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Title: Democracy and Violence: A Review of "The Democratic Experience and Political Violence"

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Abstract. This article is a book review of *The Democratic Experience and Political Violence*. The book was co-edited by David Rapoport, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles and Leonard Weinberg, Foundation Professor of Political Science at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Today's global mantra? Conveyed by global mass media it is "democracy and free markets." Through democracy and free markets lies human salvation--or so we are told. Certainly there is room to question both aspects of the mantra as well as the necessity of their linkage. For example, free markets have never been free. Even if markets were completely free of formal and informal, de facto, counterfactual, and a-factual barriers, economic disparities between and among partners in trade and commerce would subvert freedom through generating relationships of exploitation and subjugation--an economic psychosexuality of sadomasochism.

As another example, as free as markets might become, their very existence and nurturance might not best be contingent on democracy or on any specific political model. Or perhaps, as far as free markets might be a boon instead of a bane to human welfare, they might prop up variants of totalitarianism, authoritarianism, democracy, and various combinations and mutations--some well-articulated, others still to be conceived. Or perhaps, the reason free markets have never or will never be free is contingent on politics--i.e., any politics as articulated through political theorists including the variants of democracy.

It is democracy that is the focus of Rapoport and Weinberg. At Issue is the aspect of the global mantra that reifies democracy as both prophylaxis and cure to human violence within nation-states. To the discerning reader, however, the Issue soon becomes how to account for the development of the global mantra given the extremely ample historical data that should have been both prophylaxis against and cure for the mantra.

The elaboration of historical data found in *The Democratic Experience and Political Violence* originates from a 1997 conference wherein participants and then others noted what might charitably be termed an ignoring or discounting and less charitably an active reluctance and aversion to considering democracy as begetter of violence. What follows are preceis of the chapters--each supported by theory and/or data in examining the democracy-violence connection.

Rapoport and Weinberg explore democratic elections, conceive elections as a mode of political succession, contrast electoral with hereditary modes of succession, and note the aspects of each that seem to require contestation and stimulate the option of violence. The reader might well note that this chapter sets the stage of employing a welcome "seeing is believing" standard for the consequences of democracy.

Finn, Professor of Government at Wesleyan University, explores the inevitability that particular groups--that may be extrapolated to social, economic, ethnic, ideological, and any other performative entity that may be stigmatized--are excluded from the electoral, political process in a democracy. Of special

contemporary interest is the exclusion of professed or suspected anti-democratic groups that may employ violence whether or not they are excluded or included and even if they are chosen by "the people" as electoral winners. Of great interest and value is Finn's appendix on selected constitutional and statutory provisions for electoral exclusion, pp. 70-74.)

Guelke, Professor of Comparative Politics, Queen's University, Belfast, describes and compares three 1996 democratic elections--viz., the Israeli general elections, the Northern Ireland forum elections, and the Western Cape (South Africa) local elections. Violence permeated them all--be it political violence, its threat, or fear of it. Moreover, violence seems to affect not just the actual vote but also campaign behavior, attitudes of the electorate, interpretations of the vote, and the essential public discourse of democracy.

Philpott, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara, analyzes the political construct of self-determination that has been and continues to be publicly embraced by so many socially constructed groups--albeit in a manner that leaves universal human rights behind and approaches a malignant or pathological narcissism, if not an outright psychopathy or sociopathy. Although self-determination is almost always linked with the construct of democracy, it is frequently associated with political leaders who have something very different in mind and is differentially construed by leaders of representative democracies. Self-determination, unfortunately, has a long track record of legitimizing violence during its quest and afterwards.

Crenshaw, John E. Andrus Professor of Government, Wesleyan University, describes the military intervention of India as guarantor of a peace settlement in Sri Lanka's still ongoing ethnic civil war. Although not technically an example of violence within a democracy, the intervention can be seen as violence within a national grouping of Indian and Sri Lankan Tamils. Moreover, contending interest groups within democratic India, international ethnic groupings professing democratic leanings, and democratic Sri Lanka--as well as the larger strategic and even moral interests of democratic entities--have too often influenced decision-making that instigates and exacerbates violence.

Israeli, Professor of Islamic, Middle Eastern and Chinese History, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, describes the responses of Western democracies to what he and political authorities of these democracies term "fundamentalist Islamic violence" both within and external to these entities. The reader of this chapter may wonder whether Western democracies are capable of resolving political violence while retaining democratic essentials and are incapable of coherently construing democratic essentials of political violence. The reader also can profitably integrate this chapter with that of Finn's on political exclusion.

Simons, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles, presents a seemingly optimistic analysis of the absence of "widespread identity-based communal violence" in the United States. However, the reader might note that many other aspects of violence are well-represented within the United States democracy including what can be termed the insidious and omnipresent disciplinary and punitive features of organizational life that may render one bereft of one's soul even as the body remains intact. Also, some readers might wonder whether there is a tradeoff in democracy between communal and other variants of political violence.

Barkun, Professor of Political Science, Syracuse University, analyzes the "radical right" in the United States as it justifies violence in the name of democracy within a nation-state that also justifies violence in the name of a democracy that--some readers might posit--is de facto controlled by "the right."

Ultimately, the psychological dynamics characterizing both levels of violence and violence justification may appear to be equivalent.

Sprinzak, Founding Dean, Lauder School of Government, Policy and Diplomacy, Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, describes extremism--especially militant messianism--and violence in Israel. He traces the longitudinally concurrent development of Israeli democracy and of Jewish political violence within and proximal to Israel. An intriguing conclusion is that violence is not an aberration of democracy or an indicator of democracy's weakness but a reinforcer of the democratic essence.

Korbonski, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles, traces tensions towards violence and towards political violence in Eastern Europe from the post-World War era through the disestablishment of the Soviet Union and beyond. A close reading of this chapter seems to suggest that increasing ethnic homogeneity within democracies or within entities attempting to become democratic may facilitate democracy and minimize violence. Can this too easily be taken as a prescription or rationale for ethnic cleansing in the service of democracy? In addition, what is posited as trauma generated by World War II and the post-War Communist takeovers in Eastern Europe may have significantly modified collective attitudes, perhaps even national characters, that, in turn, facilitated non-violent political change towards democracy. Here democracy may seem founded on an intensely violent foundation and to require transfusions of violence.

Le Vine, Professor of Political Science, Washington University, St Louis, presents a counterfactual analysis of the proposition that democracy may require increments of violence to preserve itself. This proposition is attributed by Le Vine to former United States President Thomas Jefferson and may already be shared by readers who have read the previous chapters in this book. Le Vine strongly marshals theory and data against the proposition and the reader can benefit from studying his annex depicting so-called free democracies' crises of legitimacy and violent challenges (pp. 287-292).

Eubank, Associate Professor, University of Nevada, and Weinberg engage in counterfactual analysis of the contentions that "civic communities" must be well-established to support a viable democracy; that these "communities" require long incubation periods; and that democracy is, therefore, likely to fail when violence and authoritarianism have been previously well-established. In the context of Italy, these authors contend that regions with the strongest essentials of democracy also have had the most salient histories of Fascism and Fascist violence. The reader might wonder what this bodes for the staying power of democracy, its sequelae, and its own actualized and potential violence. Also, the advancing of practical as well as statistical significance to make one's case would be welcome (cf. Table 1, p. 301).

Gans, Professor of French, University of California, Los Angeles, may well cut right to the chase and provide a psychological vehicle for political violence regardless of political system. He cites Pericles' funeral oration as recounted in Thucydides' *The Peloponnesian War* to posit that as perceptions of democracy as fairer than other political systems increase, perceivers who fail according to their own criteria within a democracy will even more seethe with resentment and justify violence. Thus, the reader may conclude, democracy must contend with the two violent threats of those who view it as unfair whether they win or lose and those who view it as fair but still lose. Isn't this just about everyone?

Hewitt, Professor of Sociology, University of Maryland Baltimore Country, describes four examples of terrorism within the United States--examples that, presumably, don't qualify as "widespread identity-based communal violence" according to Simons in an earlier chapter. These examples include (1) White

racist violence in the South during the modern Civil Rights era, (2) the violence of African-American, self-professed revolutionary groups, (3) predominantly White leftist, self-professed revolutionary violence, and (4) predominantly White anti-abortion violence. The reader may note the analysis' lack of attention towards democracy as an elicitor--ineluctable or otherwise--as opposed to merely a context for such violence. It is the reviewer's perspective that Hewitt is committing the fundamental attribution error especially regarding political violence attributed to the African-American (at the time, black) groups (cf. Tables 2, p. 334, and Table 5, p. 341).

Miller, Professor of Political Science, University of Cincinnati, and Schaen, doctoral student in political science, University of Cincinnati, rightly critique the deprivation-frustration-aggression hypothesis that has for so often and so long been employed to explain urban riots among African-Americans in the 1960s. This hypothesis frequently cannot adequately explain or account for empirical data on violence obtained by behavioral and political scientists and can too facilely blame the perpetrators as opposed to factors of a more systemic and macromolecular nature. However, Miller and Schaen seem to attribute responsibility for political violence more to the law enforcement representatives of democracy, thereby obfuscating malignant structural aspects of democracy.

Rapoport and Weinberg conclude that "Outbreaks of violent conflict occur even in the most stable and successful of the democracies...." and that "Problems existing outside the democratic context also exist within it...." Their co-authors amply support these conclusions that are very frequently absent from public discourse on international affairs and matters of globalization. For this reason alone, *The Democratic Experience and Political Violence* demands to be read.

Additionally, the reader might be left pondering the tension between two other conclusions of Rapoport and Weinberg. One is that "communism, fascism, national socialism and lesser ideological blueprints for human betterment largely have passed from the scene no longer capable of exciting genuine enthusiasm...these ideologies were secular religions" and many people have, therefore, lost "a faith that has dominated one's life for years..." (pp. 362-364). The other is that "coming to a realistic understanding of democracy's limitations may be something else" (p. 364)--that is, more difficult to accomplish than jettisoning the above secular religions.

The tension lies in the following. Can one realistically apperceive democracy and still maintain it as a secular religion? Should democracy be or remain a secular religion? Is there yet another religion--secular or otherwise--that fits the bill for a world without or with minimal violence. Or is it the very psychology of religion in all its structural, process, and functional aspects that is part of the genesis of violence? Or yet again is the evolutionary psychology of homo sapiens such that the very discourse about political process and violence can do no more than beget false consciousness?

So as we began the review, so shall we end it. For today's global mantra bearing on democracy as prophylaxis and cure for violence, Rapoport and Weinberg's book can be a necessary prophylaxis and cure. This book is timely, provocative, and of great potential value for readers who wish to cut through the self-subjugating boilerplate that passes for informed opinion in the current era of globalization. (See Bacigalupe, G. (2000). Family violence in Chile: Political and legal dimensions in a period of democratic transition. *Violence Against Women*, 6, 427-448; Benson, M., & Kugler, J. (1998). Power parity, democracy, and the severity of internal violence. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 42, 196-209; Caro Hollander, N. (1997). *Love in a time of hate: Liberation psychology in Latin America*. Rutgers University Press; Montiel, C. J., & Wessells, M. (2001). Democratization, psychology, and the construction of cultures of peace. *Peace & Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 7, 119-129; Prager, J. (1993). *Politics*

and illusion: A psychoanalytic exploration of nationalism. *Psychoanalysis & Contemporary Thought*, 16, 561-595; Rapoport, D.C., & Weinberg, L. (Eds.). (2001). *The democratic experience and political violence*. Frank Cass.) (Keywords: Democracy, Rapoport, Violence, Weinberg.)