



Violence, Civility and Statehood in Europe and Japan. Kobe, Japan: Professor emeritus Takao Matsumura (Keio University, Tokyo); Dr Holger Nehring (Sheffield), 27.03.2009-31.03.2009.

Reviewed by Holger Nehring

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Violence, Civility and Statehood in Europe and Japan

This workshop brought together a number of senior and more junior scholars from Europe, the US and Japan in order to explore the ways in which states and governments used violence to create order and how this violence was justified. In particular, it traced the ways in which societies across Europe and in Japan negotiated â often with violent means â zones of violence within their societies that were seen as legitimate: such as the use of violence by the state and individual governments (then often called 'force') and certain uses of violence in wartime. Notions of 'civility' and 'civilised behaviour' played a central role in framing these discussions.

All contributions were based on a narrow understanding of violence as physical force used with the intent to injure others. They regarded concepts such as 'structural violence' that include socio-economic power relations not as analytical, but as historically contingent categories that emerged during these negotiations over statehood, civility and violence. Our discussions highlighted two central paradoxes in the history of violence, civility and statehood. First, they pointed to the key fact that the establishment of states' monopoly on the legitimate use of violence led to negotiations between governments and civil-society actors about when and where violence could be used legitimately and to constantly shifting boundaries between zones of violence within society. Second, the papers were thus able to show that violence not only destroyed social order, but also created it. The contributions to this workshop challenged the normative liberal paradigm of explaining statehood and regarded

violence as a destructive force in domestic and international politics and highlighted the ways in which governments have used violence in order to cope with violence, an idea highlighted by the sociologist Heinrich Popitz.

The first section discussed conceptual issues. In his introductory remarks, HOLGER NEHRING (Sheffield) developed a conceptual framework for the discussions at the conference. He highlighted the fact that the distinction, in English, between notions of (illegitimate) violence and (legitimate) use of force (usually wielded by governments) was itself the result of historical developments and should not be taken for granted. He argued for an approach that did not focus on the causes for violence. Instead, he made the case for process-oriented methodologies that combined analysing the ways in which violence developed and was used and how it was perceived. He then outlined two ways of proceeding with such a research agenda. First, he suggested unpacking the notions of political legitimacy and analyse not only how it was created from the top, but also analysing the interactions between states and civil-society actors in creating notions of legitimate and illegitimate uses of violence. Second, following from this, he suggested examining the emergence of zones of violence within society and highlighted the historical contingency. Apart from considering discussions within civil society, he suggested the creation of discipline in the army as an especially rewarding case study. Discipline was supposed to create ordered fighting that preserved certain notions of civility during wartime, although it frequently broke down during war

time, leading to rapes and other atrocities.

In a wide-ranging paper, JOHN D. WALTER (Essex) discussed the nature of early-modern statehood in a European context and thus developed a number of key reference points for further discussions. He showed this with reference to a number of key themes: the fiscal-military state, the confessional state, the centralising state, the colonising state, the disciplinary state and the information state. Walter emphasised that the novelty of the early-modern state lay in the emergence of what he called a 'networked state' that intimately connected civil-society actors to government and that undergirded all other dimensions of statehood. It was built upon notions of civility and legitimation and, in England more than on the continent, was embedded in 'deep structures' of statehood that went back to the early medieval period. Hisashi Yano (Keio University, Tokyo) added further material to such a discussion through his comparative account of the history of policing in Germany and Japan in the 1920s and 1930s. HISASHI YANO (Keio University) discussed one aspect of this history of statehood, civility and political legitimacy by analysing German and Japanese policing practices in the 1920s and 1930s in comparative perspective.

BERND WEISBROD (G ttingen) developed these themes further by highlighting how, in a process beginning in the early modern period and lasting beyond the Second World War, zones of violence came to be especially narrowly circumscribed in British domestic politics. In particular, he dealt with the emergence of the notion of a 'peaceable kingdom' and stressed that 'civility' had always been an interactive and historically contingent process. He highlighted that this went hand in hand with violence meted out in the colonies, especially in Northern Ireland, and also came with the designation of supposedly violent outsiders (such as 'the Irish' or 'the working class') within British society. Weisbrod highlighted perceptions of the British state as neutral arbiter in social conflicts as key for enabling this transition.

This theme was elaborated further in the conference's second panel that analysed violence, civility and statehood during and after the First World War. JON LAWRENCE (Cambridge) offered a close look at the interactions between the emergence of a humanitarian discourse in British society from the 1880s until after the First World War. Rather than regarding the importance of this shift, following Norbert Elias, as a shift in normative behaviour, Lawrence highlighted the function of this discourse as a 'culture of consolation' that helped contain

the perceived threat of social division and 'barbarism' in a peculiarly British way and found widespread acceptance. Most people, therefore, began to live their lives as if the myth were true, so that, ultimately, it became true.

MICHAEL GEYER (Chicago) highlighted the ways in which the First World War led to a fundamental reconfiguration of warfare and the role of states with regard to the waging of wars. He argued that we should not only consider a Great War, lasting from 1914 to 1918, but rather consider this war as part of a greater war, a 'long World War I' that lasted from 1911 to 1923. Violence on the seeming margins of Europe would thus become central for our understanding of the fundamental shift in the nature of the relationship between states and warfare in Europe. This 'greater war' re-ordered the geopolitical imagination of violence in Europe and also significantly changed the logics of violence by opening the spectre of war temporally, topically and geographically. Wars now included the intentional terrorising of civilian populations on the basis of rhetorics of national belonging and included societal mobilisation within war to such an extent that it could lead to the overthrow from within of state authority. The First World War thus created what Geyer called 'sovereignty panics' amongst governments. This pervasive sense of insecurity resulted in direct or indirect reprisals against groups that were deemed dangerous to the body politic that was now increasingly defined along national and ethnic lines. Europe had thus created an absolute absence of peace, in which the National Socialist expansion during the Second World War would have to be placed.

SHINICHI TAKAGAMI (Osaka Sangyo University) highlighted the problems that this configuration of zones of violence within British society created for the British Labour Party when it tried to come to terms with the Irish independence movement after the First World War. In her paper, NOBUKO OKUDA (Nagoya City University) considered the strikingly different histories of negotiations of legitimate and illegitimate violence in the British and Japanese women's movements from the early twentieth century to the 1920s. She was thus able to throw the conditions for the emergence of a specifically British discussion of a 'peaceable kingdom' into even sharper relief. HARUMI GOTO SHIBATA (Tokyo) discussed the ways in which the League of Nations tried to come to terms with the change of notions of statehood with regard to the transnational problem of refugees in the Chinese-Russian border region who had fled from the Russian civil war. She showed how the League of Nations sought to come to terms with the problems by creating the notion of 'traffic

in women and children', but how discussions remained infused with racial and political categories.

The third panel discussed the impact of the Second World War on notions of statehood, civility and violence. Focusing on the 'Europeanisation of evil' ROBERT GERWARTH (University College Dublin) highlighted the role of violence in creating a Europe of shared experiences from the First World War to the Second, thus analysing one particular way in which violence created a particular order across Europe. TAKAO MATSUMURA (Keio University, Tokyo) painstakingly reconstructed in horrific detail the ways in which the Japanese Army's Unit 731 used germ warfare in China during the Second World War and how the unit sought to hide its war crimes by claiming that it only carried out medical experiments. He thus combined an account of a particular form of violence in war time with a critical assessment of the commemoration of this violence in Japan, where the legitimate zones of violence from the Second World War have more or less remained intact beyond 1945. AIKO KURASAWA (Keio University, Tokyo) discussed her oral-history research and analysed the ways in which Korean forced labourers had experienced violence in the Second World War. SOON HI SEOK (Tomakomai Komazawa University) discussed the relationship of Korean forced labourers and the Ainu people in Hokkaido. With her socio-anthropological approach, she was able to highlight how the discrimination against Korean-Ainu marriages in Hokkaido that are still prevalent today shows the ways in which Japanese society has negotiated the transition from war to peace: notions of nationhood and national sacrifice continue to influence discussions about Ainu-Korean marriages. As Seok reported from her own experiences in trying to publish her research, knowledge of these problems was suppressed in the public spheres, as the existence of Korean forced labourers contradicted official memory practices that had written Japanese violence out of public discussions.

The fourth panel discussed memories of war and the impact they had on the ways in which the zones of violence were drawn and redrawn. In a wide-ranging paper, RANA MITTER (Oxford) highlighted the similarities between experiences of the Second World War in Asia and in Europe and argued for a more refined understanding of transnational factors in the emergence, collapse and re-emergence of zones of violence within European and Asian societies. He focused especially on the role of religion in mediating notions of civility and war. By contrast, GIOVANNI CONTINI BONACOSSO (Florence/Rome) stressed the local and regional specific-

ties on cultures of civility and violence for the Italian case. TOSHIO KUSAMITSU (Japanese Open University, Tokyo) added further detail to such a comparison by offering a detailed analysis of British war poets during and after World War I and their Japanese counterparts during and after World War II, asking for the reason of aesthetic differences and for the absence of British war poets of the status of Siegfried Sassoon during the Second World War. HIDEKO MITSUI's (St Andrews) anthropological paper analysed the simultaneous cacophony of voices and silences of contemporary Japanese memory culture. She argued that Japanese victimhood was not primarily defined in terms of war experiences in general, but focused primarily on Japanese victims of the nuclear bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A discourse of victimhood similar to that in West Germany that aided the emergence of novel configurations of statehood and civility by conceptualising even soldiers as victims of war could therefore not emerge in Japan.

The final panel discussed notions of statehood, civility and violence in colonial contexts. GEORG DEUTSCH (Oxford) highlighted the communication value of violence in interactions between colonial powers and native populations. In particular, focusing on the Herero War, the Maji Maji uprising and the Mau Mau insurgency, he emphasised the importance of symbolic and ritualistic acts of transgression.

YUKI TANAKA (Hiroshima City University/ Hiroshima Peace Institute) showed the paradoxes of civility and statehood by highlighting how aerial bombing in Iraq during the 1920s was interpreted by the British government as an especially humane and therefore legitimate form of warfare that emerged within the British discourse of peaceableness. Due to vagaries of international air travel, HEIKE SCHMIDT (Tallahassee) was unfortunately unable to attend the workshop and present her paper on 'The Crisis of Violence in the Twenty-First Century: A Comparative Perspective on Insurgencies'. YUMIKO HAMAI (Hokkaido) engaged with the debates about British reactions to the so-called Ugandan-Asian crisis in the late 1960s and early 1970s. By arguing that the British governments' attitude under both Harold Wilson and Edward Heath was driven primarily by short-term pragmatic consideration, she was able to show the limits of the humanitarian discourse in Britain when it came to dealing with refugee crises in its former colonies.

The panel discussion, to which Harumi Goto Shibata, Michael Geyer, Takao Matsumura and Bernd Weisbrod contributed and which Holger Nehring moderated,

highlighted a number of key themes of the conference, namely the need to unpack further 'the networked nature of the state' (John Walter), notions of political legitimacy and the historical contingency of the emergence of zones of violence. Harumi Goto Shibata stressed the need for Japanese historians to engage with the transnational transfer of ideas of governments in the fields of policing and eugenics. Participants also stressed the need for further comparative and transnational work that embeds Japan in the broader context not only of regional, but also global developments. Thus, the discussions at the workshop highlighted the historically contingent processes with which European and Japanese societies negotiated zones of violence and managed transitions from war to peace.

Conference overview:

Session I: Violence and statehood: conceptual perspectives

(Chair: ROBERT GERWARTH)

HOLGER NEHRING (Sheffield): Violence and Statehood – some conceptual remarks

JOHN D. WALTER (Essex): Violence and statehood in Europe – an early modernist's perspective

HISASHI YANO (Keio University, Tokyo): Policing and political legitimacy in Germany and Japan in comparative perspective

BERND WEISBROD (Göttingen): Violence and Civility – A British special path?

Session II: Violence, statehood during and after the First World War

(Chair: BERND WEISBROD)

JON LAWRENCE (Cambridge): War, humanitarianism and the disavowal of violence in Britain, 1899-1939

MICHAEL GEYER (Chicago): The greater war and the future of European violence, 1917-1923

SHINICHI TAKAGAMI (Osaka Sangyo University): The British Labour Party and the Irish War of Independence, 1919-1921

NOBUKO OKUDA (Nagoya City University): Women, War and Citizenship: a comparison of women's suffrage movements in Britain and Japan

HARUMI GOTO SHIBATA (Tokyo): Russian refugee women in China in the interwar period

Session III: Violence and World War II

(Chair: RANA MITTER)

ROBERT GERWARTH (University College Dublin): Europeanisation through Violence? War and the Making of Modern Europe

TAKAO MATSUMURA (Keio University, Tokyo): Germ and gas warfare by the Japanese army in the World War II

AIKO KURASAWA (Keio University, Tokyo): Indonesian Romusha for Thai-Burma Railroad Construction

SOON HI SEOK (Tomakomai Komazawa University): The mobilisation of Korean labor and Ainu people in Modern Hokkaido

Session IV: Experiences of violence, civility and statehood in Europe and Japan after 1945

(Chair: HOLGER NEHRING)

RANA MITTER (Oxford): Violence and the post-war: China, Japan and Europe in comparative perspective, 1945-1965

TOSHIO KUSAMITSU (Open University of Japan, Tokyo): War Poets in Britain and Japan: Experiences and Representations of State Violence in World Wars I & II

GIOVANNI CONTINI BONACOSSO (Florence/Rome): Memories of War in Italy

HIDEKO MITSUI (St Andrews): Memories of Colonialism in post-Second World War Japan

Session V: Violence, statehood and colonialism: Britain and Japan in Comparative Perspective

(Chair: MICHAEL GEYER)

JAN-GEORG DEUTSCH (Oxford): "Exterminate all the Brutes!": Race, Power, and Violence in Colonial Africa

YUKI TANAKA (Hiroshima City University/Hiroshima Peace University): British Air Policing in Colonial Countries between the two wars

YUMIKO HAMAI (Hokkaido): The British Government and the Ugandan Asian Crisis

HEIKE SCHMIDT (Tallahassee): The Crisis of Violence in the Twenty-First Century: A Comparative Perspective on Insurgencies

Panel discussion

HARUMI GOTO SHIBATA, MICHAEL GEYER,

RANA MITTER, TAKAO MATSUMURA, BERND WEIS-
BROD

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