeged ideal’ and those around former prime minister Béla Imrédy (Nagy-Talavera 1970: 142). As a result, the opportunistic fusion had come to an end by the autumn of 1941, leaving Szálasi largely isolated and faced with a new formidable opponent that enjoyed Berlin’s full support—the ‘Hungarian Revival and National Socialist Alliance’, formed through a fusion between Imrédy’s and Pálffy’s parties. On their part, the NS leadership distrusted the Arrow Cross, preferring either a cooperative Horthy or the pro-German, more predictable and loyal constituency of the Imrédy-Pálffy Hungarian fascists. In March 1944 NS authorities attempted to co-opt the Arrow Cross in the context of a grand ‘fascist’ coalition under the Regent but Szálasi refused. Instead, they had to rely on the willing cooperation of a cabinet whose key positions were occupied by members of Imrédy’s Alliance. The moment for the leader of the Arrow Cross, however, did come in mid-October 1944, after the NS authorities decided to invade Hungary. Horthy was forced to appoint Szálasi in Lakatos’s place just before abdicating under German pressure. The new PM (and, provisionally, Regent) reassured the NS leadership about Hungary’s “cordial relationship” with the Reich, and ensured that the fate of the country’s Jews be placed under his government’s exclusive jurisdiction (Nagy-Talavera 1970: Chs 7–8; Sakmyster 1994: 95).

It is not easy to ascertain to what extent the aid of Hungarian fascist/pro-German collaborators contributed to the ensuing brutal elimination of the country’s Jewish population. The dynamics of native collaborationism in Hungary with regard to the ‘solving’ of the *Judenfrage* had become evident to the NS authorities since at least 1942. Then Eichmann had been independently approached by Hungarian pro-German officials with a plan to arrest those Jews who were fleeing through Hungary but he refused to take any initiative whilst a ‘solution’ to the *Judenfrage* in Hungary was still pending. As emphasised in a letter sent to the German Foreign Ministry in late September 1942, Eichmann was not prepared to target those Jewish refugees in an ad hoc manner, preferring instead to wait until “Hungary is ready to include [its own] Jews also within the framework of these measures” (Braham 1981: 283).⁴ Clearly, although German patience with Horthy’s procrastination tactics was running out, the NS leadership was still trying to avoid a direct confrontation with the Hungarian regime, safe in the knowledge that, should this necessity arise, it could count on a strong pool of native supporters. In the crucial months after the first German intervention in March 1944 the NS eliminationist project could not have possibly been carried out so efficiently and swiftly without the enthusiastic collusion of indigenous groups and authorities who often interpreted the NS ‘licence’ as a *carte blanche* for legal measures and violent reprisals—beyond, or even regardless of, any German demands (Karsai 1985: 107–27). In fact, it was German caution and Horthy’s wilful procrastination rather than the weakness of an indigenous eliminationist anti-Jewish momentum that delayed the extension of the ‘final solution’ to Hungary. A fascist ‘fifth column’, however,

was active, barely checked by Horthy's balancing act and overeager to seize the opportunity when this arose in March 1944 and again in the following October (Braham 1999).

Admittedly, more than half of Hungary's Jews (c. 430,000) had been rounded up and deported under the Sztójay government between May and 7 July—that is, before the final NS coup and Szálasi's rise to power (Cole 2003: 191). By contrast, the four-month Arrow Cross regime (October 1944–February 1945) oversaw the evacuation of up to 50,000 from the remaining 200,000 Jews to the Reich, following German demands to that effect (Braham 1981, II: 835; Payne 1997: 418).⁵ Nevertheless, Arrow Cross members were instrumental in rounding up the Jews, organising their 'march', and escorting the victims to the border with Germany, since by that time the railway infrastructure had been destroyed. During these marches they abused, robbed, and killed many Jews.⁶ Even Szálasi eventually felt compelled to put an end to the 'marches' of Jewish slave labour towards the Reich, due to their dreadful conditions and exceptionally high death toll (Hilberg 1985, II: 858). In Budapest the surviving Jews (with the exception of a small number of 'protected' foreign citizens who were placed in reserved housing of a separate 'international ghetto') were thrown into a ghetto (Biss 1966: 278–86). Consisting in only 240 buildings for about 44,000 Jews, the ghetto was sealed in early December 1944 and became a 'negative space' of Jewish absence at the heart of Budapest. From there Arrow Cross squads removed and murdered up to 20,000 (Bauer 1997: 204; Ungváry 2005). Thus, the violence unleashed under the Arrow Cross was the coup de grâce to Hungary's Jewish community, after months of violent persecution and deportation under Sztójay with the full support of Imrédy's pro-fascist faction (Nagy-Talavera 1970: 230).

VICHY FRANCE: PÉTAÏN, LAVAL, AND THE 'PARIS COLLABORATORS'

The complex relationship in Hungary between an increasingly impatient NS Germany, a disillusioned semisovereign partner government under Horthy, and a radical indigenous—albeit by no means unified—fascist constituency was unique in its volatility. However, the role of indigenous fascist collaborators in the NS 'agentic order' was also crucial in other countries. In the case of France postwar 'Gaullist' historiography did not consider the Vichy regime an integral part of national history. Since the prevalent discourse of *résistance*—that is, of the noncompliance of the majority of the population to the rationale and policies of the regime—had imposed upon the Vichy state the label 'collaborationist', it was far easier to discard Pétain and his associates as acolytes of the NS aggressor, following orders and implementing uncritically Hitler's wider designs. With the Vichy regime reduced to the status of a 'nonstate' or an aberrant historical parenthesis in postwar French

historical parlance the prevailing postwar narrative for the 1940–44 Vichy period ruled out any meaningful discussion of the regime's place in national history (Conan & Russo 1998; Kallis 2003: Introduction).

In 1972, however, Robert O Paxton published his groundbreaking account on the Vichy regime, which demolished the notion of an 'alien' element in the body of French national history. Paxton convincingly demonstrated that the Vichy authorities carried out their political programme, including the persecution of the Jewish population in their area of jurisdiction, not just in direct response to NS demands but often far in excess of what was asked or expected from Berlin. Rather than resisting German orders, eliciting crucial concessions from the occupiers, or "shielding" France from a far worse fate—as Pétain himself claimed in 1944 (in Blond 1966: 469)—the Vichy regime displayed remarkable diligence in supplying French workers and handing over Jews to the NS authorities (Paxton 1972: 364). The role of such a prominent French politician of the Third Republic and later pillar of the collaborationist regime as the Foreign Minister Pierre Laval leaves little doubt as to the essential complicity of sectors of the French ruling elite to the NS project—a complicity that, as Paxton argued, was not simply the result of compliance to external pressure but divulged a degree of enthusiastic commitment to the main ideological and political premises of the aggressors (Marrus & Paxton 1981; Bartov 2000: Ch 2).

For Paxton and other scholars in subsequent years (Bertram 1980; Sweets 1986; Rouso 1987; Zuccotti 1993) the French population also bore a large share of responsibility for the fate of the country's Jewish population, both under Vichy rule and after the annexation of the 'free zone' by NS Germany in 1942. This should not divert attention from the actions of an increasing number of French citizens in the direction of helping Jews, either actively (by risking their lives to protect them) or indirectly (by not becoming informers, by obstructing the work of the authorities, or by implementing directives loosely). The brutal actions, however, of the Vichy authorities against the country's Jewish population and the submissive attitude of large sectors of the native population point to the existence of a strong anti-Jewish current associated with a sense of nationalism and 'patriotic duty', the roots of which stretched back to the late nineteenth century. Thus, Paxton concluded, the relatively high (in comparison to other states of the NS *Neuordnung*) proportion of Jews who survived the period of Vichy rule and NS occupation in France (around 75%—Zuccotti 1993: 80–89) should in no way be attributed to the way in which the Vichy authorities devised and implemented anti-Jewish measures or to any putative "shielding" of France from the potentially far worse fate of a "German satellite". Instead, incidental personal—rather than organised and systematic—assistance, small acts of nonconformity with the regime's regulations, and, above all, timing and luck were the principal reasons for this extraordinary story of survival (Ryan 1996; Birnbaum 2000: Ch 11).

The history of the Vichy regime contains ample evidence of collaboration in every possible form—official ‘state collaboration’ in the highest echelons of government; incidental and/or indirect complicity (*Gelegenheitskollaboration*); and ideology-driven, fanatical, and consistent ‘collaborationism’. The cooperation of the Vichy authorities under Pétain was broadly expected by the Nazi occupiers from the beginning; what did surprise the NS authorities was the eagerness behind this compliance and the often excessive enthusiasm with which the Vichy ‘state collaborators’ endorsed the ideological-political parameters of the NS project of *Neuordnung*. The October 1940 anti-Jewish law passed by Vichy (the notorious *Statut des Juifs*) defined Jews in stricter and more race-oriented terms than the equivalent in the NS-occupied northern zone of France; the reasons for this had nothing to do with direct NS pressure on Pétain’s regime (Griffioen & Zeller 2006: 439). Yet neither Pétain nor his Foreign Minister, Pierre Laval (who attempted to situate himself between Pétain and the more ardent French supporters of NS Germany), appeared to be enthusiastic *ideological* converts to the NS vision of pan-European ‘cleansing’. Laval excelled in a form of unscrupulous political opportunism that was dictated overwhelmingly by his desire to gain power. For him, as for Pétain, the NS new order offered a ‘licence’ to implement a programme of alleged domestic regeneration and to dismantle many of the features of the hated Third Republic. Unlike the Marshal, however, Laval also perceived himself as a dominant figure in the future, postwar reorganisation of France within a new, NS-dominated European order (McMillan 1992: 140). His subsequent disagreements with Pétain (see following) were caused by his determination to pay almost any price to the Nazis (including sacrificing so many Jews) in order to secure his future in the NS ‘new order’. It was precisely this combination of personal delusion, megalomania, and amoral opportunism that established him in the eyes of so many French people and scholars as the main culprit of ‘state collaboration’ during the Vichy period (Davies 2002: 113–15).

A distinction, however, between Vichy ‘state collaboration’ and the agency of another, more radical group—the so-called ‘Paris collaborators’ (Ory 1976; Burrin 1986, 1995; Frank 1994: 87–100)—is essential. This group of “ultras” (Defrasne 1989: 78) epitomised the spirit of Hoffman’s “collaborationism” (1968) that transformed them into genuine “soldiers of (international) fascism” to the very end (Gordon 1977: 43–70). The group consisted of an array of forces of the ‘new’ interwar French radical right, united in their fundamental opposition to the Third Republic but also displaying a much stronger ideological support for National Socialism and for the prospect of a fascist ‘new order’ in Europe. They promoted a distinct ‘third-way’ discourse in French politics (Bastow 2001) that in the 1930s and—more clearly—after 1940 translated into blatant pro-Nazi sentiment and full ideological alignment. They grew impatient with the perceived timidity of Pétain’s leadership but did not possess the necessary organisational unity to pose a viable challenge to Pétain, due more to personal than

ideological differences amongst them. Their deluded ideological vision of French and pan-European regeneration under NS Germany blended with political fanaticism and once again personal megalomania. Whilst Pétain came to view them with growing suspicion, the NS authorities in Berlin and Paris continued to lend them limited support in the context of their otherwise preference for the more traditionally authoritarian Vichy solution. The Nazis were happy to sustain them as a useful radical voice in French politics and as a possible alternative centre of power should the Pétain experiment have failed, but they knew that the main figures of the ‘Paris collaborators’ were neither popular or reliable nor united enough to seriously challenge the Marshal (McMillan 1992: 142; Davies 2002: 118; Baruch 2006).

Undoubtedly, the existence of a genuine pro-Nazi fascist ‘fifth column’ inside France put pressure on Pétain to ensure that this more radical alternative at the disposal of the Nazis was neutralised (Davey 1971: 31). For, whilst Vichy authorities seized the opportunity—provided to them through the NS ‘licence’—to dismantle the sociopolitical and cultural edifice of the Third Republic, people like Jacques Doriot, Eugène Deloncle, Robert Brasillach, and Marcel Déat chose to embrace the ideological vision of a NS-*Neuordnung* with almost missionary zeal and became its dedicated ‘agents’ (Davey 1971; Frank 1994: 88). There is no better example of this fanatical ‘agentic’ spirit than the participation of Jacques Doriot in the French Legion of Volunteers against Bolshevism (*Legion des Volontaires Français contre le Bolshevisme*, LVF) that recruited members for Operation Barbarossa during the summer of 1941 (Burrin 1986: 430). Doriot, leader of the PPF (see earlier, Ch 4), emerged after the French armistice as the sort of radical opposition from within the right that made Pétain uneasy (Allardyce 1975). He continued to receive (increasing) subsidies from NS Germany and performed admirably the role of an agitator for a closer ideological and military cooperation between France and Germany. He fully subscribed to the biological version of anti-Semitism espoused by the Nazis (Kestel 2005: 382), fought for most of the war on the side of the NS forces, received a decoration by the Wehrmacht for his contribution, and eventually became a member of the so-called exiled Vichy delegation in Sigmaringen, Germany (Burrin 1986: 49–60; Cointet 2003). Other figures from the ranks of the PPF held important positions in institutions that proved crucial for the elimination of Jews in France. Joseph Darnand, for example, founder of the *Service d’Ordre Légionnaire* (1941), which in 1943 formed the basis for the notorious paramilitary *Milice Française*, became the head of the French secret police that oversaw the arrest and deportation of Jews. Paul Marion became Minister of Information and propaganda in the Vichy government. Marc Augier—the founder of the profascist and internationalist *Jeunes de l’Europe Nouvelle*—followed Doriot to the eastern front in the summer of 1941 and oversaw the unfolding of eliminationist violence against French Jews in 1943–44. Jean Azéma also epitomised the missionary spirit of international fascism: initially a member of the AF, he joined the PPF and headed the Vichy *Radio*

Journal de Paris before following the rest of the PPF to Sigmaringen in Germany in 1944 and joining the SS-Wallonie division.

Another interesting case was that of Marcel Déat. Starting as a maverick socialist, he moved towards fascism in the second half of the 1930s and became a major pillar of ideological collaborationism with NS Germany from 1940 onwards (Baker 1976: 109–16; Cointet 1998). His conversion to 'soldier of international fascism' was swift and spectacular, leading to his participation in the LVF's mission during Operation Barbarossa (Davey 1971: 33). He remained committed to the vision of France's close alignment with the NS 'new order' until the very end, forging ever closer links with Doriot and Darnand, visiting Hitler in the autumn of 1944, and participating in the exiled Sigmaringen Vichy delegation (Brender 1992). In February 1941 he founded a new party—the National Popular Rally (*Rassemblement National Populaire*, RNP)—through which he agitated for a much closer emulation of the NS model in France. As its title suggested, the RNP was devised in an attempt to unify the disparate strands of the French 'new' and dissident 'old' right. The project included the disgruntled Laval, who in the meantime had been dismissed from the Vichy Foreign Ministry by Pétain (and temporarily arrested) in December 1940 because of his increasingly closer alignment with NS Germany and his call for a formal military alliance with the Reich. Immediately after his release Laval joined the 'Paris collaborators' in the French capital and worked closely with Déat for the founding of the RNP (Kedward 1985: 32–44). After surviving (with Laval) an assassination attempt on 27 August 1941, Déat continued to function as a major pillar of French collaborationism, becoming Minister of Labour and National Solidarity in the Laval cabinet of March 1944 (Burrin 1986: 39–49).

The other major figure (initially) associated with the PNR was Eugène Deloncle—a flamboyant character of the 'new' right whose party (the *Comité Secret d'Action Révolutionnaire*, CSAR) had been banned in 1937 and earned the notorious nickname 'Cagoule' (Bourdrel 1970). He had promptly resurfaced from the political wilderness with the outbreak of the war and, even more ambitiously, after the French defeat in June 1940. In the following October he founded the Social Revolutionary Movement (*Mouvement Social Révolutionnaire*, MSR)—a movement that was the first new collaborationist formation in France, attracting membership from the defunct CF and its successor PSF, as well as from dissident members of the AF and the PPF who longed for a more radical and activist political platform (Gordon 1975: 264). Laval had played a pivotal role in bringing together Déat and Deloncle. The two leaders and parties entered into a formal alliance in early 1941, but the rapprochement did not last for long, due to a clash of egos and political outlooks. Déat and Deloncle had a long history of mutual mistrust and conflict. In fact, the former always suspected that the latter was behind the August 1941 assassination attempt against him and Laval. In the following October Déat succeeded in ousting the whole MSR from

the RNP. Unlike Déat and Doriot but like La Rocque (see earlier, Ch 4), Deloncle turned hostile to NS Germany towards the end of the war, after a brief but unfruitful flirtation with the PPF and a short-lived involvement in Vichy politics (Drake 2005: Ch 5).

All movements/parties mentioned previously maintained good relations with the NS occupiers in one form or another. They became virulently anti-Semitic and fully supportive of the NS 'new order'. They rejoiced at the demise of the Third Republic in 1940 but subsequently criticised Pétain for failing to take advantage of this historic opportunity to eradicate the last vestiges of the republican legacy from France and usher in a genuine revolutionary phase. Their eagerness to volunteer in defence of the NS 'agent order', both within France but also in international campaigns such as Operation Barbarossa or the final defence of the Reich, attested to their depth of missionary faith that underpinned and motivated their full ideological alignment with the NS *Neuordnung*. In its first steps, Deloncle's MSR looked particularly promising to the NS authorities, as it appeared capable of generating genuine popular support (Gordon 1975: 266). Yet its uncontrolled radicalism convinced them—as in the case of the Hungarian Arrow Cross or the Romanian Iron Guard—that the more timid collaborators of Vichy were preferable to the fascist 'fifth column' of Paris at that stage.

The crucial question, however, is whether the existence of this radical 'fifth column' had any effect on the eliminationist policies of the Vichy authorities. There is no doubt that the likes of Doriot, Deloncle, Gaston Bergery (a leftist throughout the 1930s, author of the infamous 9 July 1940 founding Vichy declaration calling for a "national revolution"—Kestel 2005: 364–84), and Déat favoured a wholesale French alignment with every aspect of the NS vision, including the issue of full military collaboration with Germany that had caused the 1940 Pétain-Laval rift, and the full deportation of France's Jews. Yet Vichy was not just cooperative with regard to the introduction of eliminationist policies but overeager to escalate its own policies, even unilaterally (Marrus 1995: 23–41). In March 1941 the Vichy authorities surprised the Germans by taking the initiative to create a special anti-Jewish body (the *Commissariat Général aux Questions Juives*) and appoint an arch anti-Semite (the ex-AF activist Xavier Vallat) as commissioner. Vallat pushed through strict policies of economic expropriation and responded to German demands for the swift roundup of Jews, particularly from the Paris region. In order to manage the growing number of arrests a new transit camp was built in the outskirts of the French capital at Drancy. But Vallat proved unwilling to cross the red line that separated foreign from French Jews when it came to authorising deportations. He also resisted calls for the introduction of the yellow star in France. On the insistence of the German authorities in France Pétain eventually dismissed him in May 1942. His successor, Louis Darquier de Pellepoix, proved far more accommodating to NS demands to deport all Jews from France.

When the Vichy state moved against the country's Jewish population, activists of the PPF, the MSR, and the RNP played a brutal role in intensifying the climate of intimidation and terrorism. Immediately after the announcement of the armistice in 1940 members of the PPF started beating up Jews on the streets and destroying Jewish property (Weiss 2003: 144). In early October 1941 MSR activists blew up synagogues in Paris, having apparently received unofficial SS encouragement to that effect but unbeknownst to the German military authorities (Gordon 1975: 272; Griffioen & Zeller 2006: 443). Many MSR members, along with those of the PPF and the RNP, joined the LVF and the *Milice*—and it was their participation in the latter that had a critical radicalising effect on anti-Jewish policy in France. Then, in the aftermath of the Wannsee conference of January 1942 and the decision to deport France's remaining Jews (Eichmann himself set the figure at 40,000), the German authorities recruited hundreds of PPF members to assist them in the roundup of the Parisian Jews. In the *grand rafle* of July 1942 the squads of Doriot's party turned up dressed in their eerie dark-blue shirts and blended with the French police. More than 12,000 Jews were rounded up; of them, about 5,000 were sent directly to Drancy for deportation, and the rest were locked up in the Vélodrome d'Hiver for eight days under the surveillance of often exceptionally brutal guards. The participation of PPF activists in many more *rafles* across the country in the remaining years until their departure for Sigmaringen proved particularly devastating for the Jewish communities in France. But it was from 1943 onwards that their fatal contribution became more evident. By that time relations between the French police and the NS authorities had turned sour, particularly due to the former's perceived lack of cooperation and their growing disenchantment with the Nazi occupying forces (Kitson 2002: 380ff). As a result, the NS authorities increasingly turned to the *Milice*, the PPF, and the RNP for support in their rounding-up operations, bypassing French local authorities and police. During the final stages of deportation the SS envoy Alois Brunner relied almost exclusively on them to form special squads and carry out *rafles* under the command of the German police (Griffioen & Zeller 2006: 457).

The differences between the official Vichy regime and the so-called 'Paris collaborators' were evident from the beginning, and the gap did widen considerably during the last two years of France's occupation. Yet, the contribution made by each of these poles with regard to the elimination of France's Jews was cumulative. 'State collaboration', on the one hand, and 'ideological collaborationism', on the other, proved accommodating to the Nazis to a high, almost complementary degree. The collaborationist 'fifth column' in France operated in a rather restricted framework, due to the de facto cooperative attitude of the official Vichy regime and their failure to convince the Nazis that they represented a viable alternative for governing France. Clearly the 'ultras' contributed to the radicalisation and implementation of the NS genocidal plans in France during 1942–43 at a time when the official Vichy was becoming progressively less cooperative. They also did make a

choice in deciding to ‘go fascist’ and to remain firmly aligned with the NS ‘agentive order’ until the very end (Hoffmann 1968: 388). In so doing they pledged themselves to the Nazi cause and entered a continuum of violence that made them eventually indistinguishable from the Nazis themselves. Some of the collaborators chose this path more or less opportunistically, in the expectation of tangible gains—whether political, material or status-related. Others, on the other hand, fitted Hoffmann’s description of ‘collaborationism’—people whose “ideological predilection had obscured in their own eyes what might be called the classic interstate aspect of the problem”. For them, any notion of national interest coincided with, and derived from, the eventual victory of NS Germany and the reorganisation of the continent under its aegis. When Hitler’s regime staked its entire existence on its two parallel wars against Soviet Bolshevism and international Jewry, they did too, contributing symbolically to the first campaign but playing a far more lethal role in the latter.

FASCIST MOVEMENTS AND ANTI-JEWISH AGENCY IN THE NS ‘NEW ORDER’

Whether out of fanatical ideological agreement or as a tool for earning the trust and support of the Nazis, the fate of the European Jews in the NS ‘new order’ became a fundamental aspect of the relation between state collaborators, indigenous fascist forces, and the occupiers in almost all countries incorporated in the NS ‘new order’. On many occasions fascist movements and parties with no strong or primary anti-Jewish platform in the past intensified their anti-Jewish discourses in the late 1930s. The Dutch National Socialist Movement (NSB) had started in 1931 as a group with clear fascist sympathies. Throughout the 1930s its members perceived themselves as soldiers of a pan-European fascist crusade of regeneration but, with the exception of a small *völkisch* wing inside the party, anti-Semitism played no role in its ideological development until 1937–38. It was mostly electoral failure (from a high of nearly 8% in 1935 back to less than 4% two years later) and growing admiration for the NS regime that prompted the movement’s leader, Anton Adriaan Mussert, to refashion the party in much stronger NS terms—a transformation that by that time implied almost automatically the endorsement of the NS regime’s anti-Jewish outlook. After Mussert’s visit to Berlin in 1936—from which he returned mesmerised—the NSB established closer ties with the NS regime/party, and by the end of the decade had been almost completely ‘coordinated’. This ‘fascistisation’ did cost the NSB in terms of electoral and social support; but when The Netherlands was occupied by the Nazis in May 1940, Mussert emerged from the political wilderness to pledge his unconditional support for the NS new order and vie for political power. As in the case of Norway, the NS authorities had rather different plans for occupied Holland: by the end of May they had put in place a

Reichskommissariat under Arthur Seyss-Inquart, and a civic administration that did not include Mussert or the NSB in any significant way. The movement's unpopularity had discredited it in the eyes of the NS authorities too, who had little time for Mussert's geopolitical vision of a German-Dutch-British imperial partnership and his idea of a union of "Germanic people" (Umbreit 1994; 1988: 333; Orlow 1999: 367). Their eventual acceptance of the NSB as a political partner in late 1941–42 had more to do with the absence of alternatives than with the Reichskommissariat's sudden change of heart.

Nevertheless, Mussert's NSB ticked all the right boxes in terms of ideological support for the NS new 'agentic' order. Although members of the party failed to infiltrate the Dutch police (Croes 2004: 53–5), they operated under a form of NS 'licence' when it came to the persecution of the Dutch Jews. The paramilitary 'assault' section of the NSB (*Weerafdeling*) terrorised the Jewish quarters of the main Dutch cities, forcing businesses to display warning signs and attacking Jews indiscriminately. Always pressing for more radical measures against the country's Jews, the NSB members showed their frustration with what they perceived as the slow pace of *Entjudung* by precipitating anti-Jewish measures and laws. When the NS authorities decided to act in the direction of rounding up and deporting the Dutch Jews, NSB members participated actively in nighttime raids. With the support of the Reichskommissariat, the NSB gradually took over local government positions and facilitated the measures implemented by the NS occupying authorities at the local level. NSB mayors became willing accomplices in the process of identifying, arresting, and deporting Jews, as well as of providing labour to match Nazi demands. Furthermore, party members joined the Waffen-SS division 'Wiking' and fought alongside the Nazis for the defence of the 'new order' in Eastern and Central Europe. A leading figure of the NSB and renowned for his radical, pro-Nazi views, Meinout Rost van Tonningen, played a crucial role in recruitment and eventually joined the formation. Before turning into an SS officer and 'soldier of fascism', van Tonningen had served as president of the Dutch East Company (*Nederlandse Oostcompagnie*, NOC). The NOC was created after Mussert displayed a fanatical interest in the prospect of resettling up to three million Dutch in the occupied eastern territories after the launch of Operation Barbarossa (Eichholtz 1994: 444–54). The enthusiasm with which Mussert and his party pursued the NS goal of eastern colonisation (*Ostsiedlung*) was eloquent evidence of the NSB's loyalty to the NS vision of a future 'new order'. At the same time, it epitomised the more technocratic approach of many Northern and Western European fascist movements to the NS project, contrasting sharply to the more mystical, spiritual, and quasi-religious worldview of similar movements in the Balkans (e.g., Iron Guard). However, the NSB's ideological alignment with the NS vision was also in contrast with the mood of the indigenous society. As a result, the NOC project stalled from within due to lack of interest before it became a pointless fantasy due

to military developments in the east during 1943–44. Nevertheless the NSB provided ample ideological and logistical support for NS plans that mattered in the face of growing opposition or noncooperation by the majority of the Dutch society.

In neighbouring Belgium the role of the fascist ‘fifth column’ was more complicated, touching upon international alliances, interethnic tensions, and even the future of the Belgian state itself. The division between Walloon and Flemish cultures was reflected on the fragmentation of indigenous fascist movements. Léon Degrelle’s *Rex* represented the first tradition, coming from the ranks of dissident Catholicism but increasingly drawing close to National Socialism after its electoral peak (11.5%) in the elections of 1937. In the Flemish territories of Belgium a nationalist movement—the Flemish National League (VNV)—had been founded in October 1933 by Staf de Clercq to campaign in favour of an independent Flemish state as well as against liberalism–communism. These two groups, along with the more fiercely independent Verdinaso (acronym of *Verbond der Dietse Nationaal-Solidaristen*, Union of ‘Diets’/Flemish National-Solidarists) headed by Joris van Severen, created an intriguing web of ‘fascist’ agencies, marked more by ideological and political conflict than any form of cooperation.⁷ None of them had declared a strong interest in becoming ‘agents’ of a future NS new order in Europe—not until 1939–40, that is. Whilst the Verdinaso and a large section of the Rexist movement remained committed to a pro-Belgian line that precluded active collaboration with the Nazis, the VNV aligned itself closer with the occupiers from 1940 onwards, hoping to capitalise on German support in order to achieve its ultimate political goal—the creation of an independent Flanders.

With regard to Jews, the three fascist movements held equally intriguing and different views. The Verdinaso was openly anti-Semitic from the beginning, whilst both the Rex and the VNV switched to anti-Semitism gradually from 1935 onwards—and mostly out of political calculation than ideological affinity with NS Germany (De Wever 2007; see also earlier, Ch 4). The 70,000 or so Jews living in Belgium formed a disparate and relatively low-profile group. On the eve of the German invasion the Jewish community of Belgium consisted of two distinct elements: a small group of naturalised Belgian citizens and a large number of refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe who, therefore, did not possess Belgian citizenship. Two-thirds of the entire Jewish population in Belgium were concentrated in the two urban/economic centres of Antwerp and Brussels. Whilst attacks on Jews gathered momentum from the early 1930s onwards, in parallel with a radicalisation and ‘fascistisation’ of the Belgian extreme right, anti-Semitism remained a relatively peripheral ideological issue, overshadowed by more pressing concerns about Belgium’s ethnic divisions, the course of liberal modernity, and the perceived threat of communism. In this respect, it was unfortunate that the strengthening of anti-Jewish and pro-Nazi views coincided with the arrival of a new wave of Jewish immigrants. Attacks on Jews rose sharply

during 1939 and 1940, increasingly making no distinction between 'indigenous' and immigrant communities. A radicalising anti-Jewish political platform in the second half of the 1930s enabled a wider alliance of anti-Semitic forces that included members of the VNV, dissidents of the Verdinaso, and other rightist nationalist elements in Flanders. In 1937 a figure of the old Verdinaso, the lawyer René Lambrechts, founded the Peoples' Defence (*Volkverwering*). This was an organisation that had a clear anti-Jewish ideological profile, and in subsequent years used intimidation and violent practices to terrorise the local Jewish community. Lambrechts disagreed with van Severen's Belgium-oriented nationalism and promoted a policy of closer ideological alignment with the NS new order after 1940, borrowing directly from the discourse of the NS biological anti-Semitic brand. His movement recruited heavily from the ranks of the VNV and received direct financial support from the NSDAP. It was already highly active in anti-Jewish campaigns by 1938–39, organising events, staging demonstrations, and intimidating Jews. Starting in August 1939 such activities increased exponentially, with its members often entering Antwerp's Jewish quarter and using the slogan "out with the Jews". Although the *Volkverwering's* activities were disrupted by the Belgian government's clampdown on suspected 'fifth column' elements in 1940, the movement reconstituted itself and, along with the VNV and sections of the Rex, competed for the occupiers' favour.

The situation for the Jews could only get worse as a result of NS occupation. Hitler decided to place Belgium under direct military administration. Both he and Himmler believed that the country's allegedly sound racial stock made it a strong candidate for 'Germanisation' and integration in an expanded Germanic order in Europe (see earlier, Ch 6). Therefore, Jews were forced to register with the occupation authorities in the autumn of 1940. By 1944 two-fifths of them had been deported. But the equivalent figure for Antwerp (centre of the Flemish community) was substantially higher—nearly 65 percent. The fact that Flanders was earmarked by the military administration as the area of Germanisation par excellence and that Antwerp had a Jewish socialist as a mayor in the late 1930s must have played a role in this development. Yet, equally Antwerp had by far the highest concentration of Jews (around half of the country's Jewish population) and was the VNV's political and electoral stronghold. Unlike the Rex, the VNV had maintained a strong presence in Belgian politics throughout the 1930s; in fact, its share of the vote rose from 7 percent in 1936 to 8.3 percent in 1939, polling more than 15 percent in the Flemish areas (Hosay 2003). The party was well-organised, enjoyed substantial grassroots support in Flanders, and suffered relatively less from the Belgian government's clampdown on 'fifth column' elements in 1939–40. The VNV leader, Staf de Clercq, gained a crucial advantage over Degrelle by being released from prison almost immediately after his arrest. Therefore, when the Nazi military administration was established under Eggert Reeder in late May 1940, the VNV was far better placed to vie for power in the new order. Reeder

campaigned passionately for awarding the VNV a leading role in the reorganisation of occupied Belgium, even if he had some reservations about the party's nationalist-separatist agenda. But he faced growing opposition from Himmler, who had cultivated good links with Degrelle and desired a much wider Germanisation policy in Belgium that included the Walloons as well (Geller 1999).

Nevertheless, the VNV emerged as the primary collaborationist pillar of the NS military administration. By the end of 1941 many municipalities in Flanders had been awarded to VNV politicians. VNV-controlled local authorities facilitated the occupiers' plans for the 'cleansing' of the country's Jewish population. The first wave of deportations took place in the winter of 1940/41 and involved 'foreign' Jews. But the VNV proved far more helpful in enforcing a series of subsequent anti-Jewish measures, including the introduction of the yellow star in June 1942 and the later deportation actions of all registered Jews. It also bullied local institutions to fall in line with Nazi demands even when there were indications of reluctance or resistance. When the military administration demanded that all Jewish lawyers be removed from the membership lists of the legal professional associations, the Brussels Bar successfully countered the move. By contrast, the Antwerp Bar—which initially had also resisted the order—succumbed to pressure from the local VNV-controlled authorities and sanctioned the purge (Fraser 2003).

At the same time, intimidation of the local Jewish population gathered momentum, spearheaded by VNV activists. Attacks on Jewish property and business became a frequent spectacle in Antwerp, driven primarily by the activists of the Volksverwering/Anti-Jewish League. In April 1941, the screening of the anti-Semitic pseudodocumentary *Der ewige Jude* ('The Eternal Jew') aggravated the tension and emboldened the anti-Jewish squads that had already established a reign of terror in the city. Violence erupted in the Jewish quarter from 10 April and reached its horrifying peak on the 14th, coinciding with Passover. Then, a group made up of VNV, Volksverwering, and other pro-Nazi/anti-Semitic activists entered the Jewish quarter once again and instigated a pogrom, during which they set two synagogues on fire, smashed the windows of Jewish shops, vandalised Jewish sacred symbols, and terrorised the city's Jewish community. When it eventually came to the roundup of the city's Jewish population, the VNV authorities and the Belgian police in Antwerp obliged in a way not seen anywhere else in the country. It is therefore no coincidence that the persecution of Jews in Flanders was far more swift and devastating than in any other part of Belgium (Umbreit 1988: 335).

This does not mean that the other major force of fascism in Belgium, the Rex, remained a passive observer to the events of 1940–44. Immediately upon his release from French detention, Degrelle approached the NS authorities in Belgium with his vision of a 'Greater Belgium' fully integrated in the NS new order and ideologically committed to a 'crusade' against Bolshevism. Whilst Reeder was fully opposed to the Degrelle alternative, Himmler

and Hitler established increasingly closer links with the Rex leader, even if they did not consider him and his (divided and ineffective) party as a viable political solution for governing Belgium. Frustrated by his failure to elicit formal German endorsement, Degrelle turned into a genuine 'soldier of fascism' by recruiting members for the SS Walloon legion and, after the launch of Operation Barbarossa, leaving for the eastern front. In his absence, his party and the VNV reached an agreement that enabled the Rex to infiltrate local administration in the Walloon region, though not as successfully as the VNV had done in Flanders. Whilst Degrelle was distinguishing himself on the battlefield, receiving the Iron Cross from the Führer himself in February 1944, and earning the admiration of both Hitler and Himmler, his party kept losing influence, members, and the support of the NS military administration. When Hitler decided to dissolve the latter in June 1944 and give Himmler's SS primary control of Belgium, Degrelle at last emerged as the leading candidate for the leadership. This was a gesture of recognition for his personal commitment to the NS cause and his strong efforts since 1940 to earn German respect, but it was an honour without any practical worth whatsoever. Within three months Belgium had been liberated by the Allied forces and Degrelle—sentenced to death in absentia whilst still fighting on the side of the Nazis—escaped to Spain, never to return to his native country (Umbreit 1988: 335).

It would be impossible to review all cases of collaborationism across NS-occupied Europe, whether at state level or in the form of 'fifth column' extreme ideological collusion with the NS regime. Beyond the (semi-)sovereign collaborationist regimes there were even more regimes in the 'puppet' category that were integrated in the NS 'new order'. From Quisling in Norway (1942–45; Hayes 1972; Looock 1970; Petrick 1994) to the three administrations of Tsolakoglou, Logothetopoulos, and Rallis in Greece (1941–44; Fleischer 1986; Mazower 1993; Loulos 1994: 403) to the government of Milan Nedić in Serbia (1941–44; Tomasevich 2001), willing fellow travellers of the fascist vision assumed power under Axis tutelage and oversaw the integration of their respective states into the NS *Neuordnung*. But 'puppet' regimes constituted the weakest link in the NS 'agentic order'. Himmler himself commented on numerous occasions on the inability of collaborationist parties and regimes in NS-occupied states to effectively legitimise the NS 'new order' to their respective populations (Umbreit 1988: 329). Lacking in legitimacy, popular support, and ideological/political autonomy (Umbreit 1994: 35), they predominantly operated at a level that came very close to Milgram's passive 'agents', accepting an ancillary position inside the NS empire.

Some significant generic observations, however, from the case studies reviewed in this chapter may shed light on the nature of NS and local fascist agencies during 1940–44. Overall, the Nazis proved eminently flexible and pragmatic when it came to choosing their local allies and interlocutors in each country, largely unfettered by ideological fixations or loyalties.

This explains why they consciously chose the Horthy regime over the Arrow Cross until all other options had been exhausted; why they distrusted the Iron Guard and opted for more traditional nationalist/anti-Semitic alternatives; why they preferred Pétain's Vichy regime or the Laval alternative to the 'Paris collaborators'; why they marginalised the NSB in The Netherlands and the Rex in Belgium; and why they thwarted the ambitions of so many 'little Führers' in NS-occupied countries (Claussen, Mussert, Degrelle, initially Quisling, and so on).

This said, the NS authorities exploited the eagerness of indigenous fascist elements to collaborate in the NS new order, particularly when it came to the persecution and elimination of Jews. They fostered anti-Jewish discourses and actions by local elements, they sometimes used such organisations indirectly to incite hatred against the Jews or put pressure on their governments to collaborate more actively with the Nazis, and they eventually relied on them to carry out their eliminationist plans more efficiently. Fascist and/or pro-NS groups operating inside occupied and semisovereign countries were often socially unpopular (with only a few exceptions, such as the VNV—and only in Flanders), ideologically self-obsessed, politically marginalised, and more often than not out of touch with reality. Nevertheless, their agency was crucial and disproportionately devastating, particularly when it came to the elimination of their countries' Jewish populations. Their initial support for NS Germany may have emanated from self-centred expectations of full empowerment in the NS 'new order'. Yet, even when such hopes had been quashed by Nazi obstinacy or military defeat, they carried on as ardent supporters and agents of NS policies in their areas. Many amongst them joined Nazi formations, whether to fight against Bolshevism or to defend the Reich until the final hours of defeat. This missionary spirit of sacrifice on the altar of a fading vision underlines a rare and profound loyalty to the 'fascist' cause that set them apart from other forms of wartime collaboration (Umbreit 1988: 337).

When NS attitudes hardened gradually but dramatically in the second half of WW II, the scope for these fascist groups' independent and radical agency increased dramatically. The January 1942 Wannsee conference is generally regarded as a turning point, accelerating the pace of deportations and radicalising NS attitudes towards less cooperative states. From 1942 onwards the Nazis grew impatient and decided to use more forceful techniques to either radicalise the policies of friendly regimes or coerce them into conformity (Marrus & Paxton 1981: 705–12). This seriously limited the semisovereign regimes' independence and autonomous agency but granted far higher leverage to domestic fascist forces who had always been eager to seize the initiative and pursue a much closer coordination of their countries with the NS new order. This was how Szálasi, Degrelle, Quisling, and other fellow travellers of interwar fascism—already steeped in the logic of ideological collaborationism and of the NS crusading spirit—climbed to the position of power that the Nazis themselves had denied them earlier.

Whether in power or not, however, the agency of these groups in the 'cleansing' of Jews and other alleged foes was devastating. Through their discourses of hatred, the decisions of their members who had occupied political positions, the violent actions of their paramilitary squads, and the assistance offered through joining auxiliary repressive formations at the service of the occupiers, fascist movements and their members turned into unique, crucial building blocs of the architecture of genocide in the NS 'new order'.

10 ‘Licence to Kill’ and ‘Ordinary People’ The ‘Carnival’ of Eliminationist Violence

‘LICENCE’ AND ‘AGENCY’: A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

In the previous two chapters we explored two different forms of ‘fascist agency’ in the radicalisation of eliminationist policies across Europe from the late 1930s onwards. In the case of fascist and ‘para-fascist’ regimes, the ‘licence to eliminate’ derived from the precedent of the NS state and encompassed their own desire to establish a new ideal, fully sovereign national order based on the removal of particular ‘others’. By contrast, fascist movements operating within (semi-)sovereign states combined autonomous agency and an ideologically motivated ‘agentic’ spirit with a more direct form of NS involvement—funding and logistical support from Berlin, recruitment into NS-controlled institutions after occupation, ‘fifth column’ activities, and actions carried out on behalf of the NS authorities.

Yet, for the majority of the populations affected by war and NS occupation, ‘licence’ meant something very different. Far from being a grand history-making project or the stepping-stone to a new European order, it represented a challenge, a grave shadow replete with harsh realities, elemental choices, and extreme decisions. War and occupation affected these peoples’ horizon of agency in many different ways. For some, it meant privation, loss, and a genuine battle for survival. For others (predictably few, like in many similar circumstances) it generated a noble attitude of defiance, risk-taking, and ‘heroic helping’ (Staub 2002). For some, however, the new situation involved an open-ended opportunity to ‘do the undoable’ in their local communities, to settle accounts against their neighbours, to vent their resentment or unleash their suppressed hatred. With the exception of those who had already been active in ultranationalist/fascist organisations prior to war, all these perfectly ‘ordinary’ people cared little about emulating the NS model or contributing to the Third Reich’s crusade to change the face of their country or of Europe as a whole. They had been exposed to the direct and collateral effects of an array of different agencies. They were affected by the decisions and actions of local authorities, by the ambitions of different groups operating in their communities (often in fierce opposition to one another), as well as by the policy choices of their national governments. But

after September 1939 their lives were also disrupted by the—immediate and indirect—effects of the war. Faced with harsh dilemmas and stark alternatives, they were compelled to take sides and often act in ways that would have been unimaginable to them in more normal circumstances. Thus, for individuals and local communities in wartime Europe the atmosphere of 'licence' resulted from the interplay and collision of these different agencies, over which they initially had very little or no control.

Often the most devastating form of 'licence' had little to do with a direct (ideological) alignment with the NS plans or with the agency of national governments; rather, it was predominantly the collateral effect of the military conflict. The collapse of any form of order—political, legal, social, even moral—unleashed unfathomable opportunities and in turn had a lethal radicalising effect on local agencies. The sense of a unique and unparalleled opportunity was much stronger in those areas that were directly occupied and fundamentally refashioned by NS Germany. Predictably, the relative continuity of state and administrative structures in NS-occupied Western Europe (France, Denmark, Belgium, The Netherlands) was less susceptible to this development. Equally, the experience of semisovereign 'state collaboration' in other parts (Hungary, Romania, Slovakia) left a lot to be determined by the particular ambitions of the governments themselves: what the 'licence' involved, how far it would be exercised, and what or whom it did include or exclude (see earlier, Ch 8). However, 'licence' acquired a wholly different and extreme function in those areas that NS Germany occupied directly after an aggressive military campaign that demolished preexisting political/civic structures and left a disorienting void behind it, followed by the establishment of a new order fully aligned with the NS vision.

This is precisely what happened in the vast eastern territories that the Nazis captured, first with the invasion of Poland in 1939 and, even more dramatically, during the attack on the Soviet Union in 1941–42. This campaign—a veritable total "war of annihilation", as Hitler himself had described it in the previous March and reiterated to his generals a week before the invasion (Burdick & Jacobsen 1988: 30.3.1941)—constituted the military and ideological apex of the NS regime's dual campaign for 'living space' (*Lebensraum*) and for crushing the alleged international conspiracy of 'Judeo-Bolshevism'. This was also the moment when the NS machinery of elimination stepped up a crucial gear to 'total genocide' and potential 'omnicide' (Melson 1992: 26; Lang 1999: 40–64) in the massively expanded NS empire after the impressive territorial conquests of the 1938–41 period. All these factors contributed significantly to an atmosphere of extreme permissibility that rendered a series of conventionally taboo actions accessible by everyone—the NS authorities, fascist/ultranationalist groups operating in the occupied countries, auxiliary police formations staffed by local volunteers, and, finally, local communities and individuals. It was there that NS agency coalesced with that of fascist/ultranationalist groups and local communities to generate an atmosphere of extreme permissibility, causing or

facilitating a series of extreme developments that sealed the fate of millions in the most devastating way imaginable (Kallis 2007b).

The sense of 'licence' was at the same time the cumulative result of different agencies *and* the midwife of further, even more extreme ones. On the one hand, the breakdown of order and the interim absence of any form of 'constituted power' in the eastern occupied territories generated an empowering and exhilarating sense of exceptional permissibility, of 'running amok' in the ephemeral absence of authority and collapse of convention (Sofsky 2003: 32). In this case the 'licence' to act had less to do with *direct* NS agency, apart perhaps from the psychological effect of the 'Judeo-Bolshevik' propaganda and the incitement of such stereotypes by local fascist/ultranationalist organisations operating under NS auspices. This situation provided a way out of 'cognitive dissonance' (see earlier, Ch 4), in the sense that the collapse of civic norms mitigated both the need to justify violence and the element of fear of sanctions. Whilst, broadly speaking, in Western Europe the overwhelming majority of people saw war and occupation as an unsolicited and horrifying reversal of fortune, in the east there were instances when the discourses of (Nazi) 'occupation' and 'liberation' (from the Bolsheviks and/or Jews) coalesced. This was especially true in those areas that had been annexed by the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the August 1939 nonaggression pact signed by the German and Soviet Foreign Ministers, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Viacheslav Molotov. The Soviet occupation of the lands specified in the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact was initially greeted with some support, particularly from minority groups who had been subjected to harsh 'nationalisation' policies in the past two decades. As, however, the Soviets annexed the Polish territories in autumn 1939 and the three Baltic states in the summer of 1940, installing unpopular regimes followed by a clampdown on opponents, mass arrests, and deportations, whatever initial support existed turned into anti-Soviet anger. Thus, the news of the NS invasion in the summer of 1941 was greeted with mixed feelings by the local populations. Whilst it was yet another military conflict that would further dislocate life and expose people to the harsh realities of war, it also held a promise of release from the Soviet yoke. Whether as a real preference or as a 'lesser evil', NS occupation could be construed (however mistakenly in hindsight) as an opportunity to redress the balance and settle accounts locally. But even in Soviet territories where no change of political status had occurred since the end of the civil war two decades earlier, the bitter memories of Soviet rule, of the clampdown on local/national identities, and of the more recent Stalinist terror had rendered the prospect of NS occupation more amenable to large sections of the local population—in the short term as a release from the unpopular ruler and, in the longer term, as the stepping-stone to national self-determination and independence.

On the other hand, occupation by NS Germany entailed a new ruler, a new sociopolitical arrangement, and yet another major redistribution of power. This is exactly where *direct* NS agency became a critical factor. After

occupation the NS authorities embarked upon a project of reorganising the political, social, and economic structures of those areas in line with their own vision of a 'new order' in the east. This involved a wave of eliminationist violence against 'Judeo-Bolsheviks', carried out by the occupiers and their newly established institutions (e.g., auxiliary police). However, the NS agency was also indirect, establishing a new framework of permissibility that unleashed and radicalised a spate of local agencies too to a similar effect. Since October 1939 the NS authorities had exploited the widespread anti-Jewish feelings in occupied Poland and incited pogroms against the Jews by explicitly claiming that "Jews are outside the law [and] the authorities will not take side if someone wrongs them" (Tych 2004: 88–89, 104). The same direct 'licence' was also prevalent during the first weeks of NS occupation in the east and before the full organisation of local auxiliary police forces in July 1941. It had a lethal significance, for it perpetuated and escalated eliminationist violence even when the original causes of resentment (the Soviet rule) had been eliminated. It was also instrumental in removing a strong inhibiting factor—namely, fear of sanctions or reprisals—thus releasing energies that would have otherwise been contained under fear of a Soviet return and retaliation.

Thus, NS agency was both direct and oblique—unequivocally and directly authorising eliminationist violence, then spearheading it, but also allowing it to happen or evolve by stating its a priori benevolent indifference. In all their territorial conquests in the east the occupiers followed a brutal divide-and-rule strategy, playing one ethnic group against the other and all against the Jews; this strategy was accompanied by a disclaimer of impunity when it came to violence against particular racial-anthropological groups (Miner 2003: 46–47). As Zygmunt Bauman (1989: 86–7) has stressed, the sheer modernity of the NS genocidal project made the escalation of mass murder beyond the confines of the old Reich possible and "contained nothing which could stop [it] from happening". And it was precisely this chillingly ultra-modern NS vision of population management and 'cleansing' on such a vast scale, coupled with extreme ideological fanaticism and peerless brutality, that transformed a 'licence to hate' (perhaps profound and radicalised in the light of recent events but latent) into a veritable 'licence to kill'. Unlike the ideological collaboration of ultranationalist, fascistised groups, many individuals and small communities slid into the 'continuum of violence' because they hated, feared, or resented 'others' in their vicinity—and *now felt that they could act accordingly*. The tragedy of genocide in the east in 1939–44 lay exactly in this sense of unbound permissibility, weakening of hindrances, and cumulative desensitisation that made the transition to mass murder appear more appealing and justifiable—or at least less onerous and troubling to the perpetrators. The result was a web of mutually radicalising agencies—individual, local, regional, and national—stimulated by the pervading sense of 'anything goes,' and eventually hosted under the murderous rationale of the NS 'new order'.

Each of these agencies had very different whys and wherefores. For the local communities and individuals amongst them the sense of ‘licence’ first and foremostly concerned personal and community issues—status, power, greed, personalised resentment. Instigation of, or participation in, local pogroms and ‘cleansing’ actions were not necessarily conceived consciously as part of a geographically and politically broader genocidal campaign. Nevertheless, they constituted ‘genocidal acts’ of ethnic cleansing that, deliberately or unwittingly, endorsed and/or advanced a wider agenda of genocide against particular groups of ‘others’. A wave of localised pogroms coincided with the first phase of Operation Barbarossa. The city of Lwów in eastern Galicia was the theatre of a series of pogroms against the local Jewish population from the moment that the Nazis arrived (30 June 1941) until the end of July. The tension reached a horrifying climax with the big pogrom of 25–27 July, organised by Ukrainian ultranationalist groups as a perverse tribute to the memory of the country’s independence leader Petliura, that claimed around 2,000 Jewish lives. Throughout western Ukraine the bitter memories from the Soviet occupation, combined with ingrained hatred of the ‘Jude-Bolsheviks’, created a fertile ground for subsequent Nazi incitement to violence. When the occupiers deliberately allowed local inhabitants to identify local victims of Soviet aggression, emotions erupted and murderous hatred was easily channelled towards the Jews as the Wehrmacht watched. During the first weeks of Barbarossa the Wehrmacht authorities were inundated with pressing requests from local communities—to exact immediate revenge on Jews and Soviet collaborators, to round them up or expel them (P Friedman 1980: 183–7). Meanwhile, in the Białystok town of Jedwabne the full horror of the ‘licence to kill’ was experienced through local agency and—to a large extent at least—initiative. The town had a sizeable Jewish population (between 1,000 and 1,600 out of roughly 3,000 inhabitants—Stola 2003: 140). By early July 1941 all the necessary dispositions, incentives, and forms of empowerment for the massacre had been firmly in place: the long-term collective anti-Jewish sentiment, suppressed but aggravated during the short interlude of Soviet occupation (1939–41); the ‘Jewish-Bolshevik’ stereotype, again nurtured in the preceding period; rumours about alleged Jewish connivance with the Soviets and about participation in brutal anti-Polish activities; the occupation of the region by the NS forces in late June 1941; the spontaneous preparations for exacting ‘revenge’; finally, the Nazi order to destroy the town’s Jewish population—in itself part of a wider campaign against Polish Jews that was about to enter its most destructive and radical phase (Gross 2003; Gross 2001: 35).

Jedwabne had in no way been the most inhospitable place for Jews before the massacre. In fact, internal conflict had been more acute in neighbouring hamlets, to the point that, during the period of Soviet rule (1939–41), some Jews had actually sought refuge in Jedwabne! Thus, the exceptional evil that befell the small town in July 1941 cannot be explained only or fully through long-term factors. Violence was catalysed and made possible at a

particular point in time, in the context of specific agencies and short-term developments. This is why the publication of Jan Gross's book on the ensuing pogrom (Gross 2001), in which he described how a large number of the town's Jews were rounded up, tortured, and brutally murdered by their non-Jewish 'neighbours', caused a stir and generated controversy. With this book Gross exposed the lethal interplay of local initiative and NS empowerment in the ensuing murderous violence against the Jedwabne Jews in a way that transcends the parameters of this particular event. For the questions raised by *Neighbors* have a validity and import that goes beyond Jedwabne, beyond Poland, even beyond wartime Europe, particular perpetrators, and specific victims. Its contribution to the debate on genocidal violence touches on the crucial link between external authorisation ('licence'), mass psychology, and the conditional but all-pervasive human capacity to discharge evil in particular circumstances of crisis and extreme permissibility. This incident shows how fundamental the NS 'licence' was in empowering a web of local independent agencies, as well as in helping unleash a pageant of ritualistic violence that had no equal in the history of the town.

These multiple agencies—long- and short-term, local and NS—combined in many other areas affected by Operation Barbarossa to make there too 'the undoable doable' (Russell & Gregory 2005). Apart from the initial spontaneous (?) pogroms that coincided with the launch of Barbarossa, a far-from-insignificant number of Ukrainians, Belorussians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Poles, and others offered lasting and manifold assistance to the NS occupiers—often readily and sometimes enthusiastically. Some of them joined the ranks of 'auxiliary police' forces voluntarily, participated in the roundup and mass murder of Jews, took initiatives in an even more extreme direction than the one envisioned by the occupiers, and, generally, proved instrumental in the implementation of the NS 'final solution' in their areas. They humiliated, tortured, murdered, raped, and plundered with an air of unaccountability that continues to shock—and sometimes astonished even the NS authorities. Their rage combined collective, time-old prejudices with a highly distorting filter of 'fresh memory' that escalated resentment and increased the psychological need for revenge as a strategy of symbolic redress ("loss compensation"—Midlarsky 2005: 84). However, the attitudes of local populations spanned the full range of responses to the NS 'agentic order'—from resistance to apathy to fear to incidental collaboration to full and enthusiastic complicity to extreme brutality. Neither the historical strength of prejudice in particular societies nor the degree of individual agreement with the NS worldview can account for the full range of motivations behind the unfolding of eliminationist violence in eastern-occupied Europe. In fact, as in the case of Jedwabne, the vehemence of anti-Jewish eliminationist violence in Lithuania during 1941–42 period unfolded against the backdrop of relatively good recent Lithuanian-Jewish relations (Kwiet 1998: 11). By contrast, Latvia had witnessed the emergence of the *Ugunkrusts* (from 1933 *Pērkonkrusts*) movement with clear fascist credentials and some popular

support during the interwar period (Reichelt 2001; Danker 1997)⁴ but did not experience anything similar to Lithuania in terms of collaboration and wanton violence committed by local agents after June 1941 (Hilbrecht 1997). Given that the NS ‘licence’ was readily and equally available in all these cases, the differences in the degree and intensity of popular violence cannot be explained only with reference to the strength of profascist or anti-Jewish feelings in each case (Berkhoff 1997; Bartusevicius, Tauber, & Wette 2003). Instead, we should distinguish between those factors that generated an eliminationist ferment in the longer term (for example, anti-Jewish prejudice, diffusion of visions of extreme nation-statist utopias, short-term resentment at the effects of the Soviet rule) and the empowering effect of the ‘history-making’ moment caused by the breakdown of order and the arrival of the NS forces. It was the former that determined the primary focus of resentment (‘Judeo-Bolsheviks’ in most cases; Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, or Serbs in particular areas) in the interwar period and bridged long-term prejudice with short-term anxiety or anger. Without either the substratum of enduring, almost existential prejudice vis-à-vis specific ‘others’ or the crucial filter of interwar grudge against them, the NS ‘licence’ could not have had the empowering effect that it actually did in 1941–44. It was, however, the sense of unique permissibility derived from the NS operation and occupation that shaped and released those energies, minimised or neutralised inhibiting factors, reduced the fear of sanctions, and supplied powerful incentives for communities and individuals within them to become actively involved in the brutal ‘cleansing’ of particular ‘others’.

OPERATION BARBAROSSA: YET ANOTHER ‘STATUS REVERSAL’ AND THE ‘LICENCE TO KILL’

The havoc wreaked by Operation Barbarossa in Eastern Europe caused a fundamental redistribution of political and social power that affected the status of, and relations between, ethnic groups. In itself “status reversal” is one of the fundamental sources of resentment/rage and a catalyst for unleashing extreme violence in the form of symbolic revenge (Petersen 2001). But this effect was even more powerful in Eastern Europe in 1941 because Barbarossa was not the first but the second or even the third seismic geopolitical change in the region within a generation. The first of these occurred in 1917–20 following the military collapse of Germany, the Bolshevik revolution/civil war in Russia, and the disintegration of the Habsburg empire. Then, overambitious but insecure aspiring nation-states fought ferociously for control over the widest possible territorial domain in the aftermath of WW I, leaving behind a legacy of violence, pogroms, and bitter animosity that was only partly and temporarily concealed by the peace treaties. In anticipation of the final frontier settlement at Versailles, many areas in the east had remained in a state of flux for months. Steeped in dreams of independent statehood,

territorial expansion, and ethnic homogeneity for their future states, local populations (assisted or spearheaded by military forces that acted arbitrarily in order to preempt the outcome of the Paris negotiations) engaged in violent acts that had a clear eliminationist character. Caught between the collapse of the old imperial structures in the region and the Bolshevik 'new order' after the 1917 revolution, the populations in the intermediate zone between the German and the (defunct) Austro-Hungarian empires, on the one hand, and the emerging Soviet Union, on the other, experienced a first 'licence' that had primarily to do with the breakdown of order and the anticipation of maximum (but ferociously contested) gains for themselves. Ethnic groups fought viciously for control over many areas, from eastern Galicia and western Ukraine to territories in the northeast Baltic coastline (Schuster 2004). They committed atrocities against each other and, predictably, against the Jews who were caught in the middle in a classic case of anti-Jewish violence and 'scapegoating' (Prusin 2005). In the vacuum created by the end of WWI and its multiple offshoots in the 1918–21 period, contested future state boundaries were implicated in contending nationalist dreams of homogeneity. This fuelled a series of violent eliminationist events that were arrested only in the early 1920s, when frontiers were formalised and civic order was restored through treaty agreements (Gross 1988; Bialasiewicz & O'Loughlin 2002).

The second watershed came as a shock in August 1939 with the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact (see earlier) that altered state, political, and social structures in a vast area from the Baltic states to eastern Poland. It was followed by the Nazi invasion and the violent partition of Poland, the military occupation of the eastern half by the Soviet Union, and the annexation of the Baltic states in the summer of 1940. As a result of the fundamental adjustments that the pact generated in the following twenty months until Barbarossa, the demise of Polish rule in the western areas of Belarus and Ukraine left the Polish minorities there exposed to the wrath of local populations who had experienced a 'status reversal' in the preceding two decades due to the policies of 'Polonisation' (Gross 1988: 4). The occupying Soviet authorities extended their own 'licence' to the Ukrainians to take their revenge against the Poles, mainly by not intervening to restore order and, in some cases, by actively encouraging pogroms (Gross 1988: 35–39; Dean 2000: 10). Not only many Jews but also Ukrainians and Belorussians registered their approval at the change of the status quo, either with enthusiasm or in the 'lesser evil' mindset (Finder & Prusin 2004: 98). But the cumulative experience of the Russian civil war and the violent Stalinist policies of the late 1920s/early 1930s had already alienated large sections of the local population from the Soviet regime (Krawchenko 1987: 153; Magocsi 2002). Even those who initially welcomed the change were soon severely disappointed by the harsh policies of the new Soviet rulers (Miner 2003: 41–43). As for the various ultranationalist groups—for obvious reasons strongly anticommunist, whose ultimate overriding goal had always been the creation of an

independent, exclusive nation-state—occupation by a foreign country was bad enough but incorporation into the Soviet sphere was nothing short of a disaster. Throughout the 1930s the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) had developed strong links with NS Germany and became sufficiently ‘fascistised’ in ideological and formal terms to throw its lot with the NS *Neuordnung*. In the second OUN congress held in Rome during 1939, the organisation confirmed its goal of freeing Ukraine from every foreign element (Jews, Soviets/Russians, and Poles) and pledged themselves to a future NS-dominated Europe (Piotrowski 1998: 242). Between 1939 and 1941 the NS authorities encouraged the anti-Soviet aspirations of Ukrainian nationalism and used the OUN (particularly its militant faction under Stepan Bandera, also known as OUN-B) to undermine Soviet rule in Ukraine (Armstrong 1968: 399–403; Armstrong 1989; Dean 2000: 12). Above all, they disingenuously encouraged the chimera of future Ukrainian independence, fuelling aggressive ethno-exclusive tendencies amongst the ranks of the OUN.

With the launch of Barbarossa in June 1941 the triangular relation between Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians changed once again dramatically. When finally the Soviet forces retreated from the Ukrainian territories in the summer of 1941, OUN members capitalised on their support for NS Germany and the interregnum in order to take revenge for perceived injustices of the past—and all that in anticipation of an independent, ‘pure’ Ukrainian nation-state. Initially many Ukrainians—certainly those involved in the OUN but also many of those who had experienced a comprehensive ‘status reversal’ during the Soviet interval—viewed the NS invasion positively (Piotrowski 1998: Ch 7; Gross 2001). Long-term anti-Semitic undercurrents, responsible for violent pogroms in the recent past (from the 1880s until the end of WW I), were updated with the recent perception of Jewish support for the Soviets, and exploded within both the Polish and the Ukrainian ethnic groups, particularly after evidence of Soviet atrocities against the local populations came to light (Pohl 1996; Gittelman 2001: Ch 4; Redlich 2002). It is no coincidence that German reports compiled during the first days after the launch of Operation Barbarossa recorded many instances of public joy amongst Poles and Lithuanians at the sight of the German forces entering their villages and towns (Scheffler 1987).² For the local populations the imminent arrival of the NS forces meant much more than the end of Soviet occupation; it was also interpreted as a ‘licence’ to exact revenge from the ‘Judeo-Bolsheviks’ with impunity, with or without a direct Nazi mandate. Although this kind of revenge was often rooted in long-term prejudice against the Jews and nurtured by particular local circumstances, the impression that the Nazi advance signified the beginning of a major ‘cleansing’ operation against Jews and Bolshevik sympathisers lent an air of unbound permissibility to the prospect of anti-Jewish violence, resulting in a series of brutal attacks on Jewish communities throughout the summer of 1941 (Sabrin 1991).

Unlike Ukraine, the three Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia) had experienced independent rule in the interwar period. This experience had resulted in a dramatic elevation of their indigenous populations' respective status vis-à-vis minorities inside their boundaries (Swain 2004: 4–16). Thus, their 'status reversal' as a result of their incorporation in the Soviet sphere in 1939 and of the loss of independence in 1940–41 was particularly traumatic, generating a wave of resentment against the Soviet authorities and their perceived collaborators (predictably, 'Judeo-Bolsheviks'; Petersen 2001: 88). Ultranationalist and fascist (or 'fascistised') forces in Latvia and Lithuania—*Pērkonkrusts* (Thunder Cross) and *Geležinis Vilkas* (Iron Wolves), respectively—had been curtailed during the 1930s through the actions of national governments but received a crucial boost during the troubled years of Soviet occupation (Kasekamp 1999; Dieckmann 2004: 154–7). During that period the Germans also provided much-needed space and support for the reorganisation of these groups. They exchanged intelligence with them, plotted resistance activities against the occupiers, and spuriously kindled their independent nation-statist dreams (Kwiet 1998: 6). They sheltered an exiled coalition of Lithuanian nationalists under the umbrella of the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF), founded in Berlin in 1940, and offered indirect support to an array of other nationalist anti-Soviet movements in the Baltic states during 1939–41 (Budreckis 1968: 25; Kasekamp 2000: 132; 1993: 263–8). Such groups had been formed almost immediately after the Soviet occupation in the firm belief that the 1939 German-Soviet alliance was a temporary, opportunistic one, destined to lead to an all-out conflict between the two powers in the near future and to bring back full independence for their nations (MacQueen 1998: 33). From the beginning their resistance to Soviet rule constituted an acceptance of their 'agentive' role in a future NS 'new order' across the region. As in the case of the OUN, the LAF, the Perkonkrusts, the formally defunct Geležinis Vilkas (re-formed as a political group under the title 'Lithuanian Nationalist Party', LNP), as well as the Estonian Independence Veterans' League were integrated into the NS *Neuordnung* after June 1941.³ Many were trained in the Third Reich, given a political voice inside Germany, and were deployed by the Nazis in preparation for the invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 (Piotrowski 1998: 163).

All these seismic experiences, within just two decades from each other, bred intense anxiety, accentuated intercommunal tensions, and left behind a disoriented population even before the NS forces wreaked fresh havoc from June 1941 onwards. The vehemence of murderous 'scapegoating', primarily directed at the local Jews, was closely linked to the painful experience of 'status reversal' and were regarded as an emblematic form of historic 'justice' (Petersen 2001: 214; Friedrich 2005: 741). The majority of Jews had accepted the Soviet rule—sometimes enthusiastically, mostly with relief or as a 'lesser evil' respite. They had experienced a general elevation of their status (though by no means as spectacular as perceived by most of the population),

had become more visible in administration after two decades of restrictions placed upon them by national(ist) governments, and had played a fairly prominent role in the Communist parties. With the Soviet invasion in the autumn of 1939 many Jews and Ukrainians had welcomed the demise of Polish rule and seized the opportunity for improving their status in order to strengthen their position within local society. Reports of alleged Jewish harassment of Poles and Ukrainians during the period of Soviet rule were crucial in fomenting and radicalising anti-Jewish sentiment (Rossino 2003: 437). All these factors nurtured the long-term anti-Jewish mood of the populations and gave it a particularly venomous topicality (Levin 1987: 17–30; Bartov 1992: 159). The idea, however, of Jewish connivance with the Soviets against the majority national communities rested on *perception* distorted by long-term prejudice (the ‘Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy’—see earlier, Ch 1) rather than on the reality of Jewish-Soviet relations (Levin 1985: Chs 2–3; Greenbaum 1995: Chs 1–3). In fact, some Jews suffered a lot under the Soviet rule—and predictably they were the ones ironically looking forward to the arrival of the Nazis, refusing to believe stories about brutal persecution and mass murder (Levin 1995: 280). Thus, the belief in a wholesale ‘Jewish-Bolshevik’ connivance was the tip of a long-term tradition of popular anti-Semitism, in evidence long before 1941 but crucially aggravated during the period of Soviet occupation. Resentment, already running high and barely concealed in fear of further Soviet reprisals, was further aggravated during the May–June 1941 period with the formal annexation of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union and the mass deportations of ethnic Latvians and Lithuanians that took place in the few weeks before the Nazi invasion (Bartov 1992: Ch 4; Dean 2000: 39–43). In fact, there often appears to be a direct correlation between the uncovering of crimes committed by the Soviet NKVD, on the one hand, and the extent or vehemence of pogroms initiated by locals against ‘Judeo-Bolsheviks’ in the wake of Operation Barbarossa (Musial 2001: 171).

When the Soviet forces started retreating in chaotic haste after the launch of the German invasion, all these suppressed energies exploded. The total collapse of civic order was the first major effect of the German invasion. The void that it left behind, as the Soviet authorities left and the NS forces were still advancing or establishing themselves, provided the first ‘licence to eliminate’ with at best indirect or no NS agency (Zbikowski 1993). Nationalist/fascist organisations, their local members, and many ‘ordinary’ citizens did not have to wait for a (formal or indirect) NS authorisation to take revenge on their previous masters and their perceived collaborators. The absence of order (and, therefore, of sanctions and accountability) was the perfect invitation to vent their accumulated frustration and settle accounts with impunity. In fact, squads made up of activists of the LAF, the OUN, and other nationalist/fascist groups operating from Germany had already been deployed prior to the launch of Operation Barbarossa, ready to seize the initiative (Piotrowski 1998: 163, 180). Sensing disaster, many Jews fled

eastwards, following the retreat of the Soviet forces more out of instinct than loyalty (Levin 1995: Ch 13). Those who chose or were forced to stay were instantly deprived of their status protection and were identified as fully responsible for the suffering of the preceding two years (Glick 2002: 128). As a result, many of the early pogroms against local Jewish communities took place in the absence of NS authorities (Zbikowski 1993: 173–80). During the last week of June, Kaunas and many rural communities in Lithuania witnessed numerous outbursts of anti-Jewish violence (Levin 1985: 95; Porat 1994: 159), most of which had been organised and/or instigated by members of ultranationalist groups, such as those active under the umbrella of the LAF. The Lithuanian ultranationalist/fascist militia were eager to act before the arrival of the new NS masters. In this way, they could demonstrate their alignment with the NS cause but also make a declaration of their independence of action and of their determination to play a central role in the new Lithuania (Matthäus 1996b: 108). Immediately upon the start of Barbarossa, different LAF groupings moved swiftly to fill in the vacuum but also to infiltrate the police and the armed forces, as well as to stave off attempts by the supporters of the pre-1939 president Antanas Smetona to reestablish themselves (MacQueen 1998). As early as 23 June the LAF issued a stark warning to the country's Jews, stating that their "days were numbered", and promising amnesty for former Soviet collaborators if they murdered Jews (in Levin 1990: 56; Levin 1996: 332). Meanwhile, members of the Lithuanian Union of Šiauliai* started rounding up and executing many Jews in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal (Petersen 2001: 107). In the following few days almost 4,000 Jews were murdered in Kaunas alone, with militia burning down synagogues and many houses (MacQueen 1998: 35; Gasperaitis 2001: 886–904; see also following). In the following weeks there were numerous reports of locals actively involved in the violent roundup of Jews. By that time, the ghettos of Kaunas and Vilnius had been flooded with tens of thousands of Jewish prisoners (Piotrowski 1998: 170). Similar violent outbursts occurred in a number of locations in Latvia (G Schneider 1993: 182; Swain 2004: Ch 3), as well as in the territories of eastern Poland and western Ukraine, where the OUN was fully operational (Spector 1990: 64).

This was the chance that these nationalist/fascist organisations had been waiting for in order to realise their goal of national independence, which had acquired a totemic significance due to the trials and tribulations of the Soviet occupation. The Bandera OUN-B group, emboldened by NS support in the preceding two years, managed to proclaim an independent Ukrainian state on 30 June 1941 at Lwów (Torzecki 1994: 246). In Latvia the Perkonkrusts—officially outlawed after the 1934 coup by Ulmanis but never really broken down and with good links to the NS regime during the 1939–41 period of Soviet rule—reemerged from the underground and its leader, Gustavs Celmins, moved quickly to fill in the political vacuum created by the collapse of independent Latvia and by the Soviet retreat

(Waite 1994: 218).⁴ In Lithuania the LAF and the LNP took advantage of the situation, formed a provisional government, and proclaimed independence on 23 June (Dallin 1981: Ch 10). During the first days or, at most, weeks after the invasion, NS agency was either absent or implicit, thereby allowing fascist/ultranationalist groups to become the primary agents and implicating ‘ordinary’ people as either instigators or voluntary accomplices. For example, in the Galician town of Buczacz, in which Jews were the majority ethnic element compared to Ukrainians and Poles, pogroms started before the Germans reached the area, with the active involvement of local Ukrainian nationalist elements (Bartov 2005). Leaflets prepared by the OUN in June 1941 exhorted the local population to “annihilate . . . your enemies—Moscow, the Poles, the Hungarians, the Jews”. Meanwhile, OUN-staffed divisions fighting alongside the Wehrmacht forces established a reign of terror in many parts of western Ukraine, murdering thousands—predominantly Jews (Littman 1993: 285). In the OUN’s extreme nation-statist vision, minorities would have had no place in a future Ukrainian state; but only ‘the Jew’ combined the anti-Ukrainian and the pro-Soviet stereotype in those dramatic days of upheaval and carnage. Thus, from the last week of June onwards the bulk of the OUN propaganda literature identified the Jews as the primary target of revenge (Weisbrod 2002). Similar findings involving the local Polish population have been documented with regard to the Łomża and Białystok regions. Apparently spontaneous pogrom-like actions were recorded in a series of locations in late June/early July 1941, the extent and brutality of which surprised the NS forces (Zbikowski 2003). Even some Polish underground organisations, which soon began their campaign of resistance against the German occupiers, also targeted Jews.

Overall, the Nazi authorities had made a considerable political-ideological investment in the ultranationalist organisations and fascist groups operating in the Soviet sphere of occupation. They perceived them as agents of anti-Soviet subversion until June 1941, and short-term allies in the ‘cleansing’ operations after the launch of the invasion. In fact, a form of direct NS ‘licence’ to these organisations was evident; and this was the ‘licence’ that their members extended to local communities, overcoming the latter’s fears and hesitation. Leading by example, members of these organisations cultivated populations in a decidedly anti-‘Judeo/Bolshevik’ direction, exploited local tensions and buried desires, delegitimised actively their victims through a spectacle of mass murder, and proved to the eyes of onlookers that such violent actions were possible and legitimate. This, they thought, was the prize they had to pay for German support during the difficult times of Soviet occupation, and the capital for their post-Barbarossa prize of national independence.

But the NS plans for the shape of the occupied eastern territories had advanced in a very different direction during the months before the launch of the invasion. In the minds of the architects of the Nazi *Neuordnung* there

would be no space for national independence or semisovereign arrangements in the east (Kangeris 1988). A corpus of German documents reveals the disingenuousness of NS support for anti-Soviet movements in the Ukraine and the Baltic states in 1939–41. Anticipating a swift military victory, the NS authorities envisaged the establishment of protectorates in the east, leading to future full annexation into the Reich, large-scale 'Germanisation' of the population, and Volksdeutsche colonisation in the context of the *Generalplan Ost* (see earlier, Ch 6). They distrusted the various hypernationalist movements in the area, even if the latter had clear 'fascist' sympathies and had acted as willing agents of the NS regime in the preceding two years (Hiden & Salmon 1994: 114). At a conference that took place in Berlin on 16 July 1941 Hitler made it clear that he envisaged the transformation of the Baltic states into integral territories of the Reich, whilst the Ukraine's economic potential would be fully exploited and the area would become a Volksdeutsche colony (Cameron 2000: 68). Thus, within weeks from the launch of Operation Barbarossa the dreams of Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Latvian nationalists would be crushed under the weight of the NS large-scale plans for territorial and population reordering of eastern Europe (Torzecki 1994: 250; Waite 1994: 218; Finder & Prusin 2004: 100–3). The Ukrainian and Lithuanian independence declarations were immediately rejected by the Germans. Their initial doubts about the political trustworthiness and dependability of these ultranationalist organisations had been largely overshadowed until the launch of Barbarossa by the pragmatic priority of anti-Soviet subversion, for which these groups were invaluable. Yet, with the impressive conquests of the first weeks their utility had been exhausted from the Nazi point of view. The blow was particularly hard in the case of the OUN, whose leadership saw the transfer of the coveted areas of Bukovina, Bessarabia, and Galicia to the GG instead of the promised independent Ukraine. Bandera protested in vain in a letter that he sent to Hitler on 3 August 1941. But also the LAF, which had been promised extensive autonomy for Lithuania, and the Belarus National Union, who had been granted German assurances about the country's future independence, ended up feeling embittered (Kangeris 1988; Piotrowski 1998: 209, 163). As for the resurfaced Perkonkrusts, many in Germany and Latvia were quick to point out its earlier strongly anti-German ideological platform (e.g., putting them in the same category of national 'foe' with Jews and Poles) and thus cast a shadow on its credentials as a reliable partner in the reorganisation of Latvia under NS rule.⁵

'LICENCE TO KILL' AND NS AGENCY

The arrival of the Wehrmacht troops, followed by the Einsatzgruppen and finally by the new German administrators of the occupied regions, took place swiftly, as befitted the meticulous NS preparation for the operation.

'Restoration of order' meant German control and the defeat of indigenous nationalist dreams. On 17 July 1941 a Hitler decree announced the creation of the Ministry for the Eastern Occupied Territories (*Ministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete*) under the veteran Nazi racial ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, and the creation of a series of *Reichskommissariats* covering the entire territory expected to be conquered up to the Ural mountains. The gradual establishment of NS military and administrative structures, as well as the ensuing suppression of indigenous nationalist organisations, altered both the nature of the 'licence' and the parameters of agency in the eliminationist violence witnessed in the eastern occupied territories. It did nothing, however, to suppress the wave of eliminationist violence per se. In fact, the campaigns against the local Jews gathered momentum in the wake of German military occupation and civic reorganisation of the eastern territories. This was not a surprise: the NS authorities had expended considerable energy in stirring up resentment against the 'Judeo-Bolsheviks' in the east and in actively preparing violent outbursts against Jews, communists, partisans and other 'dissident' groups. In the eyes of the populations there the NS regime had become synonymous with the most violent persecution of the 'Judeo-Bolsheviks'. Thus, the mere prospect of their arrival after the launch of Operation Barbarossa was a 'licence' in itself to act against the Jews—a 'licence' that did not have to be formally extended to them by the NS authorities but had to do with the consolidated belief that any action against the Jews was perfectly in line with the desires of the new rulers of the region. Taking the initiative against them before the Nazis had arrived demonstrated both a realisation that this was an extremely narrow window of opportunity to discharge violence without any restrictions and a desire for voluntary, anticipatory collaboration that was expected to strengthen the position of the involved communities in the eyes of the NS occupiers. With the arrival of the Germans the 'cleansing' operations could be carried out even more extensively, efficiently, and brutally.

Nevertheless, even before the arrival and consolidation of German authorities the NS agency had been crucial. There is indeed strong evidence that the early wave of pogroms in the east had not been purely spontaneous or driven entirely by local, autonomous agency. In late June 1941 Reinhard Heydrich spoke of the need to harness the widespread resentment of the local populations in the east and guide their "self-purging efforts" against 'Judeo-Bolsheviks' without appearing to have been ordered or guided by the NS authorities (Arâjs Trial Records 1975: 57; Headland 1989: 403). A week before the operation started Heydrich had included in his instructions to the Einsatzgruppen the importance of stirring up deep-seated ethnic tensions in the eastern territories and of exploiting the widespread anti-Jewish feeling (in Burrin 1994: 5–6; Rossino 2003: 444). The infamous summary of Einsatzgruppen 'cleansing' operations in the east prepared by the commander of Einsatzgruppe A Franz Walther Stahlecker on 15 October 1941 confirmed retrospectively this intention. As Stahlecker noted,

[i]n light of the consideration that the population of the Baltic countries had suffered most heavily under the rule of Bolshevism and Judaism during the period of integration into the USSR, it could be expected that after the liberation from this foreign domination they would eliminate the enemies who were remaining in the country after the retreat of the Red Army. It was the duty of the Security Police to initiate these self-purging efforts and to guide them in the proper channels, so that the goal set for cleaning the area is reached as quickly as possible. It was no less important to establish for the future the firm and demonstrable fact that *the liberated population on their own accord had taken the harshest measures against the Bolsheviks and Jewish enemy, without any direction from German agencies.* (IMT 1949: vol 37, 679; ND L-180; and Ezergailis 1996: 13–16 for translated excerpts; emphasis added)

Stahlecker also went on to emphasise the high degree of NS connivance in the early pogroms. He admitted that NS agency in instigating them was crucial, given the difficulties in inciting 'spontaneous' large-scale local pogroms. He was unequivocal in his judgment that the 'solution' to the Jewish question in the east could only be achieved through systematic measures organised and implemented by the NS occupying authorities. Local voluntary actions were clearly regarded as insufficient and, Stahlecker added, often impossible to organise. He also expressed disappointment at the lack of widespread 'spontaneous' anti-Jewish pogroms (*Selbstreinigungskaktionen* or 'self-cleansing actions') in Lithuania. He noted that the most radical elements amongst Lithuanian partisans, under Algirdas Klimaitis,

succeeded in starting a pogrom with the aid of instructions given him by a small advance detachment operating in Kovno . . . In the course of the first pogrom during the night of June 25/26, the Lithuanian partisans eliminated more than 1,500 Jews, set fire to several synagogues or destroyed them by other means, and burned down an area consisting of about sixty houses inhabited by Jews. During the nights that followed, 2,300 Jews were eliminated in the same way. In other parts of Lithuania similar *Aktionen* followed the example set in Kovno, but on a smaller scale. (ND L-180)

Similar complications, Stahlecker admitted, arose in Latvia (Ezergailis 2002) and even more so in Estonia, where there was a distinct reluctance to engage in violent 'cleansing' acts (Weiss-Wendt 1998; Birn 2001). It was possible during the very first days after the Soviet pullout and the NS occupation to instigate small-scale pogroms "by means of appropriate suggestions" by the NS authorities to the local partisans; but the majority of the population remained generally passive. Such comments raise serious questions about the alleged spontaneity of early eliminationist violence in the occupied eastern territories. They also cast a shadow on the idea of a

genuine 'interregnum' between Soviet and German occupations in the summer of 1941 (Kangeris 1994 and 1998; Ezergailis 1996). Heydrich's instructions and Stahlecker's report reveal wholesale NS involvement even before the invasion of the Soviet Union in the face of widespread unwillingness on the part of the local populations to participate in, let alone to instigate, pogroms.

The reasons as to why some 'ordinary' people joined in, some stepped in later, many remained passive onlookers, and a few rejected the violence or even tried to help the victims are extremely difficult to generalise. As we have already discussed (Ch 4), the complex relation between desirability, feasibility, and acceptability of a certain action generates diverse conditions of 'cognitive dissonance'—a condition that may be even more pronounced in circumstances where violence is involved. One may desire the violent elimination of a particular 'other' but otherwise consider this prospect infeasible. Another may both desire and contemplate such a scenario but nevertheless shy away from it due to its perceived moral impropriety or fear of punishment. In addition, one may long for a life without 'others' but reject violent means as a solution; or may desire only particular consequences of the 'other's' removal whilst being indifferent to the ideological parameters of the action itself. In such circumstances, 'licence' could provide the crucial boost in terms of the acceptability and/or the feasibility of the action—presenting it as a matter of life-or-death, accentuating the expected gains from it, delegitimising the 'other', removing the burden of accountability, and so on. Therefore, the decision to join in required either bridging the gap (for example, by lowering the threshold of moral culpability) or overcoming it altogether as irrelevant.

From the moment that they established a semblance of order in the eastern occupied territories the NS authorities encouraged all these motives in order to elicit 'voluntary' support from the local population. However, after the first, very mixed results of their efforts to incite pogroms by proxy, they realised that 'status reversal', resentment, and anti-'Judeo/Bolshevik' rage were not enough to sway the majority of people. Therefore, an element of reward in exchange for participation in the NS project became increasingly apparent. The attraction of material and/or status gain was evident from the first moment—and was duly noted by the occupiers. Even in those cases where eliminationist violence had occurred prior to the arrival of the Wehrmacht troops on the basis of local initiative, resentment and rage combined with widespread plunder (Dean 2000: 19–21). The result was broadly the same—the humiliation and murder of victims, sometimes in highly performative ways, in the context of a ritualistic spectacle that transcended conventional social and moral norms. The difference, however, in terms of motivation was fundamental. Whilst in the case of rage, violence was elevated to the status of an autonomous goal and the (mainly psychological) rewards were associated with the performance of the act itself and the tangible sense of revenge, violence was also chosen far more rationally as a means to a self-

centred end. In the latter scenario the individual or group operated broadly on the basis of extreme 'instrumental rationality' in order to bargain for power, status, or material benefits (Schröder & Schmidt 2001: 8; Fleming 2003: 102; Frey 2004).

Such a confluence of irrational, ideological, mundane, and instrumental motives was also evident in the efforts of the NS authorities to recruit volunteers for large-scale 'cleansing' operations. Throughout July and August 1941 the NS occupying authorities moved swiftly to organise and staff local auxiliary police forces (*Hilfspolizei*) in every occupied region, as a means to either intensifying the elimination of the Jews or initiating such a process where it had failed to take off (Swain 2004: 52). In late July 1941 Himmler issued orders for the creation of such an auxiliary police structure in the east in order to compensate for the relative shortage of German military and police personnel (Pohl 1996: Chs 2–3; Haberer 2001).⁶ In the following months NS authorities recruited thousands of volunteers amongst the local populations and established a network of *Schutzmannschaften* (defence units) across the east (Breitman 1990: 23–27). Initially, the Nazis had to balance their plans to recruit as widely as possible for these units with their distrust of the indigenous ultranationalist organisations that had formed the first militia units in anticipation of a swift Soviet retreat and NS victory. In this context, they could hardly tolerate the autonomous operation of indigenous ultranationalist and partisan organisations after the restoration of order, particularly since these organisations had shown alarming signs of independence of action and ambition during the period of interregnum. The subsequent decision to disband, absorb, or neutralise them reflected German perceptions that the OUN, the LAF, and other similar organisations were nothing more than "unreliable . . . unfit to rule . . . terrorist groups" that constituted dangerous liabilities in the NS 'new order' (Torzecki 1994: 244–50; Piotrowski 1998: 204–7). But this distrust of local organisations had to be weighed against the logistical problems of restoring order in, and administering, the vast occupied lands within a very short period of time. In the absence of sufficient numbers of German personnel and in the fear that the situation might get out of control, the occupiers made a pragmatic choice: they recruited locally using basic security screening techniques and then placed the new formations under the full jurisdiction of the few German officials stationed in the area. Within the course of a few months the recruitment drive had been sufficiently successful in all eastern occupied territories for the first wave of murderous 'cleansing' to take place with disturbing swiftness and efficiency (Arad, Krakowski, & Spector 1989: #14, 6.7.1941).⁷ By July 1942, *Schutzmannschaft* units had reached 75,000 members, whilst only in Lithuania more than 8,000 were serving in a total of twenty battalions. In Ukraine, almost 28,000 were recruited—a figure that rose substantially until the end of the war, including volunteers in various SS formations that fought alongside the Germans until the very end. The equivalent figure for Belarus reached 40,000 (Piotrowski 1998: 165, 153,

185–7, 222; Rein 2006). If one includes all non-German recruits in various defence and policing roles operating under NS command in the eastern occupied territories, the figure was much higher, reaching possibly 300,000 (Browning 1993b: 28; Matthäus 2007).

These units were deployed as auxiliary forces in a series of ‘cleansing operations’ against Jews, communists, and other allegedly dangerous elements. Given the voluntary nature of recruitment during the summer of 1941, the members of the auxiliary forces became willing collaborationist ‘agents’ in the NS *Neuordnung*. Not only did they carry out orders received from their German superiors but they often exceeded their remit and engaged in arbitrary exercise of coercive power that caused sensation even amongst the NS and Wehrmacht authorities. In some cases they were prevented from performing further, more violent acts by the Germans themselves (Dean 2000: 83–86; Finder & Prusin 2004: 106). The plea of the district commissar for Sluzk, Heinrich Carl, to Wilhelm Kube (general commissar for White Russia), in which he urged an immediate halt to the activities of the Lithuanian volunteers, was primarily concerned with the fear that such actions would generate a strong anti-German feeling amongst the population. Nevertheless, such pleas were indicative of the excessive behaviour of many local volunteer formations in the NS-occupied eastern territories (Headland 1989: 407; Porat 1994: 164). Some excelled in serving in select formations under the command of the SS (Dieckmann 2000; 2004: 161). During the infamous massacre of Babi Yar (near Kiev) on 29/30 September 1941 the role of the Ukrainian auxiliary units was extensive—and so was the evidence of their brutal behaviour vis-à-vis their victims (Arad, Krakowski, & Spector 1989: #101, 2.10.1941). Their members posted notices about the scheduled roundup of the local Jews, arrested most of the victims, acted as guards at the ravine, assisted in the organisation of the execution of around 33,000 Jews, often beat up their victims, and carried out their assigned duties with cruel efficiency and commitment, even if the executions appear to have been conducted by the NS forces (Waller 2002: 88–92). Violent outbursts regularly punctuated the execution of routine duties, such as the policing of concentration areas, the clearing of villages, the search for hiding Jews, and, later, the liquidation of the ghettos (Stang 1996; Dean 2000: Ch 5). In Latvia the Nazis actively encouraged the formation of special auxiliary units for carrying out ‘cleansing operations’—amongst them the notorious commando units headed by the likes of Viktors Arajs and Voldemars Veiss (both formerly associated with the formally extinct Pērkonkrusts; Ezergailis 2001; Viksne 2005). The situation was replicated in Lithuania with the resurfacing of a group of Iron Wolf members and the formation of two indigenous militia groups under Klimaitis and Zigonys (Arad, Krakowski, & Spector 1989: #12, 4.7.1941; MacQueen 1998: 37ff).

The list of atrocities committed by members of the various police auxiliary units across the NS ‘new order’ is long and well-documented (Arad, Krakowski, & Spector 1989; Headland 1989). Such units were often

deployed in areas far away from their own residence; sometimes they were attached to German formations that carried 'cleansing operations' in what used to be territory of neighbouring countries.⁸ A typical commando or police unit consisted of a handful of NS officers, with the bulk made up of native recruits (Dean 2004: 127). Although Jews were their main target (Himka 1997: 171), depending on orders from the NS authorities they were also involved in the roundup of other groups (such as Romani and Bolshevik 'collaborators' or partisans), with whom they could now settle accounts with impunity. In areas of multiple interethnic tension and 'status reversal' in recent years, auxiliary police formations also turned mercilessly against ethnic Poles, Ukrainians, or Russians, depending on the particular circumstances of each region. The series of Einsatzgruppen reports repeatedly acknowledged the contribution of these volunteer units to the 'cleansing' measures undertaken by the NS authorities (Arad, Krakowski, & Spector 1989: #150/153, 2/9.1.1942). Without them, as well as without other forms of local collaboration or informal assistance, it would have been impossible for around 3,000 German officials in the SS and police units to carry out more than 600,000 executions in the course of ten months. Local assistance proved vital in terms of identifying the victims quickly and efficiently, as well as in carrying out large-scale operations in such a short period of time and with such disturbing competence. In fact, the satisfaction of the NS authorities with the commitment of the volunteer forces did play a role in the subsequent extension of recruitment and the deployment of auxiliary police formations in more 'cleansing' operations (Dean 1996; Porat 1994: 165).

Nevertheless, Einsatzgruppen reports and other available documents reveal substantial differences with regard to the extent of local collaborationism in the various occupied eastern territories. The general pattern that emerges out of these reports put Lithuania at the top of the scale (Vestermanis 1990; MacQueen 1998: 38), with Latvians showing "passivity [and] hesitation . . . in their anti-Semitic attitudes, not daring to take action against Jews" (Arad, Krakowski, & Spector 1989: #24, 16.7.1941); Ukrainians were broadly divided along an east-west axis (corresponding to the pre-1939 Polish and Soviet spheres), with the latter—as well as the Belorussians—generally more willing to participate in the operations. NS situational reports identified some of the reasons behind the apparent passivity of the populations in Belarus, Latvia, and some of the occupied territories of Russia. The lure of material and status gains, as well as the promise of venting profound resentment at Jews, Poles, and others, were often counterbalanced by fears of a possible return of the Russians and by mistrust of the German occupiers (Arad, Krakowski, & Spector 1989: #133, 153, 157; 14.11.41, 9.1.42, 19.1.42, respectively). Generally, the recruitment situation improved from 1942 onwards but only through a 'stick and carrot' approach that involved increasing levels of compulsion, assurances of impunity, promises of material gains (including confiscation of goods and allocation of land/houses; MacQueen 1998: 36), propaganda about the allegedly

imminent collapse of the Soviet Union, and fear of harsh reprisals for anti-German activities.

Such differences can hardly be explained as reflections of the strength of either local anti-Semitism or ideological support for the NS project. Instead, a wide range of different incentives and deterrents intervened in every individual decision to participate (or not) in ‘cleansing’ *Aktionen*. For some the prospect of taking part amounted to a permission to engage in an intoxicating ritual of violent revenge or petty retribution against particular, familiar ‘others’. For others, the main lure was the promise of material or status gains. Indeed, many volunteers in the auxiliary police formations joined primarily because of such promised material benefits. Food was a particular attraction to many at a time of war and heightened insecurity—rations for auxiliaries were much better than for the rest of the population. Financial rewards and guarantee of status in such uncertain circumstances also played a crucial role (Dean 2000: 66, 102). Some volunteered in order to protect the welfare and status of their families or communities. Others hastened to join in so as to stake a claim to their future ‘Germanisation’, particularly since this would involve a tangible material gain—the redistribution of Jewish property (D Bergen 1994; Friedrich 2005: 727). Ideological reasons—such as hypernationalist loyalties and resentment against the ‘Judeo-Bolsheviks’ and ethnic ‘others’—did play a role on many occasions as participation in the ranks of the *Schutzmannschaft* battalions guaranteed the ‘licence’ to exact revenge with impunity (Gittelman 1993: 10); but so did indirect pressure from the NS authorities, who were in desperate need of locals to staff teams assigned with the more unpleasant tasks of the ‘cleansing operations’ and for concealing the degree of Nazi involvement in the genocide (Klein 1997; Chiari 1998). Whilst the first wave of recruitment immediately after the launch of Barbarossa rested overwhelmingly on voluntary participation, with the recruits generally able to leave the *Schutzmannschaft* formations if they wished (as some did),⁹ compulsion became far more pronounced from the spring of 1942 onwards. The escalation of the ‘cleansing’ programme and the increasingly complicated military situation in the east forced the NS authorities to tap deeper and more aggressively into local human resources in order to meet the logistical requirements of liquidating the ghettos (Dean 2000: 81–83), of the ‘second wave’ of elimination against their victims in the east, and of “intensify[ing] action against banditry in the east” (Trevor-Roper 2004: Hitler Directive #46, 18.8.1942).

GENOCIDE AS ‘CARNIVAL’

By that time, of course, pressure for conformity had also increased (Newman 2002: 47). It was becoming increasingly obvious that those who had been enlisted had benefited. Their participation in violent reprisals had not only gone unpunished but also rewarded by their Nazi superiors. Similarly,

by then the repetitive experience of eliminationist violence against Jews and others (often deliberately staged in public) had contributed to the extreme delegitimation and dehumanisation of the victims. This not only encouraged a further escalation of 'cleansing' actions (Herbert 1998b: 111; Newman 2002: 54) but also functioned as a legitimising precedent and alibi for more people to become involved in the eliminationist process. By knowing that others had committed such acts or by having witnessed them in person, the delegitimation of the victimised group deepened and the process of "moral disengagement" became easier (Bandura 1999: 196; Blass 2002: 105). This largely explains the continuation and escalation of eliminationist violence in the east well beyond the first stages of Barbarossa. If during the summer of 1941 many people participated in spontaneous pogroms against people they knew but hated or came to detest out of a sense of rage and redemptive release, in 1942–44 the nature and causes of violence against 'others' had a lot to do with the cumulative experience of the latter's dehumanisation and their exclusion from the perpetrators' "moral universe" (Staub 2003: 305).

Here once again the power of the precedent acted as a form of empowerment that legitimised continuing persecution and facilitated the transgression of common morality. Not just murdering particular 'others' but the violent act itself and the dehumanising treatment of more 'others' became more 'normal', less shocking, and less morally troublesome. After the excesses witnessed during the first stages of Barbarossa, the spectacle of performative violence, ritualistic torture, and senseless murder entered the macabre horizon of everyday life (Waller 2002: 250). The horrendous treatment that had initially been intended and reserved for the Jews swept away many more. The NS occupation authorities did lend a helping hand once again, encouraging, for example, the anti-Polish sentiment in parts of Ukraine and Belarus, and allowing violence to escalate with impunity. Sporadic massacres and more organised actions (such as the one most likely authorised by the OUN leadership in the Wolyn area during the summer of 1943 that claimed the lives of almost 20,000 Poles only in July—Piotrowski 1998: 245) were allowed to continue and gather momentum in the margins of the NS 'cleansing' operations. Such violent initiatives, often provoking equally senseless retaliatory actions (e.g., Poles against Ukrainians from 1943 onwards), epitomised an open-ended "continuum of destruction" (Staub 1998), in which the NS agency was only one—however central and devastating—amongst many facets of genocidal 'cleansing'.

Examples of ritualistic violence, well beyond the parameters of mechanical conformity or instrumental rationality, carried out either by members of the auxiliary forces or by 'ordinary' people with no formal connection to the operations, were recorded at all stages of the war in the east. From the early pogroms of June–July 1941 to the later instances of violence by auxiliary forces far exceeding the remit of organised 'actions' under the aegis of the NS authorities or operations carried out by partisan groups,

excessive performative violence was a disturbing feature of the genocide in the east. It is crucial to remember that a very large number of victims in the NS 'new order' perished not through the allegedly ultramodern channels of industrialised mass murder in the death camps of the GG but through direct murder, torture, and raw violence (Browning 2000: Part 1, III). Such actions involved 'ordinary' people who were acting on their own initiative in the absence of order or had been ascribed specific roles that they were only too eager to fulfil or even exceed. They often took place in full public view, with an impromptu audience of bystanders cheering and exhorting the participants to discharge even more cruelty against their helpless victims, shouting abuse at them, and imploring for the continuation and escalation of the spectacle, before some of them in the spur of the moment would finally step in to become active, ad hoc accomplices (Lacapra 1998: 31; cf. Barnett 1999).

The performative nature of pogroms and of many organised 'cleansing' operations graphically highlights the open-ended nature of the NS 'licence'. Through the distinction between active participants and passive onlookers the publicly-enacted spectacle appeared at first to acknowledge the inhibitions of the crowd and the extraordinary nature of the ritual; but it also offered the opportunity to transgress and transcend conventional moral prohibitions (Stone 2004: 58). For those who would join in at that moment this was the symbolic moment of their 'resocialisation', through which they would overcome the troubling dissonance between the goal and the morality of the method by adapting their attitudes and values to the new situation (Staub 1990). Ad hoc involvement in violence offered the participants an intoxicating taste of 'licence' to enact their most hidden and extreme desires, and increased the pressure on others to follow suit (Kelman 1973: 46–48). But also for those already involved in the operations, in a role of authority or acting under specific instructions, the extreme nature of the spectacle, the dehumanisation of their victims, and the awareness of impunity functioned as powerful incentives or dispensations to discharge wanton violence in a superfluous, performative, and often sadistic way.

These—increasingly frequent—instances highlight a different way of overcoming the state of cognitive dissonance that inhibited many from participating in eliminationist violence even if they desired its outcome. Rather than resolving dissonance through a process of negotiating relative incentives and deterrents or recasting the action as a necessary step towards a wider goal, they offered the opportunity of an incidental transgressive experience that rendered the dissonant frame of mind temporarily stunned and irrelevant (Stone 2003). This format of discharging violence created an exceptional psychological space where ritual, transgression, and the anonymity of the crowd produced the illusion of an extraordinary experience of unbound permissibility, governed by the emphatic lapse of conventional moral norms. Instances of sporadic but intense group violence against particular 'others'—not only in modern times but earlier too—could be likened

to a "carnival of . . . authorised transgression" (cf. Bakhtin 1968: 26; Eco 1984: 6; Hagen 2005). They reflected suppressed feelings which, in turn, were momentarily sanctioned or not opposed by the authorities before order was once again restored. During these rituals taboos could be broken and new borderline ('liminal') moral spaces could be accessed for a finite period of time and only in the context of ritualised action (Davis 1965). Just like the medieval carnivals, participants could vent unacceptable desires, defy authorities, and escape normative sanctions for their behaviour, approaching violence as a "transgressive experience" (Lang 1984; Stone 2004: 46–50). Crucially, they would also experience this *ekstasis* (stepping outside of oneself), through an extreme "doubling" of their personality (Lifton 1986: 418; Caillois 1959/2001: 96–98), with the ephemeral emergence of a different, separate self—both individual and collective—operating under a very different moral mandate. Here the psychological reward from participating in the violent action emanated from "the majesty of the forbidding norm" that was momentarily parodied and demolished—not from the resolution of the dissonant frame of mind in any meaningful and lasting way.

The catalogue of 'carnavalesque' violence in the eastern occupied territories in 1941–44 is extensive and disturbing. SS reports from Belarus expressed shock at the "carnival aspects of the slaughter . . . bordering on sadism", though not for the 'cleansing' process per se or its death toll (Hochstadt 2004: 124–7). The Einsatzgruppen divisions felt compelled to streamline the shooting operations in order to limit the "demonic games favoured by the collaborators" (Piotrowski 1998: 153). Depending of the situation and nature of the *Aktionen*, Jews, Poles, and Romani were tortured and humiliated by their guards, forced to perform perverse rituals and ridicule their customs, hit with ruffles or wooden sticks, dismembered and paraded. Crushed skulls would sometimes be preserved by members of the auxiliary police members as proud mementos and prizes from the executions. Some of these rituals would last for many hours or even days, or would be repeated with chilling regularity over a period of time. Soldiers and members of special squads often drank heavily before discharging their cruel duties (Browning 1993b: 69, 82). Members of local NS-controlled organisations, such as the *Baudienst* labour service in the GG made up of young Polish draftees, often engaged in violent anti-Jewish actions, during which they operated under the extreme influence of alcohol (Friedrich 2005: 720). Youth gangs, whether on their own initiative or through German incitement (and with the lure of financial reward), would enter ghettos and beat up their victims with horrifying regularity (Piotrowski 1998: 111). Even children, so heavily indoctrinated into hating particular 'others' but also desensitised by the carnage that surrounded them, would occasionally be involved in acts of intimidation. Rage, licence, and performance created a continuum of murderous violence, in which horrendous excesses were legitimised by their public enactment and entire groups were reduced to a loathsome subhuman form of existence that ostensibly justified more—and more extreme—violence.

Of course, such instances of ad hoc participation in the discharge of the most horrific eliminationist violence in the eastern occupied territories during WW II were by no means unparalleled. Throughout the centuries pogrom-like actions against particular scapegoats had been carried out in highly ritualistic and performative ways, in the context of a fundamental breakdown of convention and of extreme personal release from moral and legal accountability. Many areas in Eastern, Central, and Southeastern Europe had a recent history of violent encounters between ethnic/religious groups, culminating in collective actions of exceptional cruelty perpetrated by one group against its 'contestant other'. Cultural factors (memory, tradition, values) may not only channel violence against a specific group but also frame it in a particular performative manner that is symbolic and meaningful both to the perpetrators and to the victims (Schröder & Schmidt 2001; Carmichael 2002: 5–24). In addition there has always been a correlation between the traumatic collapse of large-scale geopolitical orders, on the one hand, and the psychological need of population groups to reassert their—perceived as threatened—identities in confrontational and violent ways, on the other. All these features had manifested themselves in the context of interethnic/religious conflict in many parts of the Balkans and Eastern Europe; and they were also repeated during WW II. During the short-lived Legionary State in Romania (1940–41—see earlier, Chs 7–8), members of the Iron Guard ran amok across the country. Apart from terrorising, torturing, and killing Jews, they also used more perverse techniques, such as tying their victims to a column for hours or even days in full public view and dissecting them whilst still being alive (Nagy-Talavera 1970: 322–5).

However, there was something inherently extreme and grotesque about the way in which these processes were set in motion in the aftermath of the NS conquest of the east. The combination of extreme scope of change, recurring order collapse, and very short intervening periods between those painful breakdowns (1917–20, 1939, 1941) embedded a particularly poisonous sense of transience and reversibility to any arrangement. This, in turn, sustained feelings of resentment and fed excessive ambitions for recapturing pure, 'cleansed' identities from the ruins of a fractured historical space and time. That the notion of order collapsed two or—in the case of Eastern Europe—three times in the course of little over two decades, with many people experiencing seismic and disorienting changes from all three during the lifetime, could only unleash cumulative energies and far more extreme agencies than anywhere else. But it was primarily the protracted nature of this 'carnival' in the east, without any meaningful respite or restoration of civic order, that bred a peerless vicious circle of extreme violence, extreme dehumanisation of the victims, and even more extreme violence. For up to four years violence was the norm, the currency of survival and reward, the channel of release and transcendence, the benchmark of success—or simply a ritual of perverse self-affirmation through the performative annihilation of 'the other'. 'Ordinary' people were encouraged to take part, to assume

the murderous initiative, or to watch the ritualistic murder of their fellow citizens as a spectacle devoid of moral import.

In spite of the occasional expression of shock or disapproval, this situation suited the NS plans only too well. They treated the occupied territories as laboratories for testing even more extreme methods and strategies of mass racial 'cleansing' on an unprecedented scale. They found populations disoriented, frustrated, and aggrieved by the tumultuous events of the 1939–41 period, severed from the interface of a national civic authority and without any hope of obtaining one in the future. Furthermore, in the occupied eastern territories the NS authorities did not extend their 'licence' through intermediaries (friendly governments, puppet regimes) but directly and in the most extreme context of ongoing 'total' military conflict. Equally, incorporation in the NS 'agentic order' in the east offered few opportunities for moral detachment from the experience of genocidal violence, as it took the form of a direct assault on the victims, not mediated by the modern bureaucratic distancing techniques or by Nazi concerns for secrecy and euphemism, as had happened inside the Reich. All in all, the NS 'licence' in the eastern territories was raw, all-pervasive, and stripped of any nuances of moral relativity. It was extended to—or seized by—populations that had experienced so many traumatic upheavals in such a short period of time in addition to whatever cultural and ideological predispositions they may have borne as individuals or communities. This combination—much more than any purported strength of prejudice against particular 'others' or cultural predisposition towards violence—gave genocide in the east its critical, deadly momentum. Whilst the most extreme phase of elimination was driven by decisive NS initiative, local and regional agencies had by that time acquired their own momentum, shaped by very particular indigenous energies that thrived on the perception of an extraordinary atmosphere of 'licence'. In this crucial respect, the wartime project of elimination in the NS 'new order' was so much more than the sum of its constituent parts.

Conclusions

The kind of relation between ‘fascism’ and genocide in interwar/wartime Europe that this book has attempted to trace is one of *correlation* rather than causation. In the previous chapters I have focused as much on the contribution as on the limitations of different ‘fascist agencies’, whether intellectual, ideological or political, in the escalation of eliminationist violence during the ‘era of fascism’. The architecture of the book reflects a central aspect of my argument—namely, that certain *ideological and political* facets of what we have come to associate with ‘fascism’ did facilitate, help unleash, and radicalise the elimination of perceived ‘others’ in the particular circumstances of interwar and WW II Europe. Yet, this happened only where a certain ‘potential for elimination’ against such particular ‘others’ already existed, be that in the form of cultural traditions, collective prejudices, and/or recent (‘fresh’) memories. The first section of the book (Chs 1–2) examined the long-term parameters that shaped this potential. Constructions of ‘otherness’—and particularly what Bauman referred to as “contestant enmity” (1989: 62–5)—have been historically tied to prejudices and stereotypes that were in time integrated into national narratives and underpinned the formation of collective identities. On many occasions hating, fearing, or distrusting an ‘other’ was at least as important for identity-building as any feeling of positive collective association. By the time that fascism appeared in the intellectual and political scene of Europe, nationalism had not only become the most potent form of collective identification, but it had also developed into a hybrid anthropological-territorial-political concept that spelt trouble. The growing, consuming obsession with acquiring a future ‘*ideal nation-state*’ indicated a portentous shift of focus from national self-determination to unmitigated sovereignty, exclusivity, and homogeneity. A nation was a symbolic community of people, whether real or imagined, whether unified or fragmented. By contrast, the nation-state was a geopolitical structure that betrayed a chimeric ambition for national wholeness and full, decontested power. As a response to the gap between this ideal vision and a reality of incomplete, frustrated ambitions, the ideology of ‘nation-statism’ consumed many such states, old and new, particularly during and after WW I. Much more than before the Europe of 1920 was a continent of

fiercely competing but fragmented entities, of confused identities, of numerous 'contestant enmities', and of a strong yearning for a 'new (national and European) beginning'.

Nation-statism was perhaps the most significant formative influence on fascist ideology. It bequeathed each national variant of fascism an idealisation of the nation, a totemic benchmark of success (independent, fully sovereign statehood), and a radicalised discourse of 'otherness' that resonated with the nation's past and present. But fascism also articulated a counter-utopia to both liberal and socialist visions—a utopia hinging on the total *rebirth* of the nation itself. In fact, fascism escalated the meaning of 'nation-statism' by radicalising the connotations of each of its constituent parts. A fascist 'new man' making up an ideal national community, reinvigorated and 'cleansed' from allegedly alien or harmful influences, would occupy the centre stage of their own national state. Not only did fascist ideology sacralise 'the nation', but it also saw the nation-state as the vessel for the full sovereign empowerment of the national community. This notion of unbound sovereignty pointed to a campaign of *redemption*—*external* (concerning territory and 'redeeming' parts of the nation living elsewhere) and *internal* (reclaiming the nation in its purest form of a homogenous, ideal national community in its exclusive state). Thus, for fascism rebirth was not just a vague premise of regeneration but also a process of actively recapturing an ideal condition of national purity and wholeness—vital, urgent, and realisable (Eatwell 2006: 272). And it was this latter facet of redemption that introduced a decisive element of *cleansing* in the fascist utopia of an ideal nation-state (Ch 3).

The fascist discourse of 'rebirth-through-cleansing' united the idealisation of the nation with the most aggressive notions of ethno-exclusivity, and recast 'others' as incongruous and detrimental to the national regenerative project. Those 'others', particularly internal ones (i.e., living amidst the national community), were identified as dangerous aliens that stood in the way of national self-fulfilment. As menacing 'others' they had no place in a future ideal national community and nation-state; and as 'internal outsiders' they epitomised a visible, threatening anomaly at the heart of the community's living space, to which they did not and should not belong. Therefore, violence against them could be a legitimate expression of the nation-state's historic sovereignty over its own destiny. Fascist ideologies offered the opportunity to enact a future without 'others', dominated by the regenerated and cleansed national community in a powerful, complete, and homogeneous state. By enacting such a vision verbally and psychologically as a legitimate discourse, fascist ideologies helped legitimise and unleash a form of existential collective hatred directed at particular 'others'. This hatred was not blind; nor was the violent imageries that derived from it. By connecting the prospect of eliminating (in one form or another) the 'others' from the national community's living space to the appealing vision of national rebirth, fascist ideologies pitted those 'others' against of the national

regenerative discourse and empowered both nation and nation-state to view them with existential hostility (Ch 4).

Fascism was also at the receiving end of another formative influence. Since the nineteenth century the conventional discourse of *race* had been recast in ways that affected the way in which European societies perceived both themselves and others. Taxonomies of human groups had a long ancestry, at least since the late-medieval times, but received a crucial boost during the era of discoveries. The European contact with exotic colonial ‘others’ in previously unknown parts of the world strengthened the belief in an alleged European/‘white’ superiority, and often resulted in the treatment of the ‘other’ as an inherently inferior form of life (*speciation*). This in turn appeared to authorise a different behaviour towards non-European peoples that was marked by domination, denigration, and often extreme violence—violence deemed unsuitable for humans but easily deployed against these allegedly subhuman forms of existence.

Initially, these attempts at producing taxonomies of human groups did not make qualitative distinctions between Europeans themselves. However, in the course of the nineteenth century the rise of national antagonisms within Europe and the popularity of social Darwinist discourses (struggle for survival, survival of the fittest) penetrated the European scene and led to a fundamental reconceptualisation of both ‘race’ and ‘nation’ in progressively permeable terms. Nationalism capitalised on ‘race’ in order to produce a narrative of common national descent and unbroken continuity, and thus to justify a vicious defence of the nation’s purity/wholeness against allegedly ‘alien others’—alien in cultural, spiritual, and increasingly biological terms. The ‘health’ of the nation became coterminous with an array of biological benchmarks: strength in numbers, defence from miscegenation, selective breeding with both incentives and disincentives, as well as assault on the causes of ‘degeneration’. ‘Race’ offered nationalism a far more useful template of ontological and historic continuity for the nation, as well as a legitimising principle that was allegedly scientific, objective, and incontrovertible. As years went by, it became more and more difficult to distinguish ‘race’ from ‘nation’, as the former was becoming nationalised and the latter racialised. The result of this dual process was a hybrid concept that fused the two—what I have called the *racial nation* (Ch 2)—rooted in heredity and macrohistory but crucially incarnated in the form of a modern organic national community. Thus the nation-state assumed an array of further roles beyond that of being the sovereign political embodiment of the nation. It also became the vessel for its protection against degeneration, the guarantor of its collective health, and the engine of its rebirth in the context of the eternal struggle against other similar entities.

Of all variants of ‘fascism’, only National Socialism displayed an obsessive interest in the ultramodern pseudoscience of race, even if the ideology of the NSDAP perceived *Rasse* and *Volk* in almost interchangeable or complementary terms. But Germany had by that time a fully developed scientific

paradigm of race (*Rassenhygiene*, racial hygiene), to which a number of biomedical practitioners had subscribed as the platform for creating a genuine ‘master race’. Modern Germany had also been exposed to highly popular racial-anthropological theories that had suggested a clear identification of the racial ‘Aryans’ with the national modern *Germanen*. With Hitler’s appointment as chancellor in January 1933, two ‘totalitarian’ visions came together under the auspices of the NS regime—one political and mystical, steeped in theories of ‘Aryan’ superiority for the German *Volk*, the other scientific and concerned with the biological regeneration of the *Volk* through both positive and negative (cleansing) measures. The fusion of the two visions became possible on the basis of fully empowering the *völkisch* state with regard to all matters of life and death, cancelling distinctions between individual and community, between private and public spheres, between science, state, and religion. Both visions promised in different ways to deliver the totemic utopia of an ideal national community in an ideal nation-state. Their devices and prescriptions may have been very different but, from the point of view of Hitler and the numerous scientists that hastened to congratulate him enthusiastically in 1933 and worked seamlessly with the NS regime until the very end, they were also complementary. Through the alliance between extreme nation-statism and biological racism, between cultic and scientific variants of totalitarianism, a genuine *biopolitical* experiment began in 1930s Germany that spearheaded a revolutionary, ‘total’ assault on every form of decadence under the aegis of the NS regime, first within Germany and after 1939 across Europe (Ch 5).

The rest of the national permutations of ‘fascism’ were far less interested in this scientific discourse of ‘race’, particularly in its racial-hygienic variant so pronounced in the case of National Socialism. This, however, did not prevent them from subscribing to the same notion of a ‘racial nation’ as a closed biological and historic community of kindred individuals, bound together by primordial natural ties and fatally threatened by the existence of ‘alien’ elements, both in their midst and across national borders. They were far more interested in the vision of national rebirth that would both expand the nation-state and purge it from dangerous ‘alien’ influences. Their dream of an ‘ideal nation-state’ had a strong redemptive character that legitimised a utopia of a ‘life without others’ as a precondition for a fully sovereign nation in an optimal geopolitical, cultural, economic, and social environment. But ‘race’ as a historic-anthropological constant of national membership was almost always in this utopia. As in the case of National Socialism, other fascist movements preached rebirth but at the same time saw the removal of the nation’s ‘contestant others’ as a fundamental precondition for realising the desired organic national unity. Thus, *rebirth* was fused with *cleansing*, legitimising the latter and establishing a tangible benchmark for the former. ‘Rebirth-through-cleansing’ became the primary distinguishing feature of the fascist vision of regeneration. The promise of rendering the national community a fully empowered and sovereign historic entity pushed the

'others' into a sort of liminal space that fatally delegitimised their existence and justified extreme imageries against them, including the possibility of violent purging. Fascist ideology did not identify those 'others'; it inherited them, whether as 'eternal others' (e.g., Jews and Sinti/Roma) or as particular 'others' in more recent times. But its intellectual agency was crucial, for fascism recast their 'otherness' as a lethal impediment to the vision of national rebirth and suggested that their elimination was a crucial part of a positive, appealing utopia.

In this book I have argued that every form of violence against fellow human beings is a problematic proposition for the overwhelming majority of people. With the exception of small minorities of individuals who are either morally indifferent to violence or categorically opposed to it, whatever the circumstances, the rest of the population operates in a context of *cognitive dissonance* (Ch 4). This state of mind is determined by fundamental conflicts between what is psychologically desirable, practically feasible, pragmatically expedient, and morally justifiable. Violence against 'contestant others' may be (or have become, depending on the circumstances) desirable to a number of people. Yet, the desirability of a 'life without others' is usually offset by the much more profound notion of moral inadmissibility of the violent action involved in eliminating them, by a belief that such a prospect is impossible, by a fear of the consequences of such an action, or by a combination of all these concerns. With regard to the desirability of a violent encounter with 'others', nationalism, nation-statism, and racialism had already made a significant contribution, accentuating the psychological distance between the national community and its particular 'others', often dehumanising/delegitimising them, and fermenting negative passion against them. A genocidal act, however, is not just linked to a (however desired) result but also to an ethically troublesome, if not repugnant, violent method. Therefore, authorisation of violence and participation in its discharge require a negotiation of the state of cognitive dissonance, whereby desirability and expediency outweigh (even marginally or in ad hoc circumstances) the moral, legal, and political impediments to violence or relativise the problematic nature of the means used to achieve the desired goal.

It is in this context that this book has attempted to analyse *fascist agency* in interwar and WW II Europe. It is no coincidence that an unprecedented wave of widespread and exceptionally brutal genocidal violence was unleashed during the 'era of fascism', in territories controlled in one way or another by fascists and their fellow travellers, under the banner of national rebirth and the founding of a revolutionary 'new (fascist) order'. Somehow, then, fascism must have helped tip the balance of this cognitive dissonance across large areas of Europe towards the legitimation of violent cleansing against 'others'. Hence, the significance of *licence*. As I argued in Chapter 4, 'licence' is not freedom but an incentive that facilitates release from accountability or a special dispensation that relativises the morally problematic facets of eliminationist violence. Fascism supplied two kinds

of 'licence'. The first had to do with the ideological legitimisation of negative passion and hatred against particular 'others', whether generic or particular to each national context—a genuine and potent *licence to hate*. By preaching a gospel of hate against allegedly inferior and/or lethally detrimental 'others', fascism contributed to widening the psychological distance between them and the national majority. The dehumanisation and delegitimation of such 'others' mitigated the conflicts of cognitive dissonance by depriving the target of hatred from their full human status—and thus from the moral standards conventionally associated with human interaction. This was indeed a decisive first step in the direction of seeing 'others' as expendable—and of rendering their elimination a justified, desirable outcome. But there was a further, infinitely more dangerous implication that related to the diffusion of fascism in interwar Europe and to the emerging sense of a common 'fascist' mission. The power of precedent became an even more lethal and open-ended 'licence' that had a cumulative radicalising effect on fascist and ultranationalist discourses across the continent. Ideas articulated by one fascist movement would infuse the discourses of other kindred parties or groups in more countries. A legal measure against a particular group of 'others' in one country would facilitate the adoption of similar (or even more aggressive) measures in another country, against the same or another group. A pogrom here appeared to legitimise a similar violent action somewhere else. Sometimes fascists in one country used the precedent from an earlier development somewhere else to justify their own violent exhortations or actions. The delegitimation of a group in one country would not only contribute to the further delegitimation of that group elsewhere, but also lent further validity to the violent discourses of 'rebirth-through-cleansing' in other countries, against different 'others', in diverse forms but to a similar effect. Fascists and their allies took this 'licence' a crucial stage further, by actively sanctioning violence, inciting brutal purges, often spearheading the process of cleansing or indirectly inciting and legitimising it. This was a very different and far more lethal 'licence'—not a psychological 'licence to hate' but a veritable *licence to kill*.

The 'licence to kill' became identified with NS Germany in what the Nazis themselves—and the historiography of the Holocaust—have referred to as 'final solution' (Part IV). Starting with the invasion of Poland in September 1939 and the creation of the monstrous laboratory of genocide that the General Government was, it was gradually exported to all areas occupied by the NS forces—first in the east in the wake of Operation Barbarossa and then in the occupied western territories too. By far the primary target of this crusade of 'cleansing' was the Jewish communities; however, other allegedly detrimental racial-anthropological categories (e.g., Sinti/Roma, Poles/Slavs) fell prey to the NS vision of a revolutionary pan-European 'new order'. In the areas that they directly occupied, the Nazi forces unleashed the most devastating campaign of genocide—arresting, ghettoising, 'evacuating', and murdering millions of people—overwhelmingly but not exclusively

Jews. Through their own direct agency they demolished any sense of civic order, subverted fragile social relations, offered incentives to violence, and removed the burden of legal accountability. Through their ideas and actions they reconfigured the moral landscape and produced a revolutionary new ethical order based on the vocabulary of an allegedly justifiable, historically urgent, and 'creatively destructive' violence. They manipulated deep-seated prejudices and recent anxieties in order to induce a radicalisation of popular attitudes against specific 'others' and hastened to make clear that certain types of eliminationist violence against specific groups were so desirable that they would be unpunished or even rewarded. In so doing, they increased the desirability, expediency, and feasibility of violent action, whilst at the same time critically undermining the validity of inhibitions to the prospect of physically murdering 'others'. They removed legal sanctions and went even further by offering tangible material or status incentives. They led by example but also facilitated the rallying of local authorities and of 'ordinary people' to their 'cleansing' project.

The 'licence to kill', however, did not emanate only from direct NS agency. Individuals and groups/communities in all areas of the fascist 'new order' made choices, with many participating in diverse forms and to varying degrees in the project of elimination in their localities—often with little, indirect, or no Nazi involvement. A significant number (though different in every country or region) joined formal networks of collaborationism and were involved as formal 'agents' in the discharge of eliminationist violence against 'others'. Some even engaged in extreme acts, well beyond what was expected of them by the occupying authorities. Others started as passive bystanders but were increasingly emboldened or desensitised by the enactment of violence around them to the point that they seized the 'licence' themselves and participated ad hoc in a grotesque 'carnival' of violence (Ch 10). In all these very different settings the 'licence' was all-pervasive, open-ended, and readily available. Even before NS Germany had marched into a state, it was clear to populations at the time what National Socialism stood for with regard to certain minority groups and what the victory of NS Germany meant for them. One did not need to know the minutiae of the NS legislation in the Third Reich or the nature of the eliminationist experiments undertaken in the GG after the autumn of 1939 to be convinced that the extension of the military conflict into other parts of Europe also meant the export of the 'racial war', primarily against the Jews. This conviction was a form of 'licence' in itself that did not necessarily require any direct NS agency to be enacted. What is more, this impression of an NS 'licence to kill' related as much to the permissibility of violent elimination per se as to the prospect of eliminating specific 'others'. If the Nazis had singled out particular groups, this was an incentive to act against these but also other groups, depending on local and regional conditions. Thus, alongside Jews and Sinti/Roma, other racial-anthropological and ethnic groups were caught in the net of this 'licence'—Serbs in the NDH, Ukrainians/Poles/Russians in

the east, and so on. Jews were overwhelmingly targeted but this did not stop local resentments against other groups too to be incorporated into this broader ‘licence’—and carnage.

By the time the NS authorities had moved in and restored some form of order in occupied territories, the responsibility for the ‘cleansing’ operations came swiftly under their full control. With the formal dissolution of local groups and the streamlining of the operations, the ‘licence’ became more organically linked to the NS authorities. Local ‘actions’ became part of a much wider project of elimination in the newly occupied territories that was ruthlessly centralised and coordinated by the occupiers themselves. Undoubtedly, there were very real psychological pressures to comply, to emulate, and even to outperform the occupiers—conformity, fear of possible reprisals for noncooperation, desire for recognition and elevation of status, or even a longing for safety and material betterment. Yet, in most cases the ‘licence’ was accessible voluntarily—not under duress but under an illusion of omnipotence, permissibility, and unaccountability, “as a self-actualizing act . . . and a new identity of control” (Eatwell 2006: 273).

Fascist and ‘para-fascist’ regimes too made ample use of this licence derived from the NS precedent, dynamism, and authority. Most of them engaged in a pandemonium of violence against their own ‘contestant others’ and became willing ‘agents’ of the NS history-making project (Chs 7–8). They adapted and used a series of devices tested in the Third Reich (laws, coercive policies) against their own chosen victims. They borrowed arguments, propaganda slogans, and alibis from the Nazis. Their legal eliminationist measures of the 1930s often turned into violent campaigns in the early 1940s. Governments took initiative on many occasions, arresting, deporting, handing over to the NS authorities, or killing directly Jews, often Romani and—in the case of the Croat NDH—Serbs. Many leaders claimed after the war that they acted under duress from the NS regime or tried to maintain a semblance of collaboration with the Nazis in order to avoid a far worse fate of annexation by NS Germany. But there is ample evidence to show that most of them collaborated on their own accord, exceeded any Nazi demands (at least initially), or acted regardless of any NS plan or direct pressure. In fact, in their relations with other fascist or ‘fascistised’ (semi-)sovereign regimes, the NS authorities initially displayed considerable restraint, keeping up appearances with regard to state sovereignty and refraining from using direct coercion. This strategy was very effective, allowing the national governments to claim a ‘licence’ for themselves by emulating and adapting the NS precedent but often also going beyond it. Through these regimes and state institutions the ‘licence to eliminate’ was often delegated to local organisations and to the public—again in the form of indirect incitement to violence, indifference to aggressive persecution, or a conscious decision not to intervene when pogroms were taking place. Even if subsequently NS agency became more pronounced, to the point of sometimes exercising direct pressure on the ‘agents’ or occasionally forcing them into submission (e.g., Hungary 1944),

the most critical processes of violent escalation were initiated and carried through by willing state ‘agents’ across Europe. And, as the examples of Bulgaria, post-1942 Romania, and Hungary until 1944 demonstrated, it was possible to defy NS pressure, follow a different approach, or change attitude altogether (Ch 8).

Finally, there were fascist (or ‘fascistised’) movements across Europe that perceived themselves as ‘agents’ of the wider NS project (Ch 9). Of all ‘agents’ of collaboration these movements came to epitomise a model of extreme ‘collaborationism’—ideology-driven, fanatical, ‘missionary’ almost unconditional. They acted as collaborationist ‘fifth column’ elements in their own countries where their respective governments proved less amenable to the logic of the NS ‘cleansing’ campaign. They also became the most willing collaborators of the NS ‘new order’ when these areas were directly occupied or ‘coordinated’ into the NS sphere during WW II. Their role in inciting violence against ‘others’ amongst the local population, in assisting the NS authorities in their murderous tasks, in instigating pogroms, and in making all sorts of eliminationist measures possible cannot possibly be exaggerated. Ironically, many of these fascist movements were treated by the NS authorities with distrust or disdain. This explains why movements such as the OUN in Ukraine, the VNV and the Rex in Belgium, the Arrow Cross in Hungary, the Iron Guard in Romania, the Perkonkrusts in Latvia, the Iron Wolves in Lithuania, and the so-called ‘Paris collaborators’ in France were largely marginalised by the NS regime in favour of apparently more dependable (even if often less ‘fascist’) alternatives. But their agency was crucial where it most mattered—in the campaign of removing undesired ‘others’ with ruthless efficiency and brutality. Their members joined in large numbers voluntary police formations or formed semiautonomous action squads. Many amongst them became genuine ‘soldiers of international fascism’, fighting alongside the Nazis in the east and west until the very end. And when, towards the end of the war, the Nazis became increasingly frustrated with the pace of ‘cleansing’ in a number of allied or occupied countries, their leaders were deployed by the Nazis as an alternative solution in order to strengthen collaboration and expedite the elimination of unwanted ‘others’.

All these observations underline the *largely voluntary* nature of complicity in the NS/fascist wartime project of elimination, for ideological, geopolitical, or very pragmatic reasons. The various genocidal projects that unfolded in Europe during WW II encompassed a wide range of agencies and synergies between the NS authorities, ideologically kindred or aligned states, fascist/‘fascistised’ movements, and local populations. It was this pervasive fascist ‘licence’ that subverted, relativised, or cancelled altogether the state of ‘cognitive dissonance’. The peerless historical record of genocide in the NS *Neuordnung* was the fatal result of this climate of suspended accountability through direct exhortation, removal of sanctions, and the cumulative legitimising effect of precedent. In this respect, genocide was at least as much related to the desirability of the outcome (the ‘life without others’) as

it was the result of the exceptional failure or subversion of moral, political, and cultural counterbalances that usually prevent this extreme course of action. It is probably meaningless to speculate whether negative passions against ‘others’, however escalated as a result of short-term historical developments and ideological distortions, would have erupted into this paroxysm of murderous mass violence without the primary NS agency. If, however, genocide results both from the strengthening of the desirability of eliminating a particular ‘other’ *and* from the neutralisation of inhibiting factors, then interwar fascism in general—and NS Germany in particular—made a decisive input in both processes.

In Chapter 7 I described this mode of cooperation between, on the one hand, NS Germany and, on the other, fascist/para-fascist regimes, movements, fellow travellers, and supporters as an *agentic order*. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s the Italian Fascist movement/regime had functioned as the beacon of the new creed. Numerous fascist movements but also authoritarian political leaders could not hide their admiration for Mussolini’s political record and for many of his more radical ideas. Rome became a place of pilgrimage for fellow travellers across Europe and the world. On his part, Mussolini established a web of contacts with kindred fascist movements across Europe, providing political and financial support to many of them, or assisting them in their (usually subversive) activities. He also supported a series of initiatives to spread the new gospel of the Fascist political religion (*Fasci al estero*, CAUR), based on the notion of a new kind of universality for Rome (‘third Rome’) (DeCaprariis 2000). All this was set to change with the rise of National Socialism. Between 1933 and 1939 the political centre of gravity of the new creed moved gradually but irreversibly from Rome to Berlin. After an initial period of rocky relations (1933–35), the two regimes were drawn together and started to talk about a common ‘mission’. They intervened in the Spanish civil war—initially independently but increasingly as a joint force against the republic and the Soviet Union, which also took sides in the Spanish conflict. Then, the ongoing rapprochement led to the creation of the Axis alliance and to a series of further international agreements (Anti-Comintern pact, Three-Power pact, etc), which, however, accepted the *de facto* leading role of the NS regime.

Thus, by the late 1930s the defeated and humiliated Germany of 1920 had given way to a peerless military and political superpower intent upon remaking the territorial and anthropological map of Europe. Every anti-liberal, anticommunist/Bolshevik, ultranationalist, and anti-Jewish political force in Europe fell inside the gravitational field of NS Germany, whether for ideological, geopolitical, or pragmatic reasons. Even if many of these forces (National Socialism included) did not describe themselves as ‘fascist’, they felt a sense of historic affinity that transcended national boundaries and glossed over individual differences. NS Germany’s crusading spirit and the ruthless determination with which it pursued the ‘cleansing’ agenda of a *judenrein* Reich commanded the admiration of fellow travellers and the awe

of its opponents. This placed the NS regime in a special position of authority amongst the fascist/ultranationalist constituency, as a de facto leader of one of the two formidable poles of the European ‘civil war’ of the interwar period. By the end of the decade, this ‘civil war’ had already largely divided the continent into three camps (liberal, socialist, ‘fascist’). The obstinate radicalism of Hitler’s regime forced the pace of events and obliged everyone else to take sides in a fundamentalist ‘either-or’ apocalyptic vision that befitted fascism’s own nature as millenarian political religion. As a result, large sections of the European right became increasingly ‘fascistised’ and looked to the centre of fascist power for inspiration, leadership, and legitimation. The impressive German military successes in 1938–42 only intensified this belief and convinced many more that this was just the beginning of a wider pan-European crusade for a genuinely revolutionary ‘new order’. If the Italian and German involvement in the Spanish civil war in 1936–39 had been the first tangible expression of this new joint ‘fascist’ spirit, the formidable coalition that launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941 was its apex. And it was NS Germany, with its awe-inspiring record of large-scale Lebensraum expansion, ruthless internal ‘cleansing’, and missionary radicalism, that did the most to spread and legitimise the notion of a genuine ‘history-making’ moment (Roberts 2005). The growing impression that in the late 1930s/early 1940s NS Germany and its allies were redefining everything, launching a new beginning through a perverse ‘creative destruction’, and triumphing in this apocalyptic battle catalysed an avalanche of raw eliminationist violence in so many parts of the continent, with so many different perpetrators, accomplishments, and above all, victims.

The *direct* NS agency in this multiple genocidal convulsion was indeed indubitable and critical. Millions perished in the hands of the NS authorities—inside the Reich and in the occupied territories—or in the perverse industry of death that the latter pioneered in the early 1940s. Yet, many were also brutally sacrificed on the altar of similar ultranationalist and racial utopias in other parts of Europe—in areas occupied by the Axis forces or in semisovereign friendly countries, east and west, north and south. They were delivered to the cruelty, hatred, and greed of political authorities, of voluntary police groups, of local fascist/collaborationist groups, and of ‘ordinary people’—*with, without, or regardless of any direct NS agency*. Such mass-scale disregard for human life and viciousness had a lot to do with ingrained cultural prejudices, ‘ancient hatreds’, as well as recent sources of resentment. But the crucial momentum that catalysed their concurrent outburst and subsequent radicalisation implicates both ‘fascism’ and ‘fascists’ in an array of ways and processes that, in my opinion, justify the correlation between fascism and genocide probed in this book. The convulsive throes of genocidal carnage with which the ‘era of fascism’ expired was a fittingly calamitous epilogue—not only to its ethno-exclusive fantasies of regeneration but also to the devastating surplus of discordant, violent energies that it had cultivated and then helped unleash.

The cautionary tale from the peerless experience of genocide inside the fascist ‘new order’ galvanised postwar efforts to punish culprits but above all to arrest and prevent similar lethal tendencies in the future. The chosen remedies, however, divulged a fundamental misconception—that genocides happen as an “actualised intent” to eliminate a particular group. This is only half the truth: intent *is* necessary, and so is a sort of profound, almost existential targeted hatred against a particular ‘other’. But genocide is so often a hindsight—the *ex post facto* result of protracted and extensive campaigns of smaller-scale elimination, where and when hatred has been nurtured or aggravated *and* allowed to erupt in an atmosphere of exceptional, authorised permissiveness. For this to happen the intent to ‘live without others’ must have become so powerful and blinding as to transform murderous violence against ‘others’ into desirable and imaginable option; and the inhibiting factors that render mass violence against fellow humans taboo must have been demolished, neutralised, or sidestepped by a ‘licence’ to engage in such violence. Both conditions—strengthening of desire, subversion of inhibitions and obstacles—are equally crucial; and fascism ticked both boxes with devastating efficacy. As an ideology it integrated the abstract desire to live without ‘others’ into an emotive cognitive economy of redemptive hatred. As political praxis it helped redefine moral norms, demolish legal safeguards, and subvert collective social reflexes. Its two ‘licences’ came with convincing, mobilising alibis, as well as promised rewards. Its boldness set liberating precedents and new empowering benchmarks for what constituted justifiable sentiment, demeanour, and action—collectively and individually.

If one accepts that fascism did not *cause* genocide in a cultural-political void but shaped it in an exceptionally virulent form by using unexceptional ingredients and then catalysed it through its own radical praxis, then the study of what happened in interwar and wartime Europe acquires a dual significance. One—the main concern of this book—concerns fascism’s particular contribution to this atmosphere of extreme permissiveness that unleashed so many genocidal projects inside the ‘new order’. The other pertains to the mechanisms of this fatal permissiveness *per se*—how it can be fostered and communicated compellingly to audiences that have become eager to seize it and convinced of its benefits. In the latter context, fascism was a historical epiphenomenon, however significant or brutal. Since then, in the former Yugoslavia, in Rwanda, in Cambodia, in Darfur, and elsewhere, very different ideologies, regimes, and communities set in motion ‘genocides’ that make the post-WW II motto ‘never again’ sound perversely hollow. Genocides will always need aggressive majorities mesmerised by utopias of wholeness and purity, imbued with allegedly justified hatred against some other group in their midst. But genocides only happen if a historical conjuncture renders, first, hatred and, then, violence to appear like a *necessary and permissible* step in an irresistibly *positive*, fulfilling direction. Intent and desire are not enough; the mass ‘licence’

(whether derived directly from a leadership, assumed through precedents, or unfolding through a breakdown of order) to desire the abominable, do the unthinkable, and justify the otherwise unacceptable constitutes the critical mass of the genocidal chain reaction. The 'fascist chapter' in the *libro nero* of genocide constitutes a paradigmatic case of how this may happen and how savagely far it may go.

Notes

NOTE TO CHAPTER 1

1. Bundesarchiv (BA) R 58/6387b/93 (Franz Ronneberger, 'Der rumänische Nationalismus auf neuen Wegen', December 1941).

NOTE TO CHAPTER 2

1. The 'Jim Crow laws' refer to a set of segregationist legal rules introduced predominantly in the southern states of the USA from 1877 onwards to discriminate against blacks, and remained in effect until well into the 1960s.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 3

1. BA R 58/6387b/103-08.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. BA R 58/7202/7-19 (Posener Tagesblatt, 19.11.38; Presseschau Ost, Nov-Dec 1938; Deutsche Nachrichten, 11.12.38).
2. BA R 70/5/88/6-11 (Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland to Zimmermann, Pressechef des Reichskommissars Riga, 25.9.41).
3. US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) T-501/267/344 (Haeffner to Glaise-Horstenau, 'Report on the Most Urgent Problems of the NDH', 14.6.1941)
4. Mirko Puk, 'Ante Štarčević i Židovi,' *Nezavisnost*, 1: 15, 4 May 1938, 1. My thanks to Rory Yeomans for the translation of the selected excerpt, which features in his forthcoming book (Yeomans 2009).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. NARA RG 338, T-1021/18.
2. Nuremberg Documents (ND), NO-365, Letter from Dr. Erhard Wetzel to Reichskommissar Lohse, 25.10.1941; Gaskammer Brief, 'Conference', Wetzel to Heinrich Lohse (Reichskommissar Ostland), reprinted in Noakes & Pridham 1991: 1144 (emphasis added).

3. Mazal Library (www.mazal.org), BW 30/27, Letter from the Topf und Soehne company (Erfurt), 7.7.1943.
4. UK National Archives/Public Records Office (PRO) WO 309/468 ('Evidence for the Nuremberg Medical Atrocities Case' and 'War Crimes: Medical Experiments on Allied Nationals', 2.46).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. NARA RG238, ND 1816-PS.
2. NARA RG 238, ND 3363-PG, 21.9.1939.
3. BA NS 19/3978/3 ('Evakuierung von Polen in den Ostgebieten', December 1940).
4. Eichmann Trial, Session 77, 22.6.1961.
5. NARA T-120/780/372047, 24.6.1940.
6. NARA T-175/128/265434.
7. International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg (IMT), XXVI, Doc 710-PS, 266–7, Goering to Heydrich, 31.7.1941.
8. See, for example, the long correspondence between the authorities of the Lodz ghetto and Himmler in the early autumn of 1941 regarding the deportation of Jews from the Reich into the ghettos of the GG: BA NS 19/2655/Docs 3-51 (September-October 1941).
9. ND 686-PS [IMT 1947, 26: 255–57; c Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers zur Festigung deutschen Volkstums', 7.10.1939].
10. BA R 153/228/29 ('Leitsätze zur Bevölkerungspolitischen Sicherung des deutschen Volkes', 24.9.39).
11. E.g. BA NS 19/3979/25-8 (Hauptamt Planung und Boden, 'Bodenbilanz der dem Reich ausgegliederten Ostgebiete', 3.12.40).
12. BA NS 19/3978/15 ('Bodenbilanz der dem Reich eingegliederten Ostgebiete', 7.12.40).
13. BA NS 19/3978/29–30 (RKFdV report, 28.3.40).
14. BA NS 19/3978/31–32.
15. BA NS 19/3978/8–9.
16. BA R 90/138 (Dr W Lenz, 'Die rassische Zusammensetzung der Letten und ihre Beeinflussung durch die Deutschen'; and Hans Thomas Mayer, 'Beiträge zur Rassenpolitik im Siedlungsraum des lettischen Volkes', August 1941). See also BA NS 22/610/36–40 (Lithuania) and 612/36–39 (Latvia) for discussion of racial matters pertaining to the two Baltic states.
17. Yad Vashem Archives O-53/134/1813, 'Aussiedlung von Juden', weekly report of Hauptabteilung Propaganda, 21.3.42; also quoted in translation in Browning 2000: Part V/c.
18. BA NS 19/1570/1 ('Die Endlösung der europäischen Judenfrage: statistischer Bericht', 23.3.42).
19. BA NS 19/1570/12–27 (Himmler to Meine, 28.4.43).
20. IMT XXIX: 502–503 (Ansprache Franks auf der Regierungssitzung in Krakau, 16.12.1941).
21. BA RW 31/144 ('Wirtschaftspolitische Richtlinien für die Wirtschaftsorganisation Ost vom 23.5.1941, erarbeitet von der Gruppe Landwirtschaft', 23.5.41).
22. BA R 52/11, Kanzlei des GG, 247 ('Bericht über den Aufbau der Verwaltung im Generalgouvernement').
23. BA R18/5644/644, 1069 (Zindel to Pfundtner on *Reichszigeunergesetz*, 4.3.1936).
24. BA R19/180/Docs 1–2 (Bormann to Himmler, 3.12.1942; emphasis added).

25. Frank Diary, ND 2233-(a/b)PS.
26. BA, NS 19/180, 3 (Pohl to Brandt, 9.4.1943; emphasis added).
27. BA, NS 19/180, 4 (Brandt to Pohl, 15.4.1943).
28. DGFP, D I, 522/237473, Himmler to Ribbentrop, 5.1.1938.
29. Reichskommissar Ostland, Riga to SS and Riga Police, 2.12.1941—in Arad, Gutman & Margalio 1981: Doc 179.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. Historical Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (HAMFA) II (1927), A, 2/640 (Press Office of Macedonia province to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22.2.1927); the article published in *Makedonia*, 21.2.1922).
2. *Völkischer Beobachter*, 88, 29.1.1933, in Arad, Gutman, & Margalio 1981: 32–5.
3. PRO R 561/214/07/20 (UK Legation Geneva, ‘Minorities in Roumania—the Jewish Minority’, 10.1.39).
4. PRO FO 371/227 (R 6932, British Legation in Bucharest, 10.8.40).
5. PRO FO 371/24 985/7406 (‘Attitude Towards Hungary and Rumania’, 4.9.1940).
6. PRO FO 371/245–51 (Memorandum on the Jewish Minority in Romania, 20.9.40, followed by a list of anti-Jewish measures introduced in July–September 1940).
7. For NS plans to resettle Volksdeutsche from south Tyrol from 1939 onwards, see Ch 6.
8. BA NS 19/1577 (‘Juden in Italien’, *Aufbau*, 17.8.43).
9. ‘Il Fascismo e i problemi della razza’, *Giornale d’Italia*, 14.7.1938.
10. See, for example, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome (ACS) MdI, UDR, b12/1469 (‘La popolazione ebraica in Polonia’, *Antibolscevismo*, 4.9.39), where the ‘Aryan’ origin of modern Italians is stated in opposition to international Jewry. Also, see ACS MdI, UDR, b1 (‘Provvedimenti relativi ai matrimoni’, Law Scheme, 17.11.38), where the legal regulation of marriages prevents unions between ‘Aryan Italians’ and Jews.
11. That such derogatory comments did not stop is evidenced by wartime propaganda measures—for example, see BA NS 18/80/70 (*Propagandaparolen* Nr 40, 18.8.1942).
12. ACS MCP/Gabinetto/12/9 (Uffizio Razza, ‘La razza nei discorsi del Duce’, 24.2.39).
13. ACS MCP/Gabinetto/143/4 (folder: ‘Propaganda razziale in Italia’: report ‘Consensi di eminenti scienziati alla politica razziale del regime’, autumn 1938 but no specific date).
14. ACS MCP/Gabinetto/143/4 (folder: ‘Propaganda razziale in Italia’: report ‘Diffusioni voci tendenziose sull’arrivo in Italia dei razzisti tedeschi’, autumn 1938 but no specific date).
15. ACS MCP/Gabinetto/143/4 (folder: ‘Propaganda razziale in Italia’: report ‘Equiparazione gerarchica per le missioni degli studiosi addetti all’Uffizio per i problemi della razza’, 3.12.38).
16. ACS MdI, UDR, b12, folder ‘Rapporto Settimanale del Ministero Cultura Popolare’, where the ministry attempts to drum up support for the regime’s racial legislation through its propaganda campaigns in various local and national newspapers.
17. ACS, MdI, UDR, b1 (‘L’insieme della gente che abitano l’Italia’, no date).
18. ACS SPD/CO/476/Landra (Uffizio Razza Memorandum by Sabato Visco, 16.4.40; Landra to Preziosi 26.9.40; Preziosi to Mussolini, 28.9.40). Landra

wrote a long letter to Mussolini outlining his entire contribution to the Italian racialist project and protesting for his dismissal: see ACS SPD/CO/476/Landra, 27.9.40.

19. PRO FO 371/225 (R 6700, 5.7.40).
20. PRO R 1114/54 and R 6382/136 (British Legation in Sofia, 17.2.39 and 3.8.39 respectively); R 732/36 (British Legation in Athens, 23.1.39).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. Documents on German Foreign Policy (DGFP), D, 13, 191 (Report by Charge d'Affaires von Troll to the German Foreign Ministry, 10.8.1941).
2. NARA T-315/2258/501ff; also see T-501/264/1193 (Glaise Horstenau to Oberkommando Wehrmacht, 10.7.41).
3. DGFP D/13/191 (Report: Herbert von Troll to the German Foreign Ministry, 10.8.41); *ibid.*, 90 (Report: Troll to the German Foreign Ministry, 10.7.41).
4. Various reports in NARA, T-315/2258.
5. NARA T-315/2271/69, 75, 83, 87, 121, 127 (Headquarters Staff of the 718th Division, Situation Reports throughout 1942).
6. Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik (ADAP), E, IV, 49, 14.10.1942.
7. DGFP, D, 4, 202 (Report of a conversation between Hitler and Tiso, 13.3.1939).
8. BA R 70 (Slowakei), 35, 'Nicht schwach warden im Radikalismus', excerpt from *Slovenska Politika*, 16.5.1940.
9. BA R 70 (S), 35, 6, Report on the Slovak Jews (1939), *nd.*
10. BA R 70 (S), 31, 12–28, SD Vienna to RSHA, 17.10.1939; R 70 (S), 208, 8, *Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung* Prague to SD Vienna, 8.3.1940; R 70 (S), 34, 5, SD Bruck an der Leitha to SD Vienna, 21.12.1939.
11. BA, R 70 (S), 35, RSHA reports: 'Judenfrage in der Slowakei', 22.5.1940; and 'Die Judenfrage in der Slowakei', 30.8.1942.
12. ACS MdI/Direzione Generale Demografia e Razza/b3/20 ('Gli ebrei in Slovacchia', 26.3.41).
13. RA R 70 (S), 51, 18.7.41.
14. BA R 70 (S), 208, 12–14, 25.3.42.
15. BA R 70 (S), 208, 22, SS Untersturmführer Prague to SD Vienna, 25.3.1942.
16. BA R 70 (S), 208, 16, *Zentralstelle* Prague to SD Vienna, 28.3.1942.
17. BA R 70 (S), 208, 30, 18.5.42.
18. BA R 70 (S), 208, 46, Report to SD Vienna, Abt III B, 22.8.1942; cf. NARA RG 238, NO-5193, Korherr report, 19.4.1943.
19. BA R 70 (S), 208, 63, 2.10.1942; quote from Hilberg 1985, II: 732; cf. Tiso's 2.1939 speech in Durica 1964: 5–6.
20. BA R 70 (S), 40, 18.5.1942.
21. BA R 70 (S), 208, 71, 23.4.1943; 73, 17.5.1943.
22. BA R 70 (S), 35, 27, *nd.*
23. For example, Eichmann trial (1998): T/1106, Doc 1016 (Ludin to Foreign Ministry, 13.4.43).
24. BA R 58/63787b, 102 ('Juden in Rumänien', 1942).
25. Antonescu to Romanian armed forces, 1.1.1941, in Carp (1994), Doc 10.
26. ND PS-3319 (Hauffe-Tataranu agreement, 30.8.1941).
27. BA R 58/6387b/75.
28. NARA RG 242, T 501/278 'Bericht über Wahrnehmungen in Odessa', 4.11.1941.
29. ND NG-4817, Eichmann to the Foreign Office, 14.4.1942.

30. ND NG-3985, Mueller to Luther, 26.7.1942, also in Eichmann trial 1998, III: Doc T/1023.
31. Eichmann trial, T/1284, 28.9.1942.
32. ACS Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale Demografia e Razza: b12/1371. ('Antibolscevismov', 15.9.42)
33. Eichmann trial 1998, II: 843–5, Docs T/936, 941–2.
34. BA R 58/6387b/53 (*The Jewish Chronicle*, 13.10.44).
35. BA NS 19/1570, 9 ('Die Endlösung der europäischen Judenfrage: statistische Bericht', 1943).
36. Eichmann trial 1998, III: 928, Doc T/1136 (Eichmann to Klingenfuss, 25.9.1942).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 9

1. Eichmann Trial 1998: testimony of William Hoettl, 26.5.1961.
2. 'Direktive Adolf Hitlers vom 12 März 1944 bezüglich der deutschen Besetzung Ungarns', in Moll 1997: 139.
3. NARA RG 84/840.1.
4. Eichmann trial 1998, III: 928 (Eichmann to Klingenfuss, 25.9.1942, T/1136).
5. Eichmann trial 1998, III: 1097 (Veesenmayer to Foreign Ministry, 18.11.1944, T/37 (108)).
6. Eichmann trial 1998, III: 1102 (Report by Arye Breszlauer, T/1237; and *ibid*, III: 1113, Veesenmayer to Foreign Ministry, 21.11.1944, T/37 (156)).
7. The word 'Diets' was used to indicate the alleged common origin of Dutch and Flemish. It was linked to the ultranationalist vision of a reconstituted *Dietsland* as the national and political vessel for a union between the two groups.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 10

1. BA R 70/5/88 (Daugavas Vestnesis, 'Die ersten Kämpfer', 23.10.41).
2. USHMM RG 13.016M/1/23, 'Ereignismeldung UdSSR n 4', 25.6.1941.
3. BA R 70/5/88/3 (Daugavas Vestnesis, 'Die ersten Kämpfer', 23.10.41).
4. BA R 92, 18 ('Lettische Organisation "Perkonkrusts"', 22.2.1944).
5. BA R 70/5/88/8–11 (Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland to Zimmermann, 25.9.41), where numerous excerpts from previous anti-German Perkonkrusts comments are provided.
6. NARA RG 242, T-454, 100, 699–700.
7. NARA RG 242, T-175 and T-501.
8. NARA RG 242, T-175, 233, 2721867: 'Ereignismeldung UdSSR, n. 48', 10.8.1941.
9. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive (USHMM), National Archives of Belarus (Minsk), RG 53.002, 5, 'Befehl 6/42', 18.2.1942.

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BA: Bundesarchiv

NARA: US National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC

PRO: National Archives, London (Public Records Office)

ACS: Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome

USHMM: Archival collections of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC

HAMFA: Historical/Diplomatic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Archive Section of the History of Jews in Greece

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