Under the Sign of Mars: Violence in European Civil Wars, 1917–1949

JAVIER RODRIGO

This article explores the comparative history of violence in European civil wars from 1917 to 1949, beginning with the war in Russia and ending with the one in Greece. Its main goal is to prepare a framework for a transnational comparative debate on the category of 'civil war' and its historical and analytical elements in order to better understand why internal conflicts are universally assumed to be particularly violent and cruel. Responding to the need for an inclusive approach in determining the nature of civil war, I discuss the theory of violence in connection with civil wars and conclude that if civil wars are, and are perceived as, especially violent, this is due to many and multidirectional elements, including the importance of symbolic conflicts, the juxtaposition of different conflicts within any civil struggle and, in the case of Europe between the world wars, the presence of radicalising elements such as fascism.

The Spanish philosopher Álvaro d'Ors, addressing a conference just a few days after the defeat of the Third Reich, began: 'I belong to a generation that was born under the sign of Mars: a generation that first saw the light when war was laying waste the fields of Europe; which reached adulthood at the splendid moment of religious crusade that was our War of Liberation; and that now confronts the grandiose and tragic spectacle of a universal, total war such as was never seen in any previous century'.[1] The Spain of 1945 knew nothing of the atrocities that had taken place in Poland. Even so, d'Ors must have been aware that what he called a 'grandiose spectacle' was really a terrible scenario involving the murder, rape, exile and orphaning of millions of people deprived of physical, sexual and material security. It was 1945 and d'Ors – the philosopher of the Spanish Crusade, of legitimate violence, the glorification of just and necessary war – was drawing on his own experience to normalise the extreme violence that had taken over Europe. He was proclaiming the identity of a generation that saw death as productive, destruction as constructive: a generation of war. The generation of fascism, the generation whose

Departament d'Història Moderna i Contemporània, Edifici B, 08193 Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain; javier.rodrigo@uab.es

This forms part of the Research Project 'Culturas políticas, movilización y violencia en España, 1930-1950' (HAR 2014-53498-P), Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad, Spain.

[1] Álvaro d'Ors, *La violencia y el orden* (Salamanca: Criterio, 1998 [1987]), 11.

Contemporary European History, **26**, 3 (2017), pp. 487–506. © Cambridge University Press 2017
doi:10.1017/S0960777317000017

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

used terror as a political weapon, the generation who advocated the expulsion and elimination of the adversary – such was the generation born under the sign of Mars.

The history of interwar Europe can be recounted in terms of homogenisation, confrontation, elimination and expulsion. It was a time of crisis, when attempts to grasp and retain power were accompanied by violence on almost every part of the continent – violence which, from the erasure of the distinction between the military and civil spheres during the First World War to the attempted exterminations and racial hierarchisations during the Second, turned the first half of the twentieth century into the most brutal, bloody – and in consequence, foundational – period in a millennium of European history. The era that began in 1917 and ended in 1949 was a time of warfare, extermination and mass deportation all over Europe. It was also the era in which civil war became a major agent of transformation among European societies. While the first-mentioned aspect is covered by a vast theoretical corpus and a multitude of comparative studies, the second is not. In spite of their great historical importance, civil wars have received less attention than international wars as generators of collective violence.

In this article, therefore, I shall traverse half a century of European history, starting with the rather obvious assumption that, in spite of the general lack of comparative and theoretical analyses of its nature, the historical process that supplied the context for collective violence was, if not predominantly, certainly recurrently, that of internal – civil – war. Civil wars have been universally perceived as the epitome of suffering, cruelty and pain. But in most cases this fact has not been supported by any analysis of why the violence occurred. Initially, scholarly attention was focused on war itself, rather than violence, which was not included among the central elements that define internal conflicts in Europe.[2] Partly in order to escape this constricting theoretical framework, Stanley G. Payne, in the only major comparative study of civil wars in Europe, has treated them as a multifactorial process that is, to a great extent, reducible to a half a century of continuous conflict between revolution and counter-revolution, from which other elements derive.[3] This may be accurate, but it is still the case that analyses of the logic of violence in civil wars do not always produce such clear-cut results.

As Stathis Kalyvas has convincingly demonstrated, war can generate violence that was completely unintended by the main actors.[4] In other words, violence can have

[2] However, priority has been given to military matters and internal politics, though these do not always arise: many civil wars are *also* international wars, and national governments are not always actively involved. Nor is resistance always real and effective on both sides. See David J. Singer and Melvin Small, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil War 1816–1980* (Beverley Hills: Sage, 1982), 210. For a long-term view of civil war see David Armitage, *Civil War: A History in Ideas* (New York: Knopf, forthcoming); for the main arguments see Armitage, ‘Every Great Revolution is a Civil War’, in Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolutions* (Stanford: Standford University Press, 2013), available at http://scholar.harvard.edu/armitage/publications (last visited 14 Mar. 2015) and Eduardo González Calleja, *Las guerras civiles. Perspectiva de análisis desde las ciencias sociales* (Madrid: Catarata, 2013).

[3] Stanley G. Payne, *Civil War in Europe, 1905–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[4] Ibid., 24, 68.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

its own logic, but it is not suspended in space and/or time. Rather it is determined by the context of the war: civil war reduces the cost of violence because it destroys institutional sanctions. This works both ways: violence may have its own dynamics, which influence the context (rather than the other way around); yet, historically, it is war that generates a framework that favours and multiplies violence.[5] The two processes are not necessarily mutually exclusive when it comes to the analysis of historical contingencies. The European civil wars of our time, being both national *and* international, regular and irregular, were waged against armies and against civilians and so dissolved the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. Being mostly total wars, they superimposed political, national and symbolic conflicts upon one another. This multiplication of conflicts helped to deepen and intensify the politics of violence.

I therefore suggest that Europe's internal wars were exceptionally violent for a number of different reasons, including the seizure and control of power, symbolic conflicts, the break-up of communities and the juxtaposition of separate conflicts under the civil war umbrella. Some of these reasons are, of course, military: for example, civil wars are wars of intersecting belligerence. As wars became total wars, this inevitably meant that non-combatants became progressively more involved as part of the state or quasi-state apparatus of war – or as military targets, particularly from the First World War onwards.[6] There are also political elements, which as generalisations require some nuancing: both revolution and counter-revolution and fascism and anti-fascism are part of the macro-narratives that have fed into analysis of Europe's 1917–1949 internal conflicts in terms of civil war.

Not all internal conflicts, including the civil wars of Russia and Finland, are universally accepted as such. The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) was obviously just that; but internal conflicts also affected other territories such as Italy, the Balkans, France and Greece up to 1949, sometimes but not always within the context of the world war. There is little previous work on which to base a comparative analysis of these civil wars and the logic of their violence. Nevertheless, this article will attempt to evaluate the usefulness of the concept of 'civil war' in analysing the violence of internal conflict in interwar Europe. War, particularly civil war, is a highly codified form of violence.[7] Nonetheless the ubiquity of the term means that its application is not merely a historiographical but also a political and cultural act, as well as a statement of identity. Here civil wars are defined as open wars, preceded by a reciprocal declaration of hostilities by parties that previously belonged to the same

[5] For two approaches to this issue, see Luca Baldissara and Paolo Pezzino, eds., *Crimini e memorie di guerra. Violenze contro le popolazioni e politiche del ricordo* (Naples: L'ancora del Mediterraneo, 2004); David el Kenz, ed., *Le massacre, objet d'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005). For a different context see Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

[6] Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction. Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also Annette Becker, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Charles Ingrao and Henry Rousso, eds., *La violence de guerre 1914–1945* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 2002); Annette Becker and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *14–18. Retrouver la Guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

[7] Pieter Lagrou, 'La "guerra irregolare" e le norme della violenza legittima nell' Europa del Novecento', in Baldissara and Pezzino, *Crimini*, 89–102.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

political unit. From a comparative viewpoint, however, there are certain common elements that define civil war and explain the degree and intensity of its violence.[8]

Revolution and Counter-Revolution

The twentieth century was colossally violent owing to the global agglomeration of multifactorial historical processes, each attended by its own circumstances and within its own context. Whereas collective violence in wars of occupation, ethnic cleansing and genocide has become the domain of 'genocide studies', with its sometimes rather sweeping theories, violence in civil wars has not received the same theoretical or methodological attention. These theories point to nation states as the primary and major location of collective violence in twentieth-century Europe,[9] analysing their politics from the starting premise that they have been almost entirely murderous, responding to pre-decided motives and plans directed against homogeneous groups of victims identified by some common, usually metaphorical, characteristic.[10] Nonetheless, as suggested by Kalyvas and (in passing) Christian Gerlach, civil war entails a multiplicity and fragmentation of factors, levels and perpetrators, at both the micro and macro level, which make its violence particularly difficult to analyse through a homogenising lens.[11] To examine these processes, as

[8] Few comparative analyses exist. See Harry Eckstein, *Internal War: Problems and Approaches* (New York: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1964) and Robin D. S. Higham, ed., *Civil Wars in the Twentieth Century* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1972). There are numerous references to civil war in Arno J. Mayer, *Dynamics of Counterrevolution in Europe, 1870–1956* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971). A very useful work is Gabriele Ranzato, ed., *Guerre fratricide. Le guerre civili in età contemporanea* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1994). Less innovative is Philip B. Minehan, *Civil War and World War in Europe: Spain, Yugoslavia, and Greece, 1936–1939* (New York: Palgrave, 2006). From the point of view of the social sciences, see Ann Hironaka, *Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Amalendu Misra, *Politics of Civil Wars: Conflict, Intervention and Resolution* (London: Routledge, 2008); Marie Olson Lounsbery and Frederic Pearson, *Civil Wars: Internal Struggles, Global Consequences* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Eduard Newman, *Understanding Civil Wars: Continuity and Change in Intrastate conflict* (London: Routledge, 2014).

[9] Alex P. Schmid, 'Repression, State Terrorism and Genocide: Conceptual Clarifications', in P. Timothy Bushnell et. al., eds., *State Organized Terror: The Case of Violent Internal Repression* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); Bernard Bruneteau, *Le Siècle des génocides: Violences, massacres et processus génocidaires de l'Arménie au Rwanda* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2004); Omer Bartov, Atina Grossmann and Mary Nolan, eds., *Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The New Press, 2002); Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[10] We now have some thought-provoking reassessments of general theories of genocide, particularly in Donald Bloxham and Dirk Moses, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Dirk Moses, ed., *Genocide: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, 6 vols. (London: Routledge, 2010). A similar direction is taken by Olaf Jensen and Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, eds., *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives* (London: Palgrave, 2008).

[11] Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Mark Mazower has pointed out, it is essential to start not just with theory but also with historical contingency.[12]

In perspective, the worst practices of collective violence appear to depend on – without being the inevitable outcome of – specific contexts, including open war, civil war and the infiltration of peacetime politics by the logic of war. Europe's great collective massacres all took place under the aegis of war or as the result of warfare as waged against non-combatants.[13] Indeed, one of the characteristics of contemporary history is the ever-increasing proportion of civilian deaths in war – which is perfectly logical because the dynamics behind these wars aimed to transform the societies in which they took place. In fact, the same dynamics apply to both civil and international wars: conceptualisation of civilians as prime military targets, the proliferating dynamic of revolution versus counter-revolution and the spread of eliminationist ideologies, such as fascism, which glorify violence and death. All these must be ranked among the factors that encouraged the convergence and consolidation of power in twentieth-century Europe in the form of mass violence.[14] With hindsight it can be seen that the process was also powerfully affected by the modernisation and accumulation arising from industrialisation. Nevertheless, as Gerlach pointed out, all this preparation and accumulation of factors did not inevitably have to lead to collective violence.

More precisely, collective violence takes place in situations where there is conflict and a perceived crisis[15] over fairly short periods[16] that include some decisive moments and are part of contexts such as a coup d'état or an open war. However, it also depends heavily on the reaction that it generates in the states where it takes place – on the nature of their institutions, power relations and economic structures. From a historical perspective, the first of Europe's great twentieth-century civil wars launched the confrontation between revolution and counter-revolution, owing to the expansion of both processes in Europe. From this viewpoint it is difficult to avoid the sort of

[12] Mark Mazower, 'Violence and the State in the Twentieth Century', *The American Historical Review*, 107, 4 (2002), 1158–78. A similar approach is taken by Ian Kershaw, 'War and Political Violence in Twentieth Century Europe', *Contemporary European History*, 14, 1 (2005), 107–23, but not by Manus I. Midlarsky, *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Some more recent work on collective violence fails to avoid decontextualisation, using sweeping concepts and projecting them into the present and future. See, for example, Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature: The Decline of Violence in History and its Causes* (London: Allen Lane, 2011); Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Worse Than War: Genocide, Eliminationism, and the Ongoing Assault On Humanity* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009).

[13] The temporal dimension is important. Without it, the analysis becomes meaningless. Hugo Slim, *Killing Civilians: Method, Madness, and Morality in War* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2008).

[14] Aristotle Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism: The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Europe* (London: Routledge, 2005).

[15] Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*, 267.

[16] It is, of course, possible for political repression to continue for long periods which are structurally underpinned by the reality or threat of violence. Spain and Portugal are cases in point. See Diego Palacios, *A culatazos: Protesta popular y orden público en el Portugal contemporáneo* (Madrid: Genueve, 2011); Javier Rodrigo, *Hasta la raíz: Violencia durante la guerra civil y la dictadura franquista* (Madrid: Alianza, 2008).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

global and transtemporal macro-interpretation that attributes the intersecting violence of civil war to two grand concepts – revolution and counter-revolution – constantly at war with each other throughout the twentieth century, and which used two kinds of terror, the red and the white, as tools in their struggle for power over, and violent repression of, another grand concept, the *people.* It may be that all too often such definitions gloss over internal, local or community dynamics; or that the terminology, particularly 'counter-revolution', underestimates the fact that, as stated by the philosopher Joseph de Maistre, 'counter-revolution is not the opposite of a revolution, but . . . an opposing revolution'.[17] We might even agree with Arno Mayer that the dynamics of revolution and counter-revolution can explain the sudden proliferation of European civil wars. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the same dynamics can explain violence in the context of such wars.

In any case, it is highly likely that revolution has received much more attention than war from researchers intent on tracing the entire process back to the events of 1917.[18] It is true, however, that the historical importance of the Russian civil war, and the way it unleashed political tendencies and energies that were to influence other comparable processes, makes it a turning point in the history of violence in European civil wars. The war between White Russians and Bolsheviks (counter-revolutionaries and revolutionaries according to 1917 criteria), which dragged on until 1923, left no alternative but to locate the seizure and retention of revolutionary power in an armed context, testing the extent to which both sides created a space for political cleansing, repression and the exploitation and/or elimination of the adversary.[19]

The Russian civil war was the first in Europe in which we may (at least if we apply the customary interpretive standards) clearly identify these two grand projects, along with two further categories of central importance to Europe: Red Terror and White Terror. The former was 'revolutionary' and the latter 'counter-revolutionary', and each had its own path to tread, its own complex modes of operation and its own narrative deployments. According to Figes, the Cheka (the Emergency Committee directing the struggle against counter-revolution, sabotage and speculation) ordered about 250,000 executions of 'enemies of the people' under the Decree passed on 5 September 1918 for the protection of the Soviet Republic against its class enemies – which also spawned the infamous 'de-cossackisation', the disappearance or deportation of some half-million members of a Cossack minority that numbered some three million people, all of them identified as military and class enemies. It is impossible to comprehend the nature of Soviet polities of violence after the 1918 Decree unless they are put in a civil war context. In August 1918 the

17 Cited in Payne, *Civil War*, 24.

18 Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: Russian Revolution 1891–1924* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1996); James Ryan, *Lenin's Terror: The Ideological Origins of Early Soviet State Violence* (London: Routledge, 2012); Joshua A. Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation: Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics 1905–1925* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003); Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution. Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914–1921* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

19 Vladimir Brovkin, *Behind the Front Lines of the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

order to the Vecheka (the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage) to intern all suspect elements, White guards and kulaks opened the door to isolating the enemies of the revolution, resulting in a vast extension of the General Directorate of Internment Camps, more commonly known as the Gulag system (*Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei*), under the aegis of the Cheka, which set up the Chief Directorate of Forced Labour, the GUPR. The latter reported in around 1921 that there were 41,000 forced labourers in concentration camps and 73,000 in eighty-four internment camps. Only two years later the number of internment camps had risen to 355. This inexorable increase must be attributed to internal warfare.

Nevertheless, counter-revolutionary violence was not long in coming, and the Bolsheviks were not its sole target. Jews, too, fell victim to White Russian violence. Arno Mayer estimates the number of killings at between 100,000 and 150,000 in the Ukraine and southern Russia. In the Don province about 45,000 people were executed or hanged, and reprisals against combatants and non-combatants took place in all zones controlled by the Kolchak government, which is thought to have ordered 25,000 executions in the Ekaterinburg province alone.[20] This was still less than the violence perpetrated by the revolutionaries[21] and less than the number of combatants who died in battle: 1.2 million Bolsheviks and about 400,000 Whites, not to mention the tens of thousands of peasants who died in revolts and battles against the Red Army and the million or more civilians who died in the east of the former empire. In any case, the figures for the victims of violence, cleansing and purges show how difficult it is to distinguish between death and murder, between civilians who were executed and civilians who died as a consequence of war.

Factors contributing to the high index of violence against non-combatants in the Russian civil war include power, identity, national and international politics and the wider context of an international war – the violence of which was unprecedented in contemporary history. But civil wars are not international conflicts – even if they subsume such conflicts – or dual wars, but rather 'complex and ambiguous processes that favour united action by local and supra-local actors, some civilian and some in the armed forces, whose alliance gives rise to very diverse kinds of violence'. Hence these processes are defined in two dimensions – fragmentation and sovereignty – with the main bones of contention being control, popular support, collaboration and the discouraging of collaboration with the enemy. In such wars violence is greater where sovereignty is fragmented and disputed. The Russian war is a good example; so is the Spanish. In the Finnish civil war of winter–spring 1918, the internal fragmentation of power may have been the main factor. There was no clear casus belli – although there was a recognisable enemy – but the coup d'état, coupled with division within the army and in politics, large-scale mobilisation and the reciprocal call to arms in

[20] Arno J. Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001).

[21] Allegedly totalling about 400,000, according to *calculations* (my emphasis). See Evan Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War* (Boston: Pegasus Books, 1987), 285–7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

January 1918 triggered a territorial division and a revolutionary process in areas under Social Democrat control. Needless to say this also triggered violence against internal enemies.[22]

The revolutionaries were defeated but not crushed. Some 6,500 people died in battle, according to statistics quoted by Risto Alapuro; 1,650 people were executed in the Red Terror and 8,400 in the White – this out of a population of three million. After the end of the war and a chaotic retreat by the Reds during the abandonment of Tampere (on which occasion they murdered about 600 people) came the White Terror. Alapuro calculates that no fewer than 5,600 executions were ordered by ad hoc tribunals – about 200 a day. After the war's end another 12,500 died in White prisoner-of-war camps that housed about 82,000 people. In other words, many more people died as a result of policies of violence than died in battle. More died after the war than during it, and the counter-revolution killed considerably more than the revolution. Thus it is not so easy to identify the Finnish civil war as a war of elimination in a context of *total* civil war.[23]

The wars in Russia and Finland are somewhat fuzzy in outline, but at least the two had an identifiable declaration, opening and ending of hostilities. The case of Hungary is more complex because the boundary between what can and what cannot be defined as civil war becomes blurred as we analyse the anti-communist coup d'état, the White and Red Terrors and the wresting of power from Béla Kun in 1919. Clearly the existence of intersecting violence, while it may imply belligerence on both sides, cannot be the sole explanation for an internal war. Similarly, coups d'état cannot per se be identified as civil wars, insofar as attempts at self-defence by a persecuted opposition cannot be identified as war. A struggle for independence may turn into an internal war, but it does not do so inevitably.[24] The case of Ireland in 1922 is symptomatic, insofar as if the term 'civil war' is applied to the armed struggle in Ireland it assumes a debatable compromise between two opposing identities – the very two involved in the conflict – while some authors argue that it took about a

[22] Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); Anthony F. Upton, *The Finnish Revolution, 1917–1918* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); Julián Casanova, 'Guerras civiles, revoluciones y contrarrevoluciones en Finlandia, España y Grecia (1918–1949): un análisis comparado', in Julián Casanova, ed., *Guerras civiles en el siglo XX* (Madrid: Pablo Iglesias, 2001), 1–28.

[23] Seminal works on the Finnish war by Manninen, Paavolainen and Ylikangas are cited in Risto Alapuro, 'Violence in the Finnish Civil War of 1918 and its Legacy in a Local Perspective', Political Violence and Civil Wars Workshop (Florence: European University Institute, 2002). See also Jukka Kekkonen, 'Judicial Repression during and after the Finnish (1918) and Spanish (1936–1939) Civil Wars. A Comparative Analysis', in Margo De Koster, Hervé Leuwers, Dirk Luyten and Xavier Rousseaux, eds., *Justice in Wartime and Revolutions: Europe 1795–1950* (Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief – Archives générales du Royaume, 2012), 67–82; Sirkka Arosalo, 'Social Conditions for Political Violence: Red and White Terror in the Finnish Civil War of 1918', *Journal of Peace Research*, 35 (1998), 147–66; Tuomas Tepora and Aapo Roselius, eds., *The Finnish Civil War 1918: History, Memory, Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[24] Gabriele Ranzato, 'Un evento antico e un nuovo oggeto di riflessione', in Ranzato, ed., *Guerre fratricide*, xxxvii.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

century to change from covert to open warfare, by way of rebellions, internal and inter-communal conflicts and reciprocal terrorism.[25]

Of course these three concepts – civil war, overt war, covert war – are merely conventional. Covert war, in particular, is problematic from a comparative viewpoint. A civil war cannot be covert, except as a narrative metaphor; therefore, the Irish conflict cannot, strictly speaking, be a civil war. But is there such a thing as a civil war in the strictest sense? By any criteria – the reciprocal violence exercised in superimposed conflicts that were both multifactorial[26] and multidirectional;[27] the involvement of non-combatants; the attempts to secure civil backing and the instrumentalisation of historiography based on hermetic and totalising categories such as people, nation or community – the Irish conflict was not a European civil war.[28] At least, it was not if such war is seen, continental-style, as a dynamic of revolution versus counter-revolution,[29] or if we subject it to the proviso that there must be open hostility between two claimants to national legitimacy. But, again, it all depends on the definition of civil war used.[30]

After the First World War, the history of Western Europe acquired a complexity that cannot be reduced to the binary schematic of revolution versus counter-revolution. That dualism was complicated by the emergence of fascism as a vehicle for conservative revolution, on the one hand, and the anti-socialist counter-revolution, on the other. In these cases, and in that of Spain, the counter-revolution was not reactive but preventive. Italy in 1922 and Germany in 1933 have often been described in terms of civil war, insofar as the ascent of fascism led to savage repression of revolutionary parties, as in Hungary.[31] If these conflicts are to be identified as civil wars, the assumption must be that civil war violence of this sort does not require a state of open warfare or a declaration of war. In point of fact, the universally

[25] David Fitzpatrick, 'Guerras civiles en la Irlanda del siglo XX', in Casanova, *Guerras*, 79–92.

[26] These include national community and nationalism either together or separately, religion and the existence of a recognised occupying force.

[27] There were various actors and communities in no fewer than three politically separate territories.

[28] Peter Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916–1923* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1999).

[29] In any case, the Irish internal conflict of 1922 did not actually produce that many victims; the losses were concentrated towards the end of the struggle. Although Fitzpatrick acknowledges that the deaths of 1,200 soldiers from both sides must be supplemented by an unknown number of civilian casualties, other researchers have pointed out that whereas civilians accounted for about 40 per cent of deaths in 1917–19 and 48 per cent in 1920 – a similar proportion to that of the Spanish Civil War as a whole, but not to that at the beginning of the same war – the proportion rose to 64 per cent in 1921, and as high as 82 per cent between January and June 1922, falling to 39 per cent in the second half of that year. See Peter Hart, 'The Dynamics of Violence in the Irish Revolution, 1917–1923', Workshop *Political Violence and Civil Wars* (Florence, European University Institute, 2002). However, these figures now need to be revised in the light of work by Eunan O'Halpin.

[30] Peter Hart, *The IRA at War 1916–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); David Fitzpatrick, ed., *Terror in Ireland 1916–1923* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2012); T. Ryle Dwyer, *Michael Collins and the Civil War* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012); Bill Kissane, *The Politics of the Irish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Anne Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War: History and Memory, 1923–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[31] Nikolaus Wachsmann, 'The Policy of Exclusion: Repression in the Nazi State, 1933–1939', in Jane Caplan, ed., *Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 122–45.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

acknowledged 'model' for civil war – the Spanish civil war of 1936–39 – is the very opposite of a model example. The preventive counter-revolution in Spain is assumed to have generated a reactive revolution and subsequently a civil war.[32] Moreover, an enormous proportion of its violence occurred in the first few months of the conflict, long before it can be identified as a civil war in the military sense of the term.

The Fascist Era

The Spanish Civil War has been linked to European civil wars and similar conflicts because it was in part a struggle between revolution and counter-revolution, between imagined and collective entities embodied, respectively, in republicans and rebels. However, the Second Spanish Republic before July 1936 was not exactly revolutionary.[33] What initially took the brakes off the use of violence was not, in the first instance, a revolution but rather a coup d'état.[34] Thus, although the Spanish counter-revolutionaries almost attained their objective of crushing communism as in Germany or Hungary, they committed the 'sin' of ushering in a period that was revolutionary, whereas the regime they were shooting at was not. So even in Spain, the difficulties of applying this model are obvious.

We must, therefore, try another approach, one based on the profound impact that policies of violence had on the non-combatant population of Spain. Displacement and mass violence led to an enormous loss of population, including deaths in battle, murder behind the lines and the exile of republican soldiers and civilians. It was a war of forced displacements and the homogenisation and persecution of minorities whose identity depended on their political stance.[35] It was the longest of the civil wars that comprise the conventional frame of reference; it was also proportionately the bloodiest. In appropriately assessing its violence, it is crucial not to note how many victims there were in absolute terms but rather how many there were relative to the size of the population. None of Europe's internal wars throughout the twentieth century approached the murderous levels reached in the Spain of 1936: nearly 3 per cent of the population were killed in the 'red' zone and over 5 per cent in the 'blue' zone.[36]

Rebel violence caused at least 100,000–130,000 deaths by direct violence (political cleansing, occupation of territory), judicial violence, attacks on the civilian population

[32] Michael Seidman, *La victoria nacional: La eficacia contrarrevolucionaria en la guerra civil* (Madrid: Alianza, 2012).

[33] Eduardo González Calleja, 'La dialéctica de las pistolas: la violencia y la fragmentación del poder político durante la Segunda República', in José Luis Ledesma, Javier Muñoz and Javier Rodrigo, eds., *Culturas y políticas de la violencia: España siglo XX* (Madrid: Siete Mares, 2005), 101–46. On fascism, violent dialectics and the Republic, see Ferran Gallego, *El evangelio fascista: La formación de la cultura política del franquismo (1930–1950)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2014).

[34] Julián Casanova, 'Rebelión y revolución', in Santos Juliá, ed., *Víctimas de la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1999), 277–405; Paul Preston, *El holocausto español. Odio y exterminio en la Guerra Civil y después* (Barcelona: Debate, 2011).

[35] Joan Serrallonga, *Refugiats i desplaçats dins la Catalunya en guerra, 1936–1939* (Barcelona: Base, 2004).

[36] José Luis Ledesma, 'Qué violencia para qué retaguardia o la República en guerra de 1936', in Javier Rodrigo, ed., *Retaguardia y cultura de guerra, 1936–39, Ayer*, 76 (2009), 83–114.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(including the bombing of cities) and extra-judicial murder in prisons or quasi-prisons, including concentration camps and forced-labour camps. About 52,800 of these deaths occurred in the first few months after the coup d'état, many even before Franco had emerged in October 1936 as Head of State and *Generalísimo* – which throws some doubt on the label 'franquista' which is so often attached to this violence. However, the fragmentary rearguard revolution in places where the coup d'état was unsuccessful – a revolution that took violence as a concomitant of the seizure and exercise of power – killed about 38,000 people during the first few months of the war, out of a total of about 55,000 during the war as a whole. Thus, out of the figure of approximately 185,000 deaths accepted by historians for the period from 1936 to 1948 (the year in which the victors formally announced the cessation of hostilities), about 90,000 were killed in 1936. To put it another way: of the killings that took place through the twelve years of war, the great majority happened in the first six months.

Thus, although the violence was unleashed by the state of war, the ways in which it was practised had their own dynamics. Throughout the Spanish Civil War of 1936–39, the overall proportion of non-combatant victims to combatant victims is something more than half. However, in 1936 the former outnumbered the latter to a hugely disproportionate extent. Wherever the coup d'état was successful, the maintenance of public order was automatically equated with elimination of the opposition, followed immediately by a huge campaign of cleansing or purging (of which the details varied from place to place), ushered in by the proclamation of martial law by local and supra-regional authorities. This was carried out by armed civilians – most notably the Falange, the fascist party which later became the single official party that sustained Franco's regime – and by cleansing squads, or sometimes by the rebel army itself. Although 'the enemy' was not always identified beforehand, everybody knew who he was and who had to be murdered in any particular place. Rebel violence was – quantitatively – mass violence, but it was also selective.

In the Republican zone, the first manifestations of revolution were symbolic rather than relational – once the coup d'état had been foiled, its leaders killed and control of public order transferred to armed parties or trade unionists. As Mary Vincent has pointed out, these early manifestations constituted a war of religion. Violence inspired by hatred of the Catholic Church was, like all the revolutionary violence, concentrated in the first few weeks of the war.[37] In Tarragona, twenty-eight of the fifty recorded murders in the first fortnight (23 July to 4 August) were of priests or other religious individuals.[38] Clergy, and anyone else that could be linked with the Church, were one of the primary targets of revolutionary violence – if not *the*

[37] José Luis Ledesma, *Delenda est ecclesia. De la violencia anticlerical y la guerra civil de 1936* (Madrid: Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset, 2009); Mary Vincent, 'La Guerra Civil española como guerra de religión', *Alcores*, 4 (2007), 57–73; Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 86–; Gabriele Ranzato, 'La guerra civile spagnola nella storia contemporanea della violenza', in Ranzato, ed., *Guerre fratricide*, 269–303.

[38] Jordi Piqué, *La crisi de la rereguarda. Revolució i Guerra Civil a Tarragona (1936–1939)* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1998), 135.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

primary target. Historians accept a figure of about 6,800 regular and secular clergy. It was a war of religion, a class war, a national war, a revolutionary war and a struggle for power. Certain areas were harder hit by violence: while the death rate across Spain approached 3 per cent of the population, it doubled in Madrid to 6.8 per cent, which means that about one in every 147 people living in Madrid was killed. The rate in Catalonia was right on the average, at about 2.9 per cent; but in certain places, such as Cervera, the killing rate was above 20 per cent. In Sant Vicenç de Montalt it reached 45 per cent.[39]

Overall, the revolutionary violence of 1936 represented about 80 per cent of the total for the entire war. From August 1936 onwards – from the day after at least thirty political prisoners were murdered in Madrid's 'model' prison – revolutionary justice was dispensed by people's tribunals. This did not put a stop to extrajudicial violence, including the massacres of Paracuellos del Jarama and Torrejón de Ardoz in November 1936. As José Luis Ledesma has pointed out, 'five months into the war, with twenty-seven to come, one in five of the total victims had already been killed'.[40] In the rearguard zone, the occupation of territory, as part of a total war (which is what this Spanish war was), always involved some degree of direct violence throughout the three remaining years of the war, along with a new logic of repression, recovery, re-education and re-use.[41] A leading characteristic of civil war violence is its use against 'fifth-columnists' – a use which was more intensive in Spain than in any other of Europe's internal wars. Internal enemies are more likely to feature in a civil war – in a single country where the boundaries between the sides are less clearly marked – than in an international war.[42] This enemy becomes an obsession: he is persecuted, tracked down and eliminated, and his real potential for action is overestimated, turning his elimination into a primary objective.

The efficacy of this violence, both in 1936 and subsequently, is demonstrated by the fact that there was practically no guerrilla warfare by partisans in the rearguard zone. People's tribunals, military tribunals, classification committees, audit offices, concentration camps and forced-labour camps for prisoners, including political

[39] José Luis Martín Ramos, *La rereguarda en guerra. Catalunya, 1936–1937* (Barcelona: L'Avenç, 2012), 107. Josep M. Solé i Sabaté, *La repressió franquista a Catalunya, 1938–1953* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1985). Julius Ruiz, *El Terror Rojo. Madrid, 1936* (Barcelona: Espasa, 2012).

[40] José Luis Ledesma, 'Una retaguardia al rojo. Las violencias en la zona republicana', in Ledesma et al., *Violencia roja y azul. España, 1936–1950* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2010), 240.

[41] Defining 'total war' is another complicated matter; its interaction with civil war still more so. While questioning its applicability to the Spain of 1936–39, Förster and Chickering stress that their model of total war is an *Idealtypus* never actualised in its most extreme form. See Roger Chickering and Stig Föster, eds., *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Förster and Chickering, eds., *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). The same authors outline their theoretical approach in the introduction to Förster and Chickering, eds., *The Shadows of Total War. Europe, East Asia, and the United States, 1919–1939* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003). On the limitations of this concept see Roger Chickering, 'Total War: The Use and Abuse of a Concept', in Roger Chickering, Manfred F. Boemeke and Stig Föster, eds., *Anticipating Total War: The German and American experiences, 1871–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13–28.

[42] Payne, *Civil War*, 11.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

prisoners, all contributed to the purging of the political opposition and established model forms of violence that would outlast the Francoist victory and continue unchanged until at least the mid-1940s. Formally, they continued until 1948. This formalisation did not put an end to direct violence, which continued primarily in the form of killings and the cleansing of conquered territory. But it was not the only possible model.[43] The violence of the Spanish Civil War stands out from that of other European internal wars for many reasons, particularly its nature, percentage and tempo. The violence, killing and murder for identifiable causes, such as those which took place in Finland or Ireland, accelerated towards the end of these conflicts. Over and above the numerous complex realities seen on the ground, a macro-interpretive approach focuses on military-style judgments: violence is visited by the victors on the vanquished as a punishment. In Spain, on the other hand, the killing accelerated in 1936, before the civil war had really started and as the result of a preventive counter-revolutionary coup that unleashed a reactive revolution and a total war. Levels of violence during that year were high owing to the fragmentation of power and the generalised use of violence as a mechanism for appropriating, maintaining and controlling that power. At the time, however, it was also the result of a decision to forego safeguarding present success in favour of developing the society of the future. The main characteristic of violence in 1936 Spain was that it encompassed every aspect of society and could be used to purge it. Moreover, it served to close up cracks in the political and symbolic order that had not been resolved during the years of Republican political reform.

From this point of view, the Spanish Civil War was not exceptional. The notion of civil war has become an analytical tool, used to explain complex conflicts such as those during the Second World War which, although internal, were encouraged by an external invasion. Even where no open warfare took place, some historians have postulated the existence of latent civil wars in order to explain the background to the rise of phenomena such as European fascism. This is still problematic because, as Claudio Pavone has pointed out, when a state fragments under external pressure, the very concept of civil war loses precision and merges with the concepts of national liberation and collaboration.[44] Nevertheless, as we have seen, exactly the same lack of precision applies to the other processes of European civil war, particularly when there is a merging of complex situations, such as collaboration with a foreign occupying power and guerrilla warfare.

This analytical model fits the internal conflicts in the Balkans and the 'first stage' of the Greek civil war. The occupation of Greece by the Axis powers (1941–1944) changed the country profoundly, sowing the seeds of civil war and

[43] On Republican camps see Francesc Badía, *Els camps de treball en Catalunya* (Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat, 2001); on Francoist camps, Javier Rodrigo, *Cautivos. Campos de concentración en la España franquista, 1936–1947* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005). On 'audit offices', tribunals and judicial repression see Pablo Gil, *La noche de los generales. Militares y represión en el régimen de Franco* (Madrid: Ediciones B, 2004).

[44] Claudio Pavone, 'La seconda guerra mondiale: una guerra civile europea?', in Ranzato, ed., *Guerre fratricide*, 123.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

prompting the rapid growth of a communist party that successfully organised one of the strongest resistance movements in occupied Europe, as well as instigating an internal conflict against the right-wing and collaborationist armed factions which began in 1943.[45] In 1944 the National Liberation Front and its military arm, the Greek People's Liberation Army (EAM-ELAS), came up against a government backed by Britain. After the failure of the Athens uprising the government started a counter-revolutionary campaign, one aim of which was to disarm the paramilitary parties, with mass arrests affecting up to 50,000 members of the communist militias. EAM sources put the number killed at 1,192.[46]

Such was the prologue to the armed confrontation of 1947–49: Europe's last civil war before Yugoslavia fell apart in the 1990s. The Yugoslav war arose from the ashes of a multidirectional internal war encouraged by the Axis occupation, which either set up fascist states, as in Ante Pavelić's Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*; NDH), or led to occupation and collaboration, as in Milan Nedić's Serbia. The combination of factors – military, political, national, ethnic, linguistic and religious – and the number of contending factions (Serbia, the NDH, Germany, Italy, Tito's partisans, Mihailović's Chetniks) delivered up the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia to killings, deportations and cleansings – state against state, state against guerrillas and guerrillas against guerrillas – raising the number of victims (in Biondich's estimation) to nearly a million, the worst perpetrators being the Croatian Ustaše.[47] The killing of nearly 600,000 Serbs, Muslims and Jews by Pavelić's Ustaše in Croatia is a paradigm for the analysis of homogenising, eliminationist violence. However, if we treat the Balkan conflict of 1941–45 as a civil war we are likely to underestimate the main factor behind these policies of violence: the fascist occupation.[48]

The Spanish Civil War may be the best known such conflict of the fascist era, but it was by no means the only one. Indeed, we can extend the term to cover the internal conflicts that, over the course of the Second World War, swept first through occupied

[45] Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece. The Experience of Occupation, 1941–1944* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1994); Stathis N. Kalyvas, 'Red Terror: Leftist Violence During the Occupation', in Mark Mazower, ed., *After the War was Over: Reconstructing Family, State, and Nation in Greece, 1944–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 142–83; Edgar O'Ballance, *The Greek Civil War, 1944–1949* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966); John O. Iatrides, ed., *Greece in the 1940s. A Nation in Crisis* (Hannover and London: University Press of New England, 1981); David Close, ed., *The Greek Civil War, 1943–1950. Studies of Polarization* (London: Routledge, 1993); idem, *The Origins of the Greek Civil War* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[46] Polymeris Voglis, 'Political Prisoners in the Greek Civil War, 1945–50: Greece in Comparative Perspective', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 37, 4 (2002), 523–40.

[47] Mark Biondich, *The Balkans: Revolution, War, and Political Violence since 1878* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); ibid., 'Religion and Nation in Wartime Croatia: Reflections on the Ustaša Policy of Forced Religious Conversions, 1941–1942', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 83, 1 (2005), 71–116; ibid., 'Radical Catholicism and Fascism in Croatia, 1918–1945', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* 8, 2 (2007), 383–99; Alexander Korb, 'Understanding Ustaša Violence', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 12, 1–2 (2010), 1–18; Srdja Trifkovic, *Ustaša. Croatian Fascism and European Politics, 1929–1945* (Chicago: The Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies, 2011).

[48] Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Europe and then the Axis countries themselves. The Italian war was both an internal conflict and a border war on the southern European frontier of the Third Reich. The conflict of 1943–45, previously seen as a war of resistance to occupation and a partisan struggle, is now being reinterpreted as another civil war, although there has been strong conceptual and political resistance to this shift. Three or four factions (fascists, anti-fascists, Germans, Allies) participated in the fighting, killing and vengeance that characterised the internal war after the armistice of 1943. Once again there was no clear casus belli apart from the fact that the partitioning of the country into two zones (both under foreign occupation, with two self-proclaimed governments and, above all, a powerful partisan army) led to a violent armed confrontation between two claims to legitimacy. As the Italian Social Republic (*Repubblica Sociale Italiana;* RSI) reverted to so-called *sansepolcrismo*, a pure and virginal image of pre-regime revolutionary fascism (referring to the square in Milan where fascism was born, San Sepolcro) and multi-directional violence, Italy experienced a kind of internal fascist palingenesis in a context of simultaneous world and civil war.[49]

The Italian war was one against civilians. Claudio Pavone accepts a figure of over 187,000 victims between 1943 and 1945, of whom 120,000 were non-combatants. Violent fascist reprisals – torture, execution and deportation – killed between 10,000 and 15,000 partisans and civilians.[50] As Toni Rovatti has pointed out, the fascists' own (obviously distorted) estimates for executions in Italy between October 1943 and April 1945 were something over 1,400 on the Italian side and about 800 on the German side. Although these are the fascists' own figures, everything indicates that judicial executions were vastly outnumbered by extrajudicial ones, as in every European civil war. If the numbers of extrajudicial executions were proportionate to the judicial ones, the main perpetrators must have been the fascist authorities in the RSI rather than the Germans. It is no coincidence that it was during this period of internal war, occupation and fascist radicalisation that Jews and partisans were deported to labour camps and extermination camps in Eastern Europe.[51] Nowhere, either in Italy or elsewhere in occupied Europe, were the deportations a unidirectional phenomenon involving only two parties: the process was in part internal, and still more, inter-communal as regards both victims and perpetrators. The de facto civil war and the phenomenon of superimposed wars (national war, civil war, class war)

[49] Lutz Klinhammer, *Stragi naziste in Italia, 1943–1944* (Rome: Donzelli, 2006 [1997]); Paolo Pezzino, *Anatomia di un massacro. Controversia sopra una strage nazista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007 [1997]); Michele Battini and Paolo Pezzino, *Guerra ai civili. Occupazione tedesca e politica del massacro. Toscana 1944* (Venice: Marsilio, 1997); Gianluca Fulvetti and Francesca Pelini, eds., *La politica del massacro. Per un atlante delle stragi naziste in Toscana* (Naples: L'ancora del Mediterraneo, 2006); Luca Baldissara and Paolo Pezzino, *Il massacro. Guerra ai civili a Monte Sole* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009); Toni Rovatti, *Leoni vegetariani. La violenza fascista durante la RSI* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2011). The essential source for 1943–45 is still Claudio Pavone, *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991). More recent is Luzzatto, *Partigia. Una storia della Resistenza* (Milan: Mondadori, 2013).

[50] The Carabinieri's figure was 7,322. I am grateful to Toni Rovatti for giving me an update on these figures and their sources. Particularly valuable are the results obtained by the Comissione Storica Italo Tedesca, available at http://www.villavigoni.it/index.php?id=76&L=1 (last visited Aug. 2016).

[51] Giuseppe Mayda, *Storia della Deportazione dall'Italia, 1943–1945* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002); Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci, *L'Italia fascista e la persecuzione degli ebrei* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

which continued right through the Second World War in Europe and persisted after it – in the split between the National Front (which was the political wing of the armed force the *Francs-Tireurset Partisans*; FTP) and the Gaullists in France, for example, or between communist partisans and moderate (Catholic) resistance in Italy – is crucial to an understanding of the complexity and multiplicity of the causes of violence in the most practical sense.[52]

The combination of total war, national war, political or class war and war of religion that characterised internal conflicts between 1939 and 1945 explains, or helps to explain, the fact that all these wars were 'dirty wars', waged largely against non-combatants, using the techniques and tactics of violence to the detriment of individual rights and for reasons that were substantially supra-individual. The armistices that put an end to the main source of violent eliminationist policies – fascism – did not put a stop to revenge attacks, destruction of property, expulsions or killings. In fact, collective violence in the aftermath of the Second World War was openly vengeful, on the part of communities decimated during the war, Soviet soldiers against their beaten enemies and partisans and guerrillas. The world war provided a context for a series of national wars, each with its own rhythm and its own logic, and each in turn harboured its own logic of violence under the umbrella of the world war.

Other processes that can be analysed as internal conflicts (though they are not the only ones) are the measures taken to purge Europe of fascism – a quintessentially violent political cleansing which not only killed some 10,000 people in Italy and 9,000 in France but also produced the highest rates of generalised political arrest ever seen in Europe.[53] In Norway 55,000 members of the fascist *Nasjonal Samling*; NS) were tried and imprisoned; in Holland 200,000 people were put under investigation; most of the 29,000 people incarcerated in France in 1946 were political prisoners, i.e. they were found guilty of collaborating with the fascists. The figures for arrests in Italy were even higher. In Spain it is thought there were at least 180,000. The violence of war, continuing into the aftermath, promoted expulsions and homogenisation. As Mazower argues, the de facto disappearance of minorities as a 'problem' took place in a context that favoured extreme internal violence.[54] The same could be said of the so-called civil wars on the western borders of the Soviet Union from 1941 to

[52] Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (London: Macmillan, 2012), 273–4.

[53] Mirco Dondi, *La lunga liberazione. Giustizia e violenza nel dopoguerra italiano* (Rome: Editori riuniti, 2004 [1999]); Herbert Lottman, *The Purge: The Purification of the French Collaborators after World War II* (New York: W. Morrow, 1986).

[54] Poland is paradigmatic insofar as its ethnic complexity was reduced to near-total homogeneity, as the following groups were wholly or partly removed: Germans (from 2.3 per cent to 1.4 per cent of the population), Ukrainians (from 13.8 per cent to 0.7 per cent) and Belorussians (from 5.3 to 0.6 per cent). See Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), 416, table 1. This is by no means the only example. In addition to the expulsion and resettlement of some 12–13 million Germans from Eastern Europe, other significant cases include the 90,000 Hungarians expelled from Czechoslovakia and the 73,000 Slovaks expelled from Hungary. See Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005). In any case, the expulsion of Germans from east of the Oder–Neisse line, and national and class resettlement, would have given rise to internal conflict at national, ethnic, political and economic levels in countries whose western borders were occupied by

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

1947 – the last gasps of the ultra-violent clashes between collaborationist fascism and communism.[55]

The last of the great European civil wars of the first half-century took place in Greece. With hindsight, it can be seen as a turning point from the earlier dynamic and the new dynamic of communism versus anti-communism, ushering in a new logic – the 'Cold War'. Between 1947 and 1949, after the disarming of EAM-ELAS and the repression of communism,[56] the third phase of the internal conflict would, once again, include national and international factors; the Truman Doctrine and the confrontation between Tito and Stalin were crucial to defeat of the communist guerrillas.[57] The statistics of its violence, however, seem to have little to do with international politics. As previously said, grassroots logic may have little to do with the higher logic of diplomacy and economics.[58] The Axis occupation killed some 40,000 civilians, to which the Greek resistance added another 15,000. The counter-revolutionary terror claimed another 3,000 lives and the civil war proper killed 35,000 soldiers, plus about 4,000 civilians killed by the insurgents and 5,000 by government forces.[59]

Conclusion

The Greek war over, the hurricane of civil war did not revisit Europe until many years later. A historian who sets out to analyse forms of violence in European civil wars over the first half of the twentieth century will be forced to consider, among many other factors, the multi-directional nature of the processes that trigger them. The logic of these forms of violence combines local and regional dynamics with general, supranational contexts such as revolution versus counter-revolution, or fascism versus anti-fascism. It links motives, desires, fears and aspirations, from individual experience all the way to government policies.[60] And, as previously mentioned, it leads to the conclusion that the main factor in any explanation of civil wars is likely to be the superposition of wars on top of wars.

Closer examination of the reasons for such forms of violence requires a detailed exploration of the ideological, cultural, political, economic and identity-related factors at the local, regional, supra-regional, national and supranational level. For

the Red Army. See Marina Cattaruzza, '"Last Stop Expulsion". The Minority Question and Forced Migration in East-Central Europe: 1918–49', *Nations and Nationalism*, 16, 1 (2010), 108–26.

55 Alfred J. Rieber, 'Civil Wars in the Soviet Union', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 4, 1 (2003), 129–62.

56 André Gerolymatos, *Red Acropolis, Black Terror: The Greek Civil War and the Origins of Soviet–American Rivalry, 1943–1949* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

57 Roberto Rodríguez Milán, 'Confrontaciones civiles en la Europa mediterránea: Materiales para el estudio de la guerra civil griega', *Hispania Nova*, 8 (2008), 84–107.

58 On the last two, see Philip Carabott and Thanasis D. Sfikas, eds., *The Greek Civil War: Essays on a Conflict of Exceptionalism and Silences* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004).

59 Kalyvas, *Logic*; Polimeris Voglis, *Becoming a Subject: Political Prisoners during the Greek Civil War, 1945–1950* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

60 From this viewpoint see Christine Sylvester, ed., *Experiencing War* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

this reason, and because of the social and historiographical importance of the topic, any history of civil wars must be a comparative history. It must go beyond mere juxtaposition, beyond generalisations such as slow modernisation, beyond commonplaces such as structural poverty or atemporal idealisations such as inherited domination or ancestral imbalances and beyond interpretations of violence that rely on pathological (madness, sickness) or moral archetypes. It is difficult indeed to think of a kind of war that is so resistant to identification: a war whose very name or denomination (and this is common to all civil wars) is repudiated by all the parties involved, and which combines brief, violent processes such as coups d'état with long-term dynamics such as total war.

The alternative requires an analysis of civil war violence starting with praxis and context: the language it uses, the interpretations (mostly positive) that it attracts and, fundamentally, its logic. Wars of revolution against counter-revolution, as in Russia or Finland, internal wars between fascism and anti-fascism, as in Spain or Italy, and battles between partisans and/or against occupiers and collaborators, as in France, Yugoslavia or Greece, were marked by extreme multiplicity and multi-directionality which affected loyalties, individual actions and attitudes to the enemy. Not all these wars were equally violent, however. The percentage of killings and mechanisms of repression were particularly significant in Finland and even more so (both relatively and absolutely) in the Spanish Civil War, which is the easiest to identify as a result of internal logic and processes. Nevertheless, in spite of internal differences some preliminary conclusions can be drawn.

In a global perspective, genocide and mass murder are not always associated with a state of war, nor is there any reason why they should be. The Ukrainian man-made famine (*Holodomor*) of 1933 and the killings in Maoist China – including the hundreds of thousands of Tibetans killed in 1950 – were not directly associated with a state of war.[61] However, in Europe, levels of violence are always considerably lower where there is no war. In Spain the number of political killings, along with other indicators of collective violence such as concentration camps and forced labour, dropped sharply after 1948, at the end of the war that began in 1936. During the long fascist period in Italy, most of the violence (quantitatively speaking) occurred during the Second World War, the civil war and the liberation. The same can be said of Nazi Germany or Pavelic's Croatia. To widen the analysis, although it was eliminationist fascism that stained interwar Europe with the thick ochre of violence, the project for the radical racist hierarchisation of Europe would have been unthinkable without a state of war. Moreover, this reaffirms the porosity of processes and policies of mass violence: after the *Shoah*, the killing of Soviet political prisoners was the biggest ever mass murder of a particular category of victims by a particular group of perpetrators – the Nazi authorities and the army. In figures, out of 5,700,000-plus prisoners, only about 930,000 survived.[62] The phenomenon of (international) wars superimposed on

[61] Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[62] On practices of extermination and the barbarisation of warfare, see, among many others, Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941–1945. German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (New York: Palgrave, 2001

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(internal) wars accounts for the fact that policies of violence did not end in Europe in 1945, along with the Second World War. To draw too firm a line between two periods on either side of this date is a distortion which prevents us from seeing that the end of violence after the Second World War was not a fact but a process, involving both continuities and discontinuities, with one logic of violence succeeding another some – sometimes abruptly, sometimes progressively – between 1945 and the end of the decade.

The logic of civil war and the logic of civil war violence may not be the same thing, but they are surely interconnected. In many cases, civil war violence is not aimed solely at elimination. Internment camps did not always aim to kill their prisoners but rather to re-educate and exploit them; if public rape and humiliation were visited on left-wing women in the Spanish Civil War, and on female collaborators in France and Italy after the Liberation, the main aims were re-education and expiation. If people were exiled, or forcibly resettled, during or after internal wars, the idea was to get rid of them – physically and symbolically – rather than kill them. The dispute over legitimacy in a civil war means that perpetrators and victims are also participants in symbolic combats. Such wars use violence as a mechanism for the assumption and retention of power at every level; they are also performative elements for transforming society and building the future. In most cases the principal actor is not the state but several para-states competing for power and for control of the administration, armed forces and symbolic capital of the nation. Recent research has shown that while policies of violence need the dynamic of war, they can become independent of it when they are put into practice.[63] From the perspective of geopolitics, identity or culture, the assumption and retention of power may turn out to be less important to an understanding of civil war violence because they may not both be subject to the same logic. They may well be interrelated, yet potentially interdependent. When we are analysing historical contingencies in all their complexity, what the historian may or may not consider logical is irrelevant.

Following on from this, civil wars become more violent as they become more complex. The Spanish Civil War, the Second World War and the internal conflicts within the latter were civil wars, justified on a national basis, fought over issues of class and religion. They were national wars of independence against an enemy from outside, wars against class enemies, wars against the ghosts of a recent revolutionary past, wars of religion, political wars, international wars, military wars, total wars, wars of territorial occupation. It is this superposition, together with the fact that (as Victor Serge points out) civil war does not recognise non-combatants, that determines the

[1985]). Essential is Götz Aly, '"Jewish Resettlement". Reflections on the Political Prehistory of the Holocaust', in Ulrich Herbert, ed., *National Socialist Extermination Policies. Contemporary German Perspectives and Controversies* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 53–82; see also Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[63] Martin Conway has demonstrated this with respect to Greece: 'The Greek Civil War: Greek Exceptionalism or Mirror of a European Civil War?', in Carabott and Sfikas, *The Greek Civil War*, 17–40, esp. 34.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press

dimension and degree of internal violence. Civil wars decide the hierarchy, and even the appropriation, of a nation's or community's symbolic capital and sense of identity. They are invariably struggles over the future shape of society, which means that they always involve some sort of purification. This is obvious in the case of the English Civil War of the 1640s, the French wars of religion, the civil war that followed the French Revolution and the wars in Russia, Yugoslavia and Italy in the twentieth century. The Spanish Civil War of 1936–39 was the one that combined all the possible wars and fractures: that is the reason why it is commonly considered as the paradigm of all European Civil wars.

At a time when military technology was far ahead of information technology, it was easier to destroy than to understand the enemy, easier to wage war than to use politics as a way of transforming society. This is why war was so popular with political regimes that desired transformation, a new start and a foundation for a new nation. As d'Ors remarked, violence in civil wars was to varying degrees a mechanism for the cleansing and transformation of society. This partly explains why the civil wars – although they inflicted much less death and suffering on both civilians and combatants than world wars – are still seen as the supreme epitome of cruelty and barbarism.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000017 Published online by Cambridge University Press