AMERICAN HOLOCAUST

The Conquest of the New World

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early New England settlers of evangelical Puritan character "often saw evidence of anger and hostility in *other* people which they denied within themselves." And in no people did they see such things so clearly as in the indigenous people of the territory they were invading who became the unwilling victims of the Protestants' "unending . . . warfare with the unregenerate world in which they lived."[102]

This also is why what David Brion Davis once said about the belated emergence of the antislavery movement was equally true regarding the unlikelihood of any semblance of humanitarian concern for the Indians gaining serious support during this time: it could not and would not happen so long as Christians "continued to believe that natural man was totally corrupt, that suffering and subordination were necessary parts of life, and that the only true freedom lay in salvation from the world."[103] For a core principle of the saintly Puritan's belief system was that the "natural" condition of the hearts of all humans prior to their conversion to Christ—even the hearts of the holiest and most innocent of Christian infants—was, in the esteemed New England minister Benjamin Wadsworth's words, "a meer nest, root, fountain of Sin, and wickedness."[104] By defining the Indians as bestial *and* as hopelessly beyond conversion, then, the colonists were declaring flatly that these very same words aptly described the natives' *permanent* racial condition. And to tolerate known sin and wickedness in their midst would be to commit sin and wickedness themselves.

Moreover—and ominously—from the earliest days of settlement the British colonists repeatedly expressed a haunting fear that they would be "contaminated" by the presence of the Indians, a contamination that must be avoided lest it become the beginning of a terrifying downward slide toward their own bestial degeneration. Thus, unlike the Spanish before them, British men in the colonies from the Carolinas to New England rarely engaged in sexual relations with the Indians, even during those times when there were few if any English women available. Legislation was passed that "banished forever" such mixed race couples, referring to their offspring in animalistic terms as "abominable mixture and spurious issue," though even without formal prohibitions such intimate encounters were commonly "reckoned a horrid crime with us," in the words of one colonial Pennsylvanian.[105] It is little wonder, then, that Mercy Short described the creature that possessed her as both a demon and, in Slotkin's words, "a kind of Indian-Puritan, man-animal half-breed," for this was the ultimate and fated consequence of racial contamination.

Again, however, such theological, psychological, and legislative preoccupations did not proceed to the rationalization of genocide without a social foundation and impetus. And if a possessive and tightly constricted attitude toward sex, an abhorrence of racial intermixture, and a belief in humankind's innate depravity had for centuries been hallmarks of Christianity, and therefore of the West's definition of civilization, by the time

the British exploration and settlement of America had begun, the very essence of humanity also was coming to be associated in European thought with a similarly possessive, exclusive, and constricted attitude toward property. For it is precisely of this time that R.H. Tawney was writing when he observed the movement away from the earlier medieval belief that "private property is a necessary institution, at least in a fallen world . . . but it is to be tolerated as a concession to human frailty, not applauded as desirable in itself," to the notion that "the individual is absolute master of his own, and, within the limits set by positive law, may exploit it with a single eye to his pecuniary advantage, unrestrained by any obligation to postpone his own profit to the well-being of his neighbors, or to give account of his actions to a higher authority."[106]

The concept of private property as a positive good and even an insignia of civilization took hold among both Catholics and Protestants during the sixteenth century. Thus, for example, in Spain, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda argued that the absence of private property was one of the characteristics of people lacking "even vestiges of humanity," and in Germany at the same time Martin Luther was contending "that the possession of private property was an essential difference between men and beasts."[107] In England, meanwhile, Sir Thomas More was proclaiming that land justifiably could be taken from "any people [who] holdeth a piece of ground void and vacant to no good or profitable use," an idea that also was being independently advanced in other countries by Calvin, Melanchthon, and others. Typically, though, none was as churlish as Luther, who pointed out that the Catholic St. Francis had urged his followers to get rid of their property and give it to the poor: "I do not maintain that St. Francis was simply wicked," wrote Luther, "but his works show that he was a weak-minded and freakish man, or to say the truth, a fool."[108]

The idea that failure to put property to "good or profitable use" was grounds for seizing it became especially popular with Protestants, who thereby advocated confiscating the lands owned by Catholic monks. As Richard Schlatter explains:

> The monks were condemned, not for owning property, but because they did not use that property in an economically productive fashion. At best they used it to produce prayers. Luther and the other Reformation leaders insisted that it should be used, not to relieve men from the necessity of working, but as a tool for making more goods. The attitude of the Reformation was practically, "not prayers, but production." And production, not for consumption, but for more production.[109]

The idea of production for the sake of production, of course, was one of the central components of what Max Weber was to call the Protestant Ethic. But it also was essential to what C.B. Macpherson has termed the

ideology of "possessive individualism." And at the heart of that ideology was a political theory of appropriation that was given its fullest elaboration in the second of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*. In addition to the property of his own person, Locke argued, all men have a right to their own labor and to the fruits of that labor. When a person's private labor is put to the task of gathering provisions from the common realm, the provisions thus gathered become the private property of the one who labored to gather them, so long as there are more goods left in the common realm for others to gather with their labor. But beyond the right to the goods of the land, Locke argued, was the right to "the Earth it self." It is, he says, "plain" that the same logic holds with the land itself as with the products of the land: "As much Land as a Man Tills, Plants, Improves, Cultivates, and can use the Product of, so much is his Property. He by his Labour does, as it were, inclose it from the Common."[110]

Only through the ability to exercise such individual acquisitiveness, thought Locke, does a man become fully and truly human. However, notes Macpherson, concealed within this celebration of grasping and exclusive individualism was the equally essential notion that "full individuality for some was produced by consuming the individuality of others." Thus, "the greatness of seventeenth-century liberalism was its assertion of the free rational individual as the criterion of the good society; its tragedy was that this very assertion was necessarily a denial of individualism to half the nation."[111] Indeed, more than a denial of individualism, Locke's proposals for how to treat the landless poor of his own country—whom he considered a morally depraved lot—were draconian: they were to be placed into workhouses and forced to perform hard labor, as were all their children above the age of three. As Edmund S. Morgan observes, this proposal "stopped a little short of enslavement, though it may require a certain refinement of mind to discern the difference."[112]

Locke's work, of course, post-dates the era of early British colonization in North America, but the kernels of at least these aspects of his thought were present and articulated prior to the founding of the English colonies in the work of Luther, Calvin, More, Melanchthon, and other British and Continental thinkers.[113] An obvious conclusion derivable from such an ideology was that those without a Western sense of private property were, by definition, not putting their land to "good or profitable use," as More phrased it, and that therefore they deserved to be dispossessed of it. Thus, in More's *Utopia*, first published in Latin in 1516 and in English in 1551, he envisions the founding of a colony "wherever the natives have much unoccupied and uncultivated land"; should the natives object to this taking of their property or should they "refuse to live according to their [the settlers'] laws," the settlers are justified in driving the natives "from the territory which they carve out for themselves. If they resist, they wage war against them."[114] In practice this became known as the principle of *vacuum domicilium*, and the British colonists in New England appealed to it enthusiastically as they seized the shared common lands of the Indians.[115]

One of the first formal expressions of this justification for expropriation by a British colonist was published in London in 1622 as part of a work entitled *Mourt's Relation, or a Journal of the Plantation of Plymouth*. The author of this piece describes "the lawfulness of removing out of England into parts of America" as deriving, first, from the singular fact that "our land is full . . . [and] their land is empty." He then continues:

> This then is a sufficient reason to prove our going thither to live lawful: their land is spacious and void, and they are few and do but run over the grass, as do also the foxes and wild beasts. They are not industrious, neither have [they] art, science, skill or faculty to use either the land or the commodities of it; but all spoils, rots, and is marred for want of manuring, gathering, ordering, etc. As the ancient patriarchs therefore removed from straiter places into more roomy [ones], where the land lay idle and wasted and none used it, though there dwelt inhabitants by them . . . so is it lawful now to take a land which none useth and make use of it.[116]

The most well known and more sophisticated statement on the matter, however, came from the pen of the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop. While still in England, on the eve of joining what became known as the Great Migration to Massachusetts in the 1630s, Winthrop compiled a manuscript "justifieinge the undertakeres of the intended Plantation in New England," and answering specific questions that might be raised against the enterprise. The first justification, as with Columbus nearly a century and a half earlier, was spiritual: "to carry the Gospell into those parts of the world, to helpe on the comminge of the fullnesse of the Gentiles, and to raise a Bulworke against the kingdome of Ante-Christ," an understandable reason for a people who believed the world was likely to come to an end during their lifetime.[117] Very quickly, however, Winthrop got to the possible charge that "we have noe warrant to enter upon that Land which hath beene soe longe possessed by others." He answered:

> That which lies common, and hath never beene replenished or subdued is free to any that possesse and improve it: For God hath given to the sonnes of men a double right to the earth; theire is a naturall right, and a Civill Right. The first right was naturall when men held the earth in common every man sowing and feeding where he pleased: then as men and theire Cattell encreased they appropriated certaine parcells of Grownde by inclosing and peculiar manuerance, and this in time gatte them a Civill right. . . . As for the Natives in New England, they inclose noe Land, neither have any setled habytation, nor any tame Cattell to improve the Land by, and soe have noe

> other but a Naturall Right to those Countries, soe as if we leave them sufficient for their use, we may lawfully take the rest, there being more than enough for them and us.[118]

In point of fact, the Indians had thoroughly "improved" the land—that is, cultivated it—for centuries. They also possessed carefully structured and elaborated concepts of land use and of the limits of political dominion, and they were, as Roger Williams observed in 1643, "very exact and punctuall in the bounds of their Land, belonging to this or that Prince or People."[119] This was, however, not private "ownership" as the English defined the term, and it is true that probably no native people anywhere in the Western Hemisphere would have countenanced a land use system that, to return to Tawney's language, allowed a private individual to "exploit [the land] with a single eye to his pecuniary advantage, unrestrained by any obligation to postpone his own profit to the well-being of his neighbors." And thus, in the view of the English, were the Indian nations "savage."

For unlike the majority of the Spanish before them—who, in Las Casas's words, "kill[ed] and destroy[ed] such an infinite number of souls" only "to acquire gold, and to swell themselves with riches in a very brief time and thus rise to a high estate disproportionate to their merits"—all that the English wanted was the land. To that end, the Indians were merely an impediment. Unlike the situation in New Spain, the natives living in what were to become the English colonies had, in effect, no "use value." With the exception of the earliest British explorers in the sixteenth century, England's adventurers and colonists in the New World had few illusions of finding gold or of capturing Indians for large-scale enslavement. Nor did they have an impoverished European homeland, like Spain, that was desperate for precious goods that might be found or stolen or wrenched from American soil (with forced native labor) in order to sustain its imperial expansion. They did, however, have a homeland that seemed to be bursting at the seams with Englishmen, and they felt they needed what in another language in another time became known as *Lebensraum*. And so, during the first century of successful British settlement in North America approximately twice as many English men and women moved to the New World as had relocated from Spain to New Spain during the previous hundred years. And unlike the vast majority of the Spanish, the British came with families, and they came to stay.[120]

To that flood of British colonists the Indians were, at best, a superfluous population—at least once they had taught the English how to survive. In Virginia, true plantation agriculture did not begin until after most of the Indians had been exterminated, whereupon African slaves were imported to carry out the heavy work, while in New England the colonists would do most of the agricultural tasks themselves, with the help of British

indentured servants, but they required open land to settle and to cultivate. A simple comparison between the inducements that were given the early Spanish and the early British New World settlers reveals the fundamental difference between the two invasions: the Spanish, with the *repartimiento*, were awarded not land but large numbers of native people to enslave and do with what they wished; the English, with the "headright," were provided not with native people but with fifty acres of land for themselves and fifty acres more for each additional settler whose transatlantic transportation costs they paid.

These differences in what material things they sought had deep effects as well on how the Spanish and the English would interpret their respective American environments and the native peoples they encountered there. Thus, however much they slaughtered the natives who fell within their orbit, the Spanish endlessly debated the ethical aspects of what it was that they were doing, forcing upon themselves elaborate, if often contorted and contradictory, rationalizations for the genocide they were committing. As we saw earlier, for example, Franciscans and Dominicans in Latin America argued strenuously over what God's purpose was in sending plagues to kill the Indians, some of them contending that he was punishing the natives for their sins, while others claimed he was chastening the Spanish for their cruelties by depriving them of their slaves. Additionally, throughout the first century of conquest Spanish scholars were embroiled in seemingly endless debates over the ethical and legal propriety of seizing and appropriating Indian lands, disputes that continued to haunt independence struggles in Spanish America well into the nineteenth century.[121] No such disputation took place among the Anglo-American colonists or ministers, however, because they had little doubt as to why God was killing off the Indians or to whom the land rightfully belonged. It is, in short, no accident that the British did not produce their own Las Casas.

As early as the first explorations at Roanoke, Thomas Hariot had observed that whenever the English visited an Indian village, "within a few days after our departure . . . the people began to die very fast, and many in a short space: in some towns about twenty, in some forty, in some sixty, and in one six score, which in truth was very many in respect of their numbers." As usual, the British were unaffected by these mysterious plagues. In initial explanation, Hariot could only report that "some astrologers, knowing of the Eclipse of the Sun, which we saw the same year before on our voyage thitherward," thought that might have some bearing on the matter. But such events as solar eclipses and comets (which Hariot also mentions as possibly having some relevance) were, like the epidemics themselves, the work of God. No other interpretation was possible. And that was why, before long, Hariot also was reporting that there seemed to be a divinely drawn pattern to the diseases: miraculously, he said, they affected only those Indian communities "where we had any subtle device

practiced against us."[122] In other words, the Lord was selectively punishing only those Indians who plotted against the English.

Needless to say, the reverse of that logic was equally satisfying—that is, that only those Indians who went *un*punished were *not* evil. And if virtually all were punished? The answer was obvious. As William Bradford was to conclude some years later when epidemics almost totally destroyed the Indian population of Plymouth Colony, without affecting the English: "It pleased God to visit these Indians with a great sickness and such a mortality that of a thousand, above nine and a half hundred of them died, and many of them did rot above the ground for want of burial." All followers of the Lord could only give thanks to "the marvelous goodness and providence of God," Bradford concluded. It was a refrain that soon would be heard throughout the land. After all, prior to the Europeans' arrival, the New World had been but "a hideous and desolate wilderness," Bradford said elsewhere, a land "full of wild beasts and wild men."[123] In killing the Indians in massive numbers, then, the English were only doing their sacred duty, working hand in hand with the God who was protecting them.

For nothing else, only divine intervention, could account for the "prodigious Pestilence" that repeatedly swept the land of nineteen out of every twenty Indian inhabitants, wrote Cotton Mather, "so that the Woods were almost cleared of these pernicious Creatures, to make room for a better Growth." Often this teamwork of God and man seemed to be perfection itself, as in King Philip's War. Mather recalled that in one battle of that war the English attacked the native people with such ferocity that "their city was laid in ashes. Above twenty of their chief captains were killed; a proportionable desolation cut off the interior salvages; mortal sickness, and horrid famine pursu'd the remainders of 'em, so we can hardly tell where any of 'em are left alive upon the face of the earth."[124]

Thus the militant agencies of God and his chosen people became as one. Mather believed, with many others, that at some time in the distant past the "miserable salvages" known as Indians had been "decoyed" by the Devil to live in isolation in America "in hopes that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ would never come here to destroy or disturb his absolute empire over them."[125] But God had located the evil brutes and sent his holiest Christian warriors over from England where—with the help of some divinely sprinkled plagues—they joyously had "Irradiated an Indian wilderness."[126] It truly was, as another New England saint entitled his own history of the holy settlement, a "wonder-working providence."

IV

Again and again the explanatory circle closed upon itself. Although they carried with them the same thousand years and more of repressed, intolerant, and violent history that earlier had guided the conquistadors, in their explorations and settlements the English both left behind and confronted before them very different material worlds than had the Spanish. For those who were their victims it didn't matter very much. In addition to being un-Christian, the Indians were uncivilized and perhaps not even fully human. The English had been told that by the Spanish, but there were many other proofs of it; one was the simple fact (untrue, but that was immaterial) that the natives "roamed" the woods like wild beasts, with no understanding of private property holdings or the need to make "improvements" on the land. In their generosity the Christian English would bring to these benighted creatures the word of Christ and guidance out of the dark forest of their barbarism. For these great gifts the English only demanded in return—it was, after all, their God-given right—whatever land they felt they needed, to bound and fence at will, and quick capitulation to their religious ways.

In fact, no serious effort ever was made by the British colonists or their ministers to convert the Indians to the Christian faith. Nor were the Indians especially receptive to the token gestures that were proffered: they were quite content with their peoples' ancient ways.[127] In addition, it was not long before the English had outworn their welcome with demands for more and more of the natives' ancestral lands. Failure of the Indians to capitulate in either the sacred or the secular realms, however, was to the English all the evidence they needed—indeed, all that they were seeking—to prove that in their dangerous and possibly contaminating bestiality the natives were an incorrigible and inferior race. But God was making a place for his Christian children in this wilderness by slaying the Indians with plagues of such destructive power that only in the Bible could precedents for them be found. His divine message was too plain for misinterpretation. And the fact that it fit so closely with the settlers' material desires only made it all the more compelling. There was little hope for these devil's helpers of the forest. God's desire, proved by his unleashing wave upon wave of horrendous pestilence—and pestilence that killed selectively only Indians—was a command to the saints to join his holy war.

Writing of New England's Puritans (though the observation holds true as well for most other Anglo-American settlers), Sacvan Bercovitch makes clear an essential point:

> The Puritans, despite their missionary pretenses, regarded the country as *theirs* and its natives as an obstacle to *their* destiny as Americans. They could remove that obstacle either by conversion (followed by "confinement"), or else by extermination; and since the former course proved insecure, they had recourse to the latter. The Spanish, for all their rhetoric of conquest, regarded the country as the Indians' and native recruitment as essential to their design of colonization.[128]

Given that difference, Bercovitch continues, the Iberian "colonists saw themselves as Spaniards in an inferior culture. By that prerogative, they

converted, coerced, educated, enslaved, reorganized communities, and established an intricate caste system, bound by a distinctly Spanish mixture of feudal and Renaissance customs." The Anglo-American colonists, in contrast, simply obliterated the natives they encountered, for they considered themselves, almost from the start, as "new men," in Crèvecoeur's famous phrase, in a new land, and not as expatriates in a foreign place. Bercovitch illustrates what he calls the subsequent New World Spaniards' "profound identity crisis" as *Americanos* by citing Simón Bolívar's Jamaica Letter of 1815, following the outbreak of revolution against Spain: we were "not prepared to secede from the mother country," Bolívar wrote, "we were left orphans . . . uncertain of our destiny. . . . [W]e scarcely retain a vestige of what once was; we are, moreover, neither Indian nor European, but an intermediate species between the legitimate owners of this country and the Spanish usurpers."[129]

The point is further sharpened if we compare Bolívar's lament—after more than three centuries of Spanish rule in Latin America—with the boastful and self-confident words of Thomas Jefferson's first inaugural address, delivered more than a dozen years before Bolívar's letter and less than two centuries since the founding of the first permanent English colonies:

> A rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land, traversing all the seas with the rich productions of their industry, engaged in commerce with nations who feel power and forget right, advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of the mortal eye—when I contemplate these transcendent objects, and see the honor, the happiness, and the hopes of this beloved country committed to the issue, and the auspices of this day, I shrink from the contemplation, and humble myself before the magnitude of the undertaking.[130]

It was in pursuit of these and other grand visions that Jefferson later would write of the remaining Indians in America that the government was obliged "now to pursue them to extermination, or drive them to new seats beyond our reach." For the native peoples of Jefferson's "rising nation," of his "beloved country"—far from being Bolívar's "legitimate owners"—were in truth, most Americans believed, little more than dangerous wolves. Andrew Jackson said this plainly in urging American troops to root out from their "dens" and kill Indian women and their "whelps," adding in his second annual message to Congress that while some people tended to grow "melancholy" over the Indians' being driven by white Americans to their "tomb," an understanding of "true philanthropy reconciles the mind to these vicissitudes as it does to the extinction of one generation to make room for another."[131]

Before either Jefferson or Jackson, George Washington, the father of the country, had said much the same thing: the Indians were wolves and beasts who deserved nothing from the whites but "total ruin."[132] And Washington himself was only repeating what by then was a very traditional observation. Less than a decade after the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, for example, it was made illegal to "shoot off a gun on any unnecessary occasion, or at any game except an Indian or a wolf." As Barry Lopez has noted, this was far from a single-incident comparison. So alike did Indians and wolves appear to even the earliest land-hungry New England colonist that the colonist "fell to dealing with them in similar ways":

> He set out poisoned meat for the wolf and gave the Indian blankets infected with smallpox. He raided the wolf's den to dig out and destroy the pups, and stole the Indian's children . . . . When he was accused of butchery for killing wolves and Indians, he spun tales of Mohawk cruelty and of wolves who ate fawns while they were still alive. . . . Indians and wolves who later came into areas where there were no more of either were called renegades. Wolves that lay around among the buffalo herds were called loafer wolves and Indians that hung around the forts were called loafer Indians.[133]

As is so often the case, it was New England's religious elite who made the point more graphically than anyone. Referring to some Indians who had given offense to the colonists, the Reverend Cotton Mather wrote: "Once you have but got the Track of those Ravenous howling Wolves, then pursue them vigourously; *Turn not back till they are consumed.* . . . Beat them small as the *Dust before the Wind.*" Lest this be regarded as mere rhetoric, empty of literal intent, consider that another of New England's most esteemed religious leaders, the Reverend Solomon Stoddard, as late as 1703 formally proposed to the Massachusetts Governor that the colonists be given the financial wherewithal to purchase and train large packs of dogs "to hunt Indians as they do bears." There were relatively few Indians remaining alive in New England by this time, but those few were too many for the likes of Mather and Stoddard. "The dogs would be an extreme terror to the Indians," Stoddard wrote, adding that such "dogs would do a great deal of execution upon the enemy and catch many an Indian that would be too light of foot for us." Then, turning from his equating of native men and women and children with bears deserving to be hunted down and destroyed, Stoddard became more conventional in his imagery: "if the Indians were as other people," he acknowledged, ". . . it might be looked upon as inhumane to pursue them in such a manner"; but, in fact, the Indians were wolves, he said, "and are to be dealt withal as wolves."[134] For two hundred years to come Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, and other leaders, representing the wishes of virtually the entire white nation, followed these ministers' genocidal instructions with great care. It was their Christian duty as well as their destiny.

. . .

In sum, when in 1492 the seal was broken on the membrane that for tens of thousands of years had kept the residents of North and South America isolated from the inhabitants of the earth's other inhabited continents, the European adventurers and colonists who rushed through the breach were representatives of a religious culture that was as theologically arrogant and violence-justifying as any the world had ever seen. Nourished by a moral history that despised the self and that regarded the body and things sensual as evil, repulsive, and bestial, it was a culture whose holiest exemplars not only sought out pain and degradation as the foundation of their faith, but who simultaneously both feared and pursued what they regarded as the dark terrors of the wilderness—the wilderness in the world outside as well as the wilderness of the soul within. It was a faith that considered all humanity in its natural state to be "sick, suffering, and helpless" because its earliest mythical progenitors—who for a time had been the unclothed inhabitants of an innocent Earthly Paradise—had succumbed to a sensual temptation that was prohibited by a jealous and angry god, thereby committing an "original sin" that thenceforth polluted the very essence of every infant who had the poor luck to be born. Ghastly and disgusting as the things of this world—including their own persons—were to these people, they were certain of at least one thing: that their beliefs were absolute truth, and that those who persisted in believing otherwise could not be tolerated. For to tolerate evil was to encourage evil, and no sin was greater than that. Moreover, if the flame of intolerance that these Christian saints lit to purge humanity of those who persisted down a path of error became a sacred conflagration in the form of a crusade or holy war—that was only so much the better. Such holocausts themselves were part of God's divine plan, after all, and perhaps even were harbingers of his Son's imminent Second Coming.

It is impossible to know today how many of the very worldly men who first crossed the Atlantic divide were piously ardent advocates of this world-view, and how many merely unthinkingly accepted it as the religious frame within which they pursued their avaricious quests for land and wealth and power. Some were seeking souls. Most were craving treasure, or land on which to settle. But whatever their individual levels of theological consciousness, they encountered in this New World astonishing numbers of beings who at first seemed to be the guardians of a latter-day Eden, but who soon became for them the very picture of Satanic corruption.

And through it all, as with their treatment of Europe's Jews for the preceding half-millennium—and as with their response to wildness and wilderness since the earliest dawning of their faith—the Christian Europeans continued to display a seemingly antithetical set of tendencies: revulsion from the terror of pagan or heretical pollution and, simultaneously, eagerness to make all the world's repulsive heretics and pagans into followers of Christ. In its most benign racial manifestation, this was the same

inner prompting that drove missionaries to the ends of the earth to Christianize people of color, but to insist that their new converts worship in segregated churches. Beginning in the late eighteenth century in America, this conflict of racial abhorrence and mission—and along with it a redefined concept of holy war—became secularized in the form of an internally contradictory political ideology. In the same way that the Protestant Ethic was transformed into the Spirit of Capitalism, while the Christian right to private property became justifiable in wholly secular terms, America as Redeemer Nation became Imperial America, fulfilling its irresistible and manifest destiny.

During the country's early national period this took the form of declarations that America should withdraw from world affairs into moral isolation (to preserve the chaste new nation from the depravities of the Old World and the miserable lands beyond) that was uttered in the same breath as the call to export the "Rising Glory of America," to bring democracy and American-style civilization to less fortunate corners of the earth.[135] Less than a century later, during the peak era of American imperialism, the same contradictory mission presented itself again: while those Americans who most opposed expansion into the Philippines shared the imperialists' belief in the nation's predestined right to rule the world, they resisted efforts to annex a nation of "inferior" dark-skinned people largely because of fears they had of racial contamination. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., said it most straightforwardly when he referred to America's virulent treatment of the Indians as the lesson to recall in all such cases, because, harsh though he admitted such treatment was, it had "saved the Anglo-Saxon stock from being a nation of half-breeds."[136] In these few words were both a terrible echo of past warrants for genocidal race war and a chilling anticipation of eugenic justifications for genocide yet to come, for to this famous scion of America's proudest family, the would-be extermination of an entire race of people was preferable to the "pollution" of racial intermixture.

It was long before this time, however, that the notion of the deserved and fated extermination of America's native peoples had become a commonplace and secularized ideology. In 1784 a British visitor to America observed that "white Americans have the most rancorous antipathy to the whole race of Indians; nothing is more common than to hear them talk of extirpating them totally from the face of the earth, men, women, and children."[137] And this visitor was not speaking only of the opinion of those whites who lived on the frontier. Wrote the distinguished early nineteenth-century scientist, Samuel G. Morton: "The benevolent mind may regret the inaptitude of the Indian for civilization," but the fact of the matter was that the "structure of [the Indian's] mind appears to be different from that of the white man, nor can the two harmonize in the social relations except on the most limited scale."[138] "Thenceforth," added Francis Park-

man, the most honored American historian of his time, the natives—whom he described as "man, wolf, and devil all in one"—"were destined to melt and vanish before the advancing waves of Anglo-American power, which now rolled westward unchecked and unopposed." The Indian, he wrote, was in fact responsible for his own destruction, for he "will not learn the arts of civilization, and he and his forest must perish together."[139]

But by this time it was not just the native peoples of America who were being identified as the inevitable and proper victims of genocidal providence and progress. In Australia, whose aboriginal population had been in steep decline (from mass murder and disease) ever since the arrival of the white man, it commonly was being said in scientific and scholarly publications, that

> to the Aryan . . . apparently belong the destinies of the future. The races whose institutions and inventions are despotism, fetishism, and cannibalism—the races who rest content in . . . placid sensuality and unprogressive decrepitude, can hardly hope to contend permanently in the great struggle for existence with the noblest division of the human species. . . . The survival of the fittest means that might—wisely used—is right. And thus we invoke and remorselessly fulfil the inexorable law of natural selection when exterminating the inferior Australian.[140]

Meanwhile, by the 1860s, with only a remnant of America's indigenous people still alive, in Hawai'i the Reverend Rufus Anderson surveyed the carnage that by then had reduced those islands' native population by 90 percent or more, and he declined to see it as a tragedy; the expected total die-off of the Hawaiian people was only natural, this missionary said, somewhat equivalent to "the amputation of diseased members of the body."[141] Two decades later, in New Zealand, whose native Maori people also had suffered a huge population collapse from introduced disease and warfare with invading British armies, one A.K. Newman spoke for many whites in that country when he observed that "taking all things into consideration, the disappearance of the race is scarcely subject for much regret. They are dying out in a quick, easy way, and are being supplanted by a superior race."[142]

Returning to America, the famed Harvard physician and social commentator Oliver Wendell Holmes observed in 1855 that Indians were nothing more than a "half-filled outline of humanity" whose "extermination" was the necessary "solution of the problem of his relation to the white race." Describing native peoples as "a sketch in red crayons of a rudimental manhood," he added that it was only natural for the white man to "hate" the Indian and to "hunt him down like the wild beasts of the forest, and so the red-crayon sketch is rubbed out, and the canvas is ready for a picture of manhood a little more like God's own image."[143]

Two decades later, on the occasion of the nation's 1876 centennial celebration, the country's leading literary intellectual took time out in an essay expressing his "thrill of patriotic pride" flatly to advocate "the extermination of the red savages of the plains." Wrote William Dean Howells to the influential readers of the *Atlantic Monthly:*

> The red man, as he appears in effigy and in photograph in this collection [at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition], is a hideous demon, whose malign traits can hardly inspire any emotion softer than abhorrence. In blaming our Indian agents for malfeasance in office, perhaps we do not sufficiently account for the demoralizing influence of merely beholding those false and pitiless savage faces; moldy flour and corrupt beef must seem altogether too good for them.[144]

Not to be outdone by the most eminent historians, scientists, and cultural critics of the previous generation, several decades later still, America's leading psychologist and educator, G. Stanley Hall, imperiously surveyed the human wreckage that Western exploration and colonization had created across the globe, and wrote:

> Never, perhaps, were lower races being extirpated as weeds in the human garden, both by conscious and organic processes, so rapidly as to-day. In many minds this is inevitable and not without justification. Pity and sympathy, says Nietzsche, are now a disease, and we are summoned to rise above morals and clear the world's stage for the survival of those who are fittest because strongest. . . . The world will soon be overcrowded, and we must begin to take selective agencies into our own hands. Primitive races are either hopelessly decadent and moribund, or at best have demonstrated their inability to domesticate or civilize themselves.[145]

And not to be outdone by the exalted likes of Morton, Parkman, Holmes, Howells, Adams, or Hall, the man who became America's first truly twentieth century President, Theodore Roosevelt, added his opinion that the extermination of the American Indians and the expropriation of their lands "was as ultimately beneficial as it was inevitable. Such conquests," he continued, "are sure to come when a masterful people, still in its raw barbarian prime, finds itself face to face with the weaker and wholly alien race which holds a coveted prize in its feeble grasp." It is perhaps not surprising, then, that this beloved American hero and Nobel Peace Prize recipient (who once happily remarked that "I don't go so far as to think that the only good Indians are dead Indians, but I believe nine out of ten are, and I shouldn't like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth") also believed that "degenerates" as well as "criminals . . . and feeble-minded persons [should] be forbidden to leave offspring behind them." The better classes of white Americans were being overwhelmed, he feared, by "the

unrestricted breeding" of inferior racial stocks, the "utterly shiftless," and the "worthless."[146]

These were sentiments, applied to others, that the world would hear much of during the 1930s and 1940s. (Indeed, one well-known scholar of the history of race and racism, Pierre L. van den Berghe, places Roosevelt within an unholy triumvirate of the modern world's leading racist statesmen; the other two, according to van den Berghe, are Adolf Hitler and Hendrik Verwoerd, South Africa's original architect of apartheid.)[147] For the "extirpation" of the "lower races" that Hall and Roosevelt were celebrating drew its justification from the same updated version of the Great Chain of Being that eventually inspired Nazi pseudoscience. Nothing could be more evident than the fundamental agreement of both these men (and countless others who preceded them) with the central moral principle underlying that pseudoscience, as expressed by the man who has been called Germany's "major prophet of political biology," Ernst Haeckel, when he wrote that the "lower races"—Sepúlveda's *"homunculi"* with few "vestiges of humanity"; Mather's "ravenous howling wolves"; Holmes's "half-filled outline of humanity"; Howells's "hideous demons"; Hall's "weeds in the human garden"; Roosevelt's "weaker and wholly alien races"—were so fundamentally different from the "civilized Europeans [that] we must, therefore, assign a totally different value to their lives."[148] Nor could anything be clearer, as Robert Jay Lifton has pointed out in his exhaustive study of the psychology of genocide, than that such thinking was nothing less than the "harsh, apocalyptic, deadly rationality" that drove forward the perverse holy war of the Nazi extermination campaign.[149]

The first Europeans to visit the continents of North and South America and the islands of the Caribbean, like the Nazis in Europe after them, produced many volumes of grandiloquently racist apologia for the genocidal holocaust they carried out. Not only were the "lower races" they encountered in the New World dark and sinful, carnal and exotic, proud, inhuman, un-Christian inhabitants of the nether territories of humanity—contact with whom, by civilized people, threatened morally fatal contamination—but God, as always, was on the Christians' side. And God's desire, which became the Christians' marching orders, was that such dangerous beasts and brutes must be annihilated.

Elie Wiesel is right: the road to Auschwitz *was* being paved in the earliest days of Christendom. But another conclusion now is equally evident: on the way to Auschwitz the road's pathway led straight through the heart of the Indies and of North and South America.