One Hundred Years of Violence

José Sols

To my daughter Inés,
born in 2002,
with the hope that she may live
in a more peaceful, free and just world.

José Sols Lucia is a theologian and historian, Professor of Ethics and Christian Thought in the *Institut Químic de Sarrià* (IQS), the University of Ramon Llull, Barcelona. He is a member of the Study Centre "*Cristianisme i Justícia*", and collaborates on the Spanish section of the Club of Rome (tt30). He has also taught in prisons in Paris and in Barcelona. *josesols@iqs.es*

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Leaving behind a violent century

I was born in the early hours of the morning in San José in1962, when the hard Sorian winter was giving way to the mild Dourian spring. My birth, like any other I suppose, caused great excitement in the family. I grew up with a Valencian family who spoke Castilian Spanish. They were Catholic, Western, white, very cultured, and of a growing economic status. I had still not reached my first birthday when we moved to Barcelona. Here, a new cultural universe opened up before us: a great city with a dual culture, a political hotpot in favour of both democracy and Catalonian nationalism. I opted for none of this, and yet, this is what has marked my life up to now, and will surely continue to do so until death comes to greet me.

In other corners of the world in that same year, thousands of babies were born, babies that entered into humanity through other doors: other nationalities, other cultures, other races, other religions and of different economic backgrounds. Those who survived are my age today, and their lives have been shaped by realities that they too did not choose. Without a doubt, we are not merely cultural puppets in the theatre of life, controlled by an invisible hand; but neither are we able to choose the cultural route taken by the unpredictable flight of human liberty.

These thousands of humans who were born at the same time as myself, millions if we are to widen the segment of time, all belong to different, and sometimes opposing groups. Some of us feel distrustful of these other groups. I am sure that if I were to visit an Islamic country on my own, I would not feel very safe walking down certain streets with the look of a lost Westerner about me. In the same way, many foreign Muslims walk through the streets of my city today, a city that belongs to them too, with a feeling of paranoia, which is perhaps justified. What can we say about the Palestinians and Israelites, or the Chechens and the Russians, or the Afghans and any other community? They still despise and kill each other.

We were born into a violent world. We have created a violent world. We leave a violent world behind us like a legacy for those that follow.

Why? This question has haunted me for years. The answers to it, though they start off simply enough, do not really satisfy me and have, bit by bit, become more complex and even obscure. Today I, like many others, would place myself in the domain of ignorance. I don't know, I don't understand, I don't want to understand why the world is so violent. As John Keane says, *"any attempt at theorising [on the subject of violence] may seem, at first sight, a means towards a self-complacent rhetoric"*. [i] I don't want to understand, because it seems to me that this would be showing a lack of respect towards the victims of violence, this claim of being able to "explain" it, as if it were a culinary recipe. However, I feel compelled to reflect upon it, and to investigate where it comes from, in the hope, or illusion maybe, that, one day, we can all live in peace with each other and with ourselves. And all means all. I am not excluding anyone from this.

The twentieth century has been the most violent century in the history of humanity. Never before did we use such devastating bombs as those that levelled Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Never before have we had bombs as cruel as

those 110 million impersonal mines which are still planted in 70 countries world-wide, some of them camouflaged like stones or even multicoloured like an innocent butterfly. These mines kill 27 people a day and mutilate another 40 people a day for life, and can explode decades after a war has finished, destroying the life of an innocent child who might have been playing football with his friends near the town. Never before has humanity seen such a well-organised and industrial approach to death, such as was carried out in the Nazi concentration camps. Never before have collective massacres reached the scale that we have seen in the last century in Cambodia, the Soviet Union and Rwanda.

The twentieth century has not only seen a quantitive increase in violence, something which would seem logical considering the huge demographical growth the world has witnessed (the world population has quadrupled over the last one hundred years), and the improved technology used in weapon-making, but there have also been developments in the sophistication and types of violence used. From the psychological torture carried out in Latin American dictatorships, using methods taught by Israelis, capable of changing the personality of the subject, (for example, the case of the Spanish Jesuit, Luis Eduardo Pellecer in Guatemala, 1981), to the "scientific" experimentation carried out by Nazi doctors on prisoners in the German concentration camps. Not only that, but violence has succeeded in invading all aspects of society, even entering into people's homes, whether it be in the form of men attacking women, or through televised entertainment which is deemed surprisingly appropriate for all the viewing public. What kind of future does this offer to a society which allows and even encourages its young people to view violence as entertainment?

We could naively believe that the world is divided into two parts: with one part of humanity living in peace, and the other living subject to violence and chaos. It's a long time ago now that this idea stopped being true. Violence lies in wait at the door of every citizen that belongs to a supposedly peaceful country. This is how Olof Palme died in 1986, (Swedish Prime Minister), and Ernest Lluch (Catalonian economist, and Spanish ex-Minister, assassinated by ETA in 2001), and the group of Deputies from the Swiss canton of Zug (27th September, 2001). The weapons industry, the drugs trade, and the constant movement of people from country to country mean that violence does not remain confined to one geographical locality, but instead is distributed – however unequally - around the whole planet.

Do we have to review the thousands of examples of violence that have occurred over the last century? Must we remember the expulsion and widespread murder of the Turks who lived in the Balkans, when the Ottoman Empire was breaking up (1912-1913), as if in revenge for the centuries of repression lead by the Turks of the Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian and Romanian communities; or the genocide of Armenian Christians in Anatolia at the hands of the Turks, to which must be added the 250,000 Armenians murdered in the final years of the nineteenth century; or the large-scale murder of the Serbians in 1917, perpetrated by the Bulgarians; the repressive and commandeering policies of Stalin that brought about the execution of millions of citizens of the Soviet republics (14 million in the Ukraine alone); the extermination of the Chinese at the hands of the Japanese army in 1937 using chemical and biological weapons, like Anthrax and Typhus, or by simply killing in cold blood (in one day alone, December 13th, and in one single city of 650,000 inhabitants, Nanjing, between 260,000 and 350,000 Chinese civilians were murdered, and in total between 10 and 35 million murders were committed during those genocidal months);[ii] the widespread executions which took place in the Nazi concentration camps coupled with a slow process of degradation and humiliation; the bombardment of cities during World War II, causing

huge human and cultural losses; the Cambodian massacre led by Pol Pot (2 million dead); the military repressions, supported by North America, which took place in Latin America (200,000 dead in Guatemala, 75,000 in El Salvador, and Operation Condor which led to thousands of missing or murdered people in Argentina and Chile, and in which people like Henry Kissinger were directly implicated, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize); the Algerian War; the Vietnam War; the extermination of Kurds in Turkey and Iraq; the murder of a third of the population of East Timor following the Indonesian invasion of 1975, with the full consent of Great Britain, the USA and Australia; the post-colonial killing among the Tsutsis and Hutus in the Great Lakes Region in 1994 that was settled with around a million deaths; the "ethnic cleansing" by the Serbs in Bosnia during the nineties; nationalist terrorists, religious fundamentalists (more than 100,000 civilians have been murdered in Algeria alone); or must we recall the armies of drug cartels, the mafia, and the endless "uncivil" wars? I suppose not. We all know that *"this century has seen a scale of violence, whether planned or not, that has surpassed all that has gone before"*.[iii]

2. A century that lies ahead of us promising little hope of peace

The Islamic fundamentalist attack of the 11th September 2001, in the United States (9-11), and the resulting war by the USA "against international terrorism", as well as other huge incidents which occupied the media, show that this new century is also beginning under the cloud of violence. If this were not the case, if violence could remain locked in one dreadful century, it would only be of interest to historians wanting to study the diversity and persistence of its many manifestations during that same bloody century. But unfortunately, violence is as present today as it was ten or twenty years ago. The locations and the types of violence carried out may have changed, but the Earth still remains stained with blood. This would include countries that think they have left their violent pasts behind forever, and yet now they see new incidences of violence.

As I write these words, the North American President, George W. Bush, is persuading Congress to approve huge budgetary increases destined to improve their weapons and strengthen their army so that it can become the best in the world, and so that they can achieve 40% of world-wide weapons production. It is rare for such weapons to go without being used. When there is no opportunity to use them in large-scale wars, such as the Gulf War, they are used in a multitude of "local wars". We are planting the seeds for an extremely violent 21st century.

The fact that the phenomenon of violence is spreading with ease to younger segments of the population (young people and adolescents everywhere, children in Brazil, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Rwanda, and Bosnia), increases our anxiety surrounding the century that has just begun. In Rwanda alone, following the massacre of the Hutus against the Tsutsis in 1994, 120,000 children were imprisoned, of which 2,400 *"were wasting away in appalling conditions in adult prisons, accused of committing acts of genocide"*.[iv]

3. Violence or acts of violence? The singular nature of the phenomenon

It would now be fitting for us to clarify what we already understand by the word violence.[v] John Keane supports his traditional definition: *"the term (which comes from the Latin word* violentia) *presents us with obsolete connotations which go back to its*

first English uses (at the end of the Middle Ages) to describe 'the use of physical force' against a person, who 'interrupts or bothers', 'disturbs with roughness and bad manners' or 'defiles, dishonours or offends'. (…) The term is understood better when it is defined as the action which an individual or group takes against another's body, without their consent, and whose consequences may be concussion, bruising or scratching, swelling or pain in the head, a broken bone, a heart attack, the loss of a limb or even death".[vi]

Others, in contrast, like Johan Galtung or Ignacio Ellacuría would prefer not to reduce violence to a concrete physical attack or to a specific moment in time, but instead they would widen it to include all that which voluntarily attacks the physical or psychological integrity of a person, or that which attacks human life in general. This would be the case with, for example, an economic system that generates social pockets of economic poverty through the way it is structured. Ellacuría, when referring to structural violence (radical and latent), and revolutionary violence (obvious, and a consequence of the structural), wrote in 1973: *"we are talking about two types of violence: one which is radical, and superficially the least visible, and which can be understood within the context of injustice; and the other, which is fundamentally a reaction to violent situations, classed as such because they go against human dignity and oppress one's freedom".*[vii] This was also the viewpoint of the Second General Assembly of the Latin American Episcopacy (Medellín, Colombia, 1968), who, in a spirit of prophetic revelation, described the situation in which the subcontinent found itself as "institutionalised violence".[viii]

Johan Galtung points to a widening of the concept of violence, which goes beyond a specific physical attack. According to the Norwegian professor, *"violence is defined as the reason for the difference which exists between the potential and the actual, between what might be and what is"*, in such a way that *"if a person were to die of Tuberculosis in the 18th century, it would be difficult to consider it as violence, due to the fact that this death would have been inevitable, but if they were to die of the same disease today, in spite of the medical resources we have against the disease in the modern world, violence would then suit our definition in this last case. (…) In other words, when the potential is higher than the actual, the difference is, by definition, avoidable, and when it can be avoided, then violence is present".*[ix] We know that many deaths through illness and hunger could be prevented in today's world if economic resources were used, (this is what Galtung calls "the potential"): this does not happen though, ("the actual"), in spite of our capabilities. This should also be considered as violence.

So the viewpoint of Keane, like that of Galtung, Ellacuría and the Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín, exposes the central features of violence. Violence is much more than a specific physical attack; it is any attack on human life or on one's physical integrity, carried out in either a concrete physical way, or through a socio-economic structure, (Galtung, Ellacuría, Medellín). However, we are not going to excessively dilute the concept of violence in such a way that, by the end, the concrete act of physical violence is forgotten, (Keane).

Why do we use the term "violence", rather than "acts of violence" or "violences"? Why does our language tend towards the singular, when we are talking about a phenomenon of multifaceted diversity? It is at this point that we are going to examine the singular nature of the phenomenon of violence, that is, the fact that one person can be capable of attacking the life of another, in this way seriously damaging their 'otherness', an essential trait of the human being. Violence presents itself in a number of ways, but we perceive it in a unitary way. This perception brings us back time and again to the same question about violence: "Why?" Violence is an expression

of the difference between what man observes to be and what he feels should be; it is an expression of the existential frustration that can be felt at all human levels, from the individual to the political. Self-loathing arises out of the difference between what I observe myself to be and what I believe I could be, and this leads to a violent rejection of everything that has caused this difference or everything that reminds me of it. Violence and dissatisfaction go hand in hand. Violence is a way of expressing frustration and disappointment: I destroy because I feel destroyed. If I must fall, then let others fall along with me.

II. PATHS TOWARDS VIOLENCE

There are many different human paths that lead to violence. We are going to look at three of them here. The first two tackle the problem of identity. The third tackles the struggle for life.

1. The identity crisis felt in an ever-expanding world: Who am I?

It has been known that at different times in history, the social universe has grown in a small amount of time due to political change, for example, when the Greek *polis* became the Hellenic Empire of Alexander or, more recently in Europe, when the Nation-State became a member of the European Union. The social area widens as does one's point of reference. The increase in this social area causes problems of identity for both the individual and for groups. Who am I? Who are we? Within the locality of my town or my area, (if we're talking about an area or quarter with a certain character), I can situate myself with ease. I have a name, I am known by others, I am somebody's son or somebody's nephew. We all speak the same language, we have the same faith or the same religious tradition, we share some common values. But the moment that the social area widens, I become completely anonymous, a member of an enormous community where nobody knows me and where I know nobody, everyone coming from different backgrounds, speaking different languages and maybe even of different religions. A feeling of dizziness wells up inside me and with it, the need to hang on to something to prevent me from falling, something solid: my identity. I decide that I am of a certain nationality, or religion, or that I belong to a certain ideological group, or that I support a certain football team. This defensive attitude to counter my feelings of vertigo reduces the size of the human universe around me in a deceiving way: now my world is smaller, it is a group, they are "my people". The rest become "the others". Each of these instances in which the individual tries to reduce the size of the group is full of deceit. An individual does not belong to a single group, but rather to the human condition. However, the feelings of vertigo become so intense that we feel the need to belong to a certain group, nation, or tribe. We need to be recognised and to have a name. We need to be somebody.

This breaking up of the social universe brings about a shift in one's personal identity towards a supposed group identity: "I am Catalonian", "I am from the Basque Country", "I'm a socialist", "I'm a squatter". The survival of the group becomes fundamental to me, because the group is my life and my being. I start defending the group with words, with my bare hands, and with weapons, because my life is part of it. At least, this is what I believe through my misleading perspective of the world. Anyone who dares attack my group attacks my life, because my life is the group, that which gives me my identity and which allows me to exist. The known world has been split in two in one go: it has become "my people" and "the others". I feel compelled to work and struggle for the survival of "my people" and the destruction of "the others". Their

very existence is a threat to me and mine. Violence comes into play. The more timid, shy or "cultured" individual may only resort to a verbal form of violence, a scorn of the other side manifested through attitudes or politically correct social behaviour, however harmful it may prove to be. On the other hand, their children, who are more adolescent, more uninhibited and less worried by social conventions, may progress straight to physical aggression.

In the 20th century, the world has grown enormously. The population has considerably increased, and cities have become overpopulated. The countryside has emptied on almost all of the continents. If an alien were to visit us, he would not be able to understand why we live crowded together in London, Paris, Barcelona, Madrid, New York, Mexico D.F., Sao Paulo, Tokyo or Calcutta, when we have vast expanses of empty land, for example, in Canada, Africa or South America. The overpopulation of the world and of its large cities has caused many people to widen their social horizons, and has led to a visible increase in the cultural diversity of every city. Every day I go out into the street, I am soon sure to see Western Europeans, Slavs, Sub-Saharan Africans, North Africans, Andean South Americans, North Americans, Pakistanis. Where am I? In any big city in the whole world.

2. The identity crisis that comes from identifying oneself with one's possessions: what am I?

There is another path which also leads towards violence, towards the destruction of the "other", and which is also related to identity: that is, protecting what I consider to be mine as best I can. If in the first instance we were dealing with a reduction of the social universe into a local group, here we are dealing with a projection of the self onto one's possessions: I am what I own. So, if what I have is in danger, then my identity too could be threatened. As far back as we can go, there are several examples of identity being associated with possessions. The local ruler is worth "more" than the peasant because he owns more property. The banker is worth "more" than the baker because he has more money. The Minister is worth "more" than the civil servant because he has more power, a greater social influence and a greater salary. However, all these examples are only of individuals. When they die there will be a name and two dates on their headstone marking their birth and death. In spite of sharing a common humanity, their lives and behaviour are different because some have a lot and some have only a little. We only see the person through what they own. This means that, on sensing that our possessions are in danger, we feel an existential, life-threatening danger. If someone or something attacks my car, my place of work, my house, my current account, my inheritance, I will defend myself with my bare hands or with whatever it takes, because losing my possessions would mean losing myself. I am what I own. I am my house, my car, my salary, my current account, my inheritance. Violence appears on the scene again. I will attack anyone who dares to attack me, or rather, what belongs to me.

We are faced with a damaging perspective. Humanity is destroyed, reduced to a pile of possessions, to a few zeros on the right of a figure from 1 to 9 in a bank account. The complexity and wealth of the human being becomes infinitely impoverished. Every extra zero that I have on the right of my bank balance allows me to enter into a new material universe, and this makes me someone new, someone greater. I am worth more if I possess more. Let's think about how we would treat a Minister who might visit our workplace one day, or how we would treat a girl begging on the street. No one would be able to prove to me that one is worth more than the other. No one would be able to

prove to me that there is something which is more important than merely being human. And yet, the treatment of one and of the other is sadly opposed.

In the 20th century, consumerism was born. Now, we are not only looking for that which we need to live, but also that which we are made to believe is equally essential through its publicity. The first industrial revolution was intended to produce a stock of goods on a large scale demanded by a society enriched through an accumulation of capital in both land and business. The following industrial generations did not pursue the same objective, but instead were determined to convince society of the need to consume something, anything which could be offered immediately. Their argument always pointed towards one's "quality of life" (one is supposedly happier if one has a car, a fridge, a freezer, a television, central heating, air conditioning, a video, a computer, a secondary residence), or it would point towards one's "public image" (being somebody, being respected), although it has not been proved that the degree of happiness of an average citizen of Tokyo is greater today than that of his ancestors who lived in a medieval culture. Consumerism has caused a visible and dramatic increase in man's obsession with possessions, and in the identification of one's person with what one owns. This trend has significantly grown over the last century, and with it, the violence it entails.

3. The struggle for one's basic vital needs: How will I survive?

We are now going to discuss the third and last path towards violence. It deals with the denial of one's basic vital needs. Here I am referring to a total of seven things: food, shelter, clothing, health, culture, liberty and peace. It is through these seven central ideas that a human life can unfold with dignity. We could express it using Maslow's Pyramid of Needs, which contains the following stages from top to bottom:

need for self-actualisation
(giving what one is capable of, fulfilling oneself)
need for self-esteem
(self-worth, success, prestige)
need for social acceptance
(affection, love, a sense of belonging, friendship)
need for safety
(security, protection against harm)
physiological needs
(food, water, air)

Abraham H. Maslow, a North American Behaviourist Psychologist of Russian origin, showed that in the human being, one's needs are placed in ascending order. When those from a lower and more basic tier are satisfied, one feels the need to satisfy those on a higher level. Throughout the 20th century, a large section of humanity had their most basic vital needs denied, that is, the basics needed for survival. Hunger, persecution, torture and murder have abounded over these last one hundred years. When we cannot get our most basic vital needs through ordinary, peaceful means, we look for them by other means, which may then be violent ones. This is the struggle for our basic vital needs, the struggle for survival. Let's imagine that food is being shared out in an area that is devastated by hunger, an area in which we live. We want to feed ourselves and feed our small children. We are asked to form an orderly queue and assured that there will be enough for everyone. We queue up patiently, (there is an abundance of endless queues in the Third World, and also in the period following wars or natural

disasters). But let's suppose we realise that there isn't enough food to go round, that there is no order, and that the food will just go to the pushiest ones in the queue; there is no doubt that violence will then erupt within seconds. We would push and claw our way through with all our might just to get something to eat for ourselves and for our family. Perhaps our violence would be even more pronounced if we saw that someone else had an enormous quantity of food, while we lived in poverty.

The desire for balance is a natural one. Imbalance leads to violent impulses in search of one's natural equilibrium. Imagine we have two spaces separated by a wall, both of identical atmospheric pressure, one filled with water and the other empty. As soon as a crack appears in the wall, the water from the first space gushes through to the second space, until a balance of height is reached, (the principle of the communicating vessels). In a world where basic goods are shared out in an abominable way, those who are left wanting will resort to violence in order to take from those who have too much. It is for this reason that violence has often been linked to extreme poverty and overpopulation. A greater concentration of violence is usually found in big cities and in poverty-stricken districts, much more than in the countryside or in quiet residential areas of a lower demographic density. Let's not forget that we are animals and that we need air, water, food and shelter in order to survive. If these needs are denied, we will fight in order to get them. The history of Nazi Germany is one of the greatest examples of this animality. One of the most cultured nations of Europe, the Father of modern philosophy and modern geography, home to some of the greatest musical compositions and brilliant institutions, gave in to the worst type of violence imaginable - industrial genocide. This arose from a "general dissatisfaction": a direct result of the very tough economic conditions of the Versailles Treaty, reinforced with the Dawes Plan in the twenties, the economic crisis of the thirties, the financial crash of 1929, and a fear among capitalists that the country would become sovietised, following the success of the Russian Revolution.

III. BIOLOGY AND HISTORY

1. We are an aggressive animal species, not a violent one

Violence contains an important animal characteristic. The human being belongs to an aggressive animal species. "Aggressiveness" is not the same as "violence", although we sometimes confuse the terms in colloquial language. Aggressiveness is a characteristic of many different animal species, through which the individual or the group can protect itself against negative external influences that may threaten its life or its wellbeing, just as they seek to survive through the use of force. The lion hunts zebras in order to eat. Without this aggression, lions would have perished millions of years ago. The lioness also protects its young from possible external attacks. The need for food and protection are therefore linked with this aggressiveness. The human being is among this group of species. If anyone doubts this, let them try to grab a baby from the arms of its mother in the street, and in less than two seconds they will understand how that serene woman can be transformed into a wild animal.

However, aggressiveness is not the same as violence. It is the background from which violence may be produced, if it should arise. This background is not a cause of the phenomenon, but rather makes it a possibility. For Konrad Lorenz, aggressiveness is an animal trait, through which the species is perpetuated. As the animals of one particular species are spread through the available habitat, a process of natural selection takes place through combats between rivals allowing animals to defend their young, and giving opportunity to these natural impulses. [x] For this reason, he sees nothing "diabolical" in animal aggressiveness, a trait which man shares. Intra-species aggression *"is an essential part of the life-preserving order of all beings"*.[xi] But it is precisely in this instinctive nature of aggression that the danger lies. *"Awareness of the fact that the aggressive tendency is an actual instinct, primarily designed to preserve the species, allows us to understand the magnitude of the danger: it is the spontaneity of that instinct which makes it so terrible"*.[xii]

Aggressiveness is part of us then, in the same way that the sexual instinct is, or that of hunger or fear. Violence, however, is not. Violence comes from the outside, or at least, that is how it is felt. Ellacuría goes as far as saying that *"the indispensable and generally beneficial impulse should remain constant; in the particular instances in which it could become harmful, it is curbed by a special inhibiting mechanism"*.[xiii]

2. Violence as a response to past acts of violence (whether supposed or actual)

Nevertheless, the progressive technological development of human life has decreased this "inhibiting mechanism" which Ellacuría was talking about, due to the fact that it reinforces the lack of communication between the aggressor (for example, the president of a country who gives the order to attack someone, or the pilot in a plane at great altitude who presses the button) and the victim (the people who suffer the

bombardment), just as José María Basabe points out: *"it is becoming increasingly easier to kill with emotional impunity, brought about through the technical ease of the murderous act, which makes the murderer insensitive to the consequences of his crime, also helped by the distance at which firearms have now become effective; so that the killer does not feel the horror of his actions in his heart"*.[xiv]

According to Thomas Hobbes, the father of political science, it is on this special inhibiting mechanism that the modern State is founded. In this State, a system of laws is organised and given the name "republican", with the aim that each individual should feel protected against the possibility of attack from the "other", who is like a "wolf" to him *("homo homini lupus",* "man is a wolf to another man"). Hobbes' argument is based on the idea of the natural equality of all men, and so it is the desire to attain the same level (or natural state) as others which leads people to confrontation: *"Nature hath made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind as that, though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body or of quicker mind than another, yet when all is reckoned together the difference between man and man is not so considerable as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he. For as to the strength of the body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himself"*.[xv] In the "natural state", everyone becomes a potential enemy to everyone else, because we are all longing for the same thing. The "republic" is the result of the pact which everyone signs in order to delegate the ruling of society to a particular authority, in such a way that all its members remain protected from each other through this system of laws. Politics is not a natural thing, but an artificial construction of the human being so that he can survive in society. *"The ultimate motive, aim or plan of men (who naturally love liberty and dominion over others) on introducing among themselves this restriction on their life through the formation of a republic is to look after their own preservation and achieve a happier life"*.[xvi] Hobbes does not state that the human being is violent by nature either, but rather that, on being part of society, he must struggle to survive against other people.

But if violence is not a part of us, if what we possess is only the aggressiveness which allows us to survive, how is it that we come to be violent? How is it that we reach the point of killing the "other", as well as constructing a veritable "industry of death", such as is the case with national armies that are supplied with up-to-the-minute technology? In order to answer these radical questions, we must look back at the anthropological myth, just as René Girard does in his speech on the "propitiatory victim" or "scapegoat", (just because it's a myth doesn't necessarily mean it has no meaning). According to Girard, in the hominid's learning process his mimetic behaviour increases, that is, his imitation of others. With this behaviour, rivalry between individual members of the same group also increases. Different males want the same female, different individuals want to have the same object or control the same territory. There comes a time when it seems that everybody wants the same thing. This is the "mimetic crisis", which leads to the loss of the basic social structure which existed before. This crisis can lead to a war of everyone against everyone, which will end in the self-destruction of the group, or which could lead to the emergence of a "propitiatory victim". This occurs when, for one reason or another, everyone suddenly finds themselves pointing to one member of the group, wanting to mete out the group's violence on him. In this way, the longing for violence that had grown within the group is satisfied. The victim's death brings peace to the group. The victim can then become a symbol of peace, in such a way that he appears to be a sacred totem, just as religion

originated from a search for peace in humanity. Society is united before the victim. It is in this way that religions, social structure, culture and morals appear within society: whoever started the violence within the group will be outlawed, and from these prohibitions, moral values will arise.[xvii]

John the Evangelist puts these words in the mouth of Caiphas, the High Priest, during the trial of Jesus of Nazareth: *"you have no idea, you do not understand that before a whole nation perishes one man must die for the people"* (Jn 11,50). According to Girard, Caiphas does what all peoples have done in their quest for survival, that is: *"limit the violence towards the most important, but, if necessary, fall back on it as a last resort in order to avoid even greater violence"*.[xviii] The myth of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4) also tries to explain the origin of violence. Cain kills his brother in order to give himself the sole authority and make himself the only point of reference before God. Cain destroys otherness. According to this myth, violence is born with the aim of self-assertion, thus excluding otherness. In the same way, Hegel uses myth, in his case, the myth of the master and the slave, which we will not go into here.[xix]

Nevertheless, we cannot scientifically know how or when violence appeared in history, because we lack the necessary information. What can be more easily verified, is that a man or woman who has carried out violence doesn't feel like it is something which is part of them, but rather something which has been acquired, as if in response to a former act of violence which had been committed against them: "I did it because the same was done to me or to mine". We hear this in all the prisons of the world. Violent delinquents usually justify their violent familial and social backgrounds as being a result of their lacking the means to live or to be happy. During wartime, those who go into combat more mercilessly are often those who have previously lost members of their own families or friends.

For this reason, biology and history are both at the root of violence. Along with the aggressive animal-like trait which man possesses that allows him to balance out the group, maintain his territory, strengthen his defences, assure the reproduction of the group and the social hierarchy,[xx] we are faced with the historical fact that all of us are born into a world in which violence is already present, and almost all of us, on carrying out violence, feel that we are responding to some sort of violence which was shown towards us in the past in the form of physical aggression, humiliation or by way of obstacle to the basics we needed in order to survive. Violence would be incomprehensible without this double biological and historical element.

IV. THE MAIN MANIFESTATIONS OF VIOLENCE

Throughout the 20th century, as we said previously, violence has invaded every aspect of humanity and, under the guise of innocence, has even succeeded in becoming a perverse form of entertainment for children. There does not seem to be any aspect of humanity left which has not been stained by blood. It is true that violence has always existed, at least, as far back as our historical memory and our anthropological intuition can take us. However, in these last one hundred years, violence has increased and become more sophisticated, more "effective" (involving a lesser degree of risk to the perpetrator, and with more people being killed). Paradoxically, it coexists quite happily alongside democracy and human rights, which now seem more and more like worthless bits of paper.

1. The economic structure that kills slowly

The greatest violence committed in the 20th century has been that of socio-economic injustice. This form of violence is the slowest killer of all and has taken the greatest number of human lives, leaving no room for hope whatsoever since it is part of a social structure. Throughout the last century a worldwide system has been shaped, becoming more and more global, which has seen the minority of humanity getting progressively richer, while the majority sinks into to an ever-increasing poverty. The U.N.D.P. (United Nations Development Programme) shows in its *2001Report* that, of the 6,000 million inhabitants of the Earth, 4,600 million live in impoverished countries. Of these 4,600 million inhabitants, 2,800 million live on less than two dollars a day, and of these, 1,200 million live on less than one dollar a day. 854 million are illiterate. 325 million children don't go to school. 968 million don't have access to drinking water or treated water. 2,400 million do not have access to the most basic sanitation, and many more do not have access to a higher quality of sanitation. Every year 11 million children under the age of five die from preventable diseases, which means an average of 30,000 children per day.[xxi] The U.N.D.P. had already pointed out in its *1998 Report* that from the beginning of the nineties, the inequality of income between populations of richer countries and those of poorer countries had gone from a ratio of 32 (times higher) to 70.

All of this represents a huge injustice, because in the majority of cases, poor and rich people are that way through no merit of their own. They are born poor or they are born rich. Without a doubt, some can become rich over the years, but they would have already been born into a cultural, social and economic mould, which gave them the capacity to break free. The huge majority of poor people today would already have been born into a poor environment, and will never be able to use their hidden qualities, because the system doesn't give them the opportunity to. The millionaire footballers of humble origins, such as Maradona, are the exception to the rule, and their example can be used to pacify the collective conscience. The economic system imposed during the

last century after the European and American powers decided to dominate the world in order to overcome their own crisis of economic growth, is like a gas that slowly kills those who don't have the money to buy the protective mask. Neither does it stop there, since economic injustice can cause other types of violence as we have already seen, such as when the struggle for survival results in serious acts of aggression.

2. Nationalism and imperialism: the lay form of divinity that justifies everything

Nationalism is a human concept that has seen some of the worst violence committed in the last century. During the Second World War, the French Jesuit, philosopher and theologian, Gaston Fessard, stated that there had been three great false divinities in the twentieth century: the divinity of Reason (liberalism), the divinity of Class (Communism) and the divinity of the Nation (National Socialism or fascism). *"I have here* -said Fessard- *the names of the* Weltanshauungen*, that is, the ideas held by the world that are hovering over us today, and like the ancient gods, are directing our conflicts. The fact that these three views of the world are thus dominating the minds of our contemporaries is a sociological and historical fact which characterises our era and which nobody can dare deny"*. [xxii] These three concepts can be classed as "divinities" through their double claim of being able to interpret the totality of human existence in a definitive way, and of not having been based on anything that had come before. They are "false" in their need to destroy anything that tries to expose the lies on which they are based. The clumsy attempts to unite some of these three "divinities" into a positive religion only serve to confirm this false claim denounced by Fessard: for example, Spanish National-Catholicism (of the Carlist type: "God, Country, Laws and King"), Catalonian ("Catalonia will be Christian or will not be at all"), Irish, Croatian, Polish, American Nationalist-Christianity (Reagan: "God has blessed this nation") and the Islamic Fundamentalism of several Arabic countries.

The term "nationalism" is ambiguous. Hitler and Franco were nationalists, and so were the Catalonian cellist Pau Casals and the Indian pacifist Gandhi, and yet these two sets of people have very little in common. On the one hand, "nationalism" is a collective feeling linked to a cultural mould. It is the members of a certain society that share a specific common history, and feel that they are "a people", with set traditions, a common language, a particular collective mentality and symbolism, which may even include their own mythology. In this first understanding of the term then, there is a love of "a people", "a history", "a land" and "a culture". Nothing objectionable there.

On the other hand, "nationalism" can also be the deification of a country, (Fessard), and therefore anything that goes against it must be criticised, rejected and even eliminated for being insolent and irreverent. Nationalism then becomes like the ancient forms of religion, with a critical and almost non-existent spirit. Humanity is suddenly divided into three groups: 1. The members of the "nation", 2. The enemies of it, and 3. The members of other nations allied to it or irrelevant to it. You only have to have a drink in some nationalist areas in order to understand this paranoiac division of humanity. This form of nationalism uses and abuses myths. The more mythical its history, the more its nationalist spirit becomes inflamed because of its bigoted nature. On the other hand, the more realistic its history, the more disappointing it proves for its nationalist spirit, because the historical appears to be too concrete, particular and arguable. In fact, the nationalist mind tends to convert the historical into the mythical, and will resist, even forcefully, any historical revisions that question the established myth.

This last type of nationalism has time and again lead to violence over the last century. On occasion, it has been the type of violence that breaks out among groups that do not belong to the ruling party (the IRA in Northern Ireland, ETA in the Basque Country, the Independent movement in Corsica, or the Zionist movement in Palestine before 1948). On other occasions it might be orchestrated by those in power (Francoism in Spain, Nazism in Germany, Fascism in Italy and Japan, imperialism in the U.S.A., Argentina during the Falklands War, and Israel since 1948). The path towards violence has gone through the following stages:

1. Faced with the complexity of their historical reality, a group (a large group) chooses to simplify it by reducing it to the terms of "nation", "country", "people", "land", "culture", or "race", interchangeable terms which can be used to create a simplified form of speech;

2. The historical reality is then read according to one of these categories (for example, "nation"), in such a way that everything becomes dependent on and interpreted through that category;

3. Anything that refuses to be subject to this scheme of thought is seen as the enemy ("anti-Spanish", "anti-Basque", "anti-Catalonian", "anti-American", …);

4. The enemy must disappear. This is where violence starts. It is justified as a necessary evil in the service of the divine "nation".

The worst type of enemy of this nationalism is not its opposing group (for example, Spanish nationalism against Catalonian nationalism, or Corsican against French nationalism), but rather the individual or group that tries to form bridges between the two extremes believing that a peaceful and dual coexistence is possible. The other extreme only serves to reaffirm the nationalist philosophy, since according to the dialectic, opposites are identical. The existence of one defines and confirms the existence of the other, while the bridge questions the whole philosophy of nationalism because it rejects its ideology. For example, ETA would rather kill Ernest Lluch than José María Aznar, (even though both of them have been attacked in the past, one of them mortally), because Lluch's beliefs questioned the very philosophy of ETA, while Aznar's reaffirmed it.

Nationalism also has a serious problem of tending towards imperialism. In the first instance, nationalism is usually defensive and self-justifying, or centrifugal: "we have the right to self-determination because we are a people". It is a legitimate right: a human collective with cultural and historical maturity has the right to govern itself. In a second instance, nationalism becomes offensive and imperialist. The nation is so great, or needs to be so great, that it must devour its surrounding territories to give it room to breathe. Hitler stated this clearly when he spoke of "living space". "Germany", "Catalonian countries", "the Basque Country", "the Soviet Union", "France", "America", "Yugoslavia", "Spain", are magical words which claim to justify territorial or cultural invasions. Nationalist expansion is not always territorial. Sometimes it is simply social. It tends to sweep aside the social groups that don't agree with it, even within the confines of a democracy.

3. Is diversity impossible?

It seems that social and cultural diversity is not possible then. It seems that Muslims and Hindus, Jews and Palestinians, Basques and Spanish, Irish and British, Serbs and Croats, Kurds and Iraqis, Tsutsis and Hutus, Flemish and French-speaking, Russian and Lithuanian cannot live together in the same land. A nationalist friend of mine once said to me: "it is historically proven (!) that two different languages cannot coexist in the same society; as time passes, one will devour the other". Aside from the fact that this said friend had obviously travelled very little around the world, he

suddenly came to an immediate conclusion to this false premise: "so if the other language does not devour ours, we should be one step ahead and attack it first". And my friend went on to do this as best he could.

Now let's look at the opposite argument, that diversity is possible. All of human history has seen itself bathed in cultural and social diversity. This is not only due to its frequent migratory movements (have a quick glance at the geographical origins of your own four grandparents and that of your eight great-grandparents, and draw your own conclusions), but also because it would be absurd to speak of "one culture". The more you insist upon this, the more pathetic your discourse will sound. "Culture" does exist as an aspect of humanity, but can we speak of "one culture"? If we were to spend some time talking about people who supposedly belong to "the same culture", we would be overwhelmed by the great cultural diversity among them, which is a great part of the human condition. The problem does not reside in the supposed impossibility of cultural and social diversity, but in the difficulty in opening up one's spirit to accept it, such as was indicated when we spoke of the identity crisis. I can live alongside whites and blacks with no problem, or heterosexuals and homosexuals, or Jews and Arabs, Corsicans and French, Christians and Atheists. However, if I should suffer an identity crisis, I may try to escape from that which ties me to a collective identity to give myself security and protection. So I decide "I'm Spanish" and I hate all the Basque separatists and the Catalonians, or "French", and I hate all the Independents from Brittany, "Muslim" and I hate all Christians, "Argentinean" and I hate all Chileans, a "labourer" and I hate all capitalists, a "squatter" and I hate all those who belong to the system.

When somebody asks me if I am a Christian, or a socialist, or a Catalonian, or just wants to know what I am, I usually answer, "I am me". Unfortunately, the psychological difficulty in accepting oneself for oneself leads to an identification with a group or with a simplistic ideology which ends up rejecting the "other", viewing diversity as impossible, and supporting a harmful type of uniformity. Timid people, or those with more refined behaviour would only attack others with their thoughts. Those who are less inhibited would be ready to injure others, and even kill them. Even Parliaments legislate the marginalisation of this "other", a form of white-glove violence. This bid for uniformity is often promoted by ruling parties in order to hide other important social problems: they speak of "the country", "the Church", "the people", in order to make people forget that in the midst of this supposed unity, outright socio-economic injustices are being committed.

4. Social exclusion: you're not one of us

The rejection of diversity has led to many forms of social exclusion. The historical examples are numerous. We are so used to it now, that it already seems normal to us. We see in our society various social groups that have few opportunities of advancing themselves in life, but we don't react: the Haitians in the Dominican Republic, the Koreans in Japan, the Bosnians in Spain, the Kurds in Germany, the Christians in Algeria, black people in the U.S.A., Catholics in Northern Ireland, or those who have lost their caste in India. In all of these places there are clear "social frontiers", physically invisible, but more real than a simple customs check at the airport. It is clear to me who "my people" are, and I work with them. We support each other. If anyone who is not one of ours should ask for help, we answer them with the unspoken words or attitude that say: "you're not one of us", and the communication ends there. This has been one of the main causes of violence in the last century, that is, defence of the social

frontier by those who are "inside" the system, and the attack against this system by those who are on the "outside". Those who are inside live in certain comfort, luxury even. They are afraid to lose what they have, to lose what they are, as we already mentioned. It was fear that kept the whites together in South Africa during the decades of *apartheid*, and it is that same fear that Europeans are starting to feel now when faced with the arrival of immigrants. Violence is used to block their way through into the system, while those on the outside fear death by starvation and may resort to violence to bring down the social barrier once and for all, in this way gaining access to the comforts on the inside of the system.

"You are not one of us". How is it possible that a human being could say such a thing? How is it possible to use the word "you" as a form of rejection, and "us" as a form of exclusion? The word "you" was originally used to reveal the openness of the human spirit, and to show that humanity cannot exist without love and that this love cannot exist without otherness. The word "us" serves to unite this diversity into one whole, in such a way that no individual is excluded from it, but instead is made possible through it. It is sad when the words "you" and "us" are used to make shameful social barriers.

5. Torture in the home and massacre in the classrooms

The psychoanalyst Adnan Houbballah, from his time spent with victims of violence in the Lebanon, points out that the four stages of a civil war are: 1. The confrontation of ideologies, 2. Confrontation between communities, 3. Confrontation within the community, and 4. Confrontation within the family.[xxiii] Let's examine this more closely:

1. In the first instance, there is a clash between conflicting ideologies (right and left), each with their own vision of society and of the future of the country. Each group argues with the other, maybe even resorting to the use of weapons.

2. As time passes, this confrontation worsens, becoming more extreme. Now it's not just a question of different ideologies, which are after all, not always obvious. Instead it becomes necessary to call on something innate, more radically existential: so the conflict between communities arises (Christians against Muslims, one ethnic group against another). The homogeneity of the group, which is vital for its success in violent combat, is brought about with this shift. When this shift affects religious communities and not just different ethnic or cultural groups, "divine arguments" are used to justify highly debatable political issues.

3. In each community there is not only one leader, but several that live together in a more or less organised way. When these die in combat, their respective followers become more radical in their attitude and feel the need to be faithful to their dead leader. They will not allow other leaders to eclipse their master and will argue with each other until blood is spilt. *"This is the most distressing and atrocious phase of the war. The fighters, who are mostly adolescents, commit acts of cruelty that have never before been seen. They show themselves to be the most aggressive, destructive and murderous men in their mercilessness".*[xxiv]

4. The members of the same family do not always belong to the same religious, ethnic or social community. In Sarajevo, for example, there were many marriages between Serbs and Croats, or between Serbs and Bosnians. The conflict between communities goes right into the heart of the home. It is the last stage: brother kills brother, like what happened in the Lebanon. Houballah recounts a tragi-comic anecdote: *"A father brought his four sons to hospital. All had been injured by bullets in different parts of their legs. The doctor was amazed, and asked the father who had shot them. The shaken father answered 'I did'. 'But you must be mad!', the doctor reprimanded. 'Actually, I'm not', replied the father. 'So, how do you explain this?' 'Just listen a minute Doctor. Two of my sons belong to the X movement, and the other two belong to*

the Y movement. An argument between them was turning sour, each one picked up their rifle and prepared to shoot the other. On seeing the danger and no other solution, I didn't hesitate. I would rather have lame sons than dead sons for a cause that is beyond me'".[xxv]

Even in the heart of the home, socio-cultural and political confrontations occur. These are made even more cruel, if that is possible, because they attack the family bond. Violent societies end up by bringing bloodshed right into the heart of the family, and worse still, some people who would not dare to be violent outside of the house, lose their inhibitions in the home and attack their loved ones. In the last few years, the number of attacks between couples or within the family has significantly increased. More and more, conflicts within the home over love, or for whatever other reason, end up with one person in the cemetery and the other in prison.

This is also happening in the classrooms of colleges and secondary schools, particularly in the U.S.A., where access to weapons has become very easy due to a dated constitutional right. There are an increasing number of cases where adolescents gain notoriety or bid the world farewell having left a trail of dead or injured in one single apocalyptic episode of shooting in their school. But beyond the mental imbalance of one individual, we are faced with an important social phenomenon: there is violence in homes, and violence among young people. Why?

We must take two elements into account. In the first place, there is the excessively masculine element of social and cultural life. Over the centuries, man has held dominion in the public realm. Women were subordinated and in most cases, did not voice any objection. Their secret suffering went with them to the tomb. The 20th century has seen great initiatives with regard to the liberation of women, in particular, in the Western World. This is something that has not always gone down well with a great number of men. In some cases, the authority of these men has been restored with the use of even more violence, as they find it is not enough to try and impose one's authority on a woman with words alone. The inferiority complex of some men is thus resolved in the bruising on a woman's face. This is because violence is a phenomenon that is mostly linked to men. Women are not near as violent as men. Throughout the world, men's prisons are much more populated than women's prisons. It is true that there are women who, in order to stand out in an all-male environment, adopt more aggressive behaviour than the men themselves, but these are in the minority. This was the case with the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, one of the most intransigent political leaders in Western Europe over the last few decades (during the Falklands War, the miners' strike, and when faced with pressure from the IRA during the hunger strikes). It is usually the case that violence is linked to men and to societies that are governed by men. So violence constitutes tangible proof of this imbalance. A society in which half of its members have restricted freedom, is an ill society. In male chauvinistic societies, one of the symptoms of this illness is violence. Men seek physical conflict, or at least, watch it. They enjoy competitive sport (to practise or watch), such as football or boxing, they want action films (or films of extreme violence). Violent culture is, to a great extent, the institutionalisation of masculine adolescence stretched across an apparently endless period of time.

This brings us to the second element, the culture of violence that, as we have seen, is prevalent in male chauvinistic societies. The boy that one day turns up in his college with a weapon, ready to kill dozens of his classmates and teachers carries with him thousands of hours of viewing violence as a simple hobby. Ever since he was weaned, his first toys and all those which followed brought with them the idea of "killing someone", "stopping the enemy". Just because some of us managed to separate the imaginary from the reality without killing anyone, doesn't mean that everyone is

psychologically able for this absurd and schizophrenic life. In the end, the imaginary becomes real, and blood is shed in the classrooms. Society is horrified, they tear their hair out, the same society that allowed the child attacker to watch violent films to his heart's content in the first place. Even the films watched in schools sometimes fall into this category. The foolish solution is to make larger and more secure prisons. How foolish. The only real solution which can seriously tackle the problem of poverty and social injustice (the seeds of violence), depends on allowing everybody to be part of society, (the principle of excluding no one), and to encourage peace at all cultural levels, and thus stop the culture of violence once and for all. This should happen in such a way that a child can turn 14 without having watched thousands of murders on the cinema screen, the television or in video games.

6. Religions that kill

The message of peace has a religious dimension, since it arises from a profound conviction that points to an openness to the other-worldly. It seems fitting that the human being should live in harmony with himself, with the other members of his species and with the Nature that surrounds him. This belief does not belong to any physical law, but rather to an anthropological and moral conviction that springs from a particular view of the world, a faith. Religions have brought peace to human life, in some instances through a cosmo-naturalist vision (Eastern philosophy), and in others with a more socio-fraternal one (Western philosophy).

But positive religions (that is, human religions that have called themselves "Religion", "Church", "community"), have let people that are motivated by power enter into their very heart, and have been used by politicians to attract followers to their ideological cause. The Irish, Croatian, Polish and Spanish nationalists have used Catholicism shamelessly. The anti-Western Arab movement selectively uses the Koran to suit its notions. Zionism unscrupulously edits the sacred texts of Judaism. North-American imperialism falsifies aspects of Christianity with no hesitation whatsoever, and subsidises pro-North-American groups that operate as sects, but that give themselves the grotesque name of the "Evangelical Church". Religions that serve a political cause become instruments of power and even instruments of death. Violence which has a supposed foundation in religion is more brutal than any other form, because it justifies its reason for attack: "God wants it", "for Allah", "in the name of the Holy Ground", and it leads to the worst atrocities ever, for example, September 11th.

Religion is very dangerous. It is not the cause of the fire, but rather the petrol that fuels the flames. Religion should only be a way of expressing that the soul is open to the other-worldliness of the human being, and to the possibility that, through this openness and faith, the human being can encounter God. In no instance should religion ever be used as a political instrument. Religious faith does have an undeniably political dimension however, because it affects everything to do with being human, thus touching on the political. But this is a very delicate territory, in which the different shades of interpretation are extremely significant. Archbishop Oscar Romero from El Salvador and the Jesuit philosopher Ignacio Ellacuría, like other leaders in Liberation Theology, developed political ideas through the Christian faith, which brought them to the ideas of fraternity, and the desire to restore a more humane world with a just economic and political structure. This same principle, in the hands of more simplistic souls, can lead to weapons and atrocities. Some of the great violent episodes of the 20th century have seen the use of religious language: Irish Catholicism and British

Protestantism in Northern Ireland, Jewish Zionism, Communist Atheism, and Islamic fundamentalism among others.

7. The schizophrenic nature of democracy

It is thought that democracy is a form of protection against violence, usually against the arbitrary aggression of one group towards another. In the democratic system, every citizen is equal before the law and wrongful violence is punished with imprisonment. But democracy has a schizophrenic nature because, while it goes under the guise of pacifism, it wears the uniform of combat every day. Does anybody doubt that the U.S.A. is a democracy? Is anybody still unaware at this stage of the involvement of North-American governments in the upkeep of horrific dictatorships that lasted for decades throughout the world (Asia, South America, Israel against the Palestinians…), or in the big business that is the weapons industry, including the manufacture of landmines? Does anyone doubt that France is a democracy? And does anyone still not know about the role of French governments in the horror that transformed the face of the African continent?

Democracies have many sins to confess when it comes to violence. It is not true that violence was provoked by totalitarian regimes alone. Democracies have also participated in violence, they have shamelessly supported dictatorial regimes and made weapons deals with the most bloodthirsty governments. The respect of Human Rights is not a primary concern in democracies, but rather seen as beneficial to the enrichment of the country, or even just of one social sector of the country. We therefore live in schizophrenic democracies, which are like something out of horror films, humanist by day, bloodthirsty by night. We are all aware of it, we all see it, but only a few people speak out against it, in particular, some Western Christian groups and also several non-governmental organisations. If anyone dares to speak on this in the political forum, he is thrown aside with all the power and means of social communication, such as was the case with the Communist Julio Anguita, one of the few Spanish politicians of recent times who refused to let himself be devoured by the system.

The great danger of democracy is that which Fessard points out in relation to Reason, Class and Nation: self-deification. Democracy sets itself up as the last step towards human progress. Any alternative to it is accused of being regressive and anti-democratic. This self-divinisation of the system allows it to carry out violence without leaving itself open to hardly any criticism at all. Following September 11th, President George W. Bush said with his usual simplicity: "in the war against 'international terrorism', anyone who is not with us, is against us". So the U.S.A. and Great Britain can bomb any corner of the world and can even openly support terrible politicians like Ariel Sharon, and call it the "democratic struggle against international terrorism"; in contrast, Al Qaeda does the same and we simply call this "terrorism". What is the difference?

8. The final step: genocide, the total elimination of the other

Genocide is the ultimate degree of violence. It is the total elimination of the "other". It responds to the idea of "let's finish off everyone in this group" without exception (a race, a people, or a religion). In the domain of violence, the "other" which must be destroyed could refer to a person or a group, in the same way that the destructive "I" as well as being one person could also refer to a group. Genocide brings

about the complete eradication of the "other" as an individual: instead the individual "other" melts into the collective "other". One no longer sees Isaac M., but instead one sees "a Jew", and says "Jews are all the same to me". I make the whole group guilty of a series of wrongs they are supposed to have committed against me. Every member of this group is guilty, whether potentially so or by their actions. Everyone must suffer the penalty that I have chosen for them. Neither does it matter if one of these individuals is not even aware of being a member of this collective: I know it, and that's all that matters. Many "Jews" in Nazi Germany did not feel Jewish, just like many of those who were murdered in Stalin's USSR, or more recently in Algeria, or Latin America. They did not feel part of this group which was being condemned. Genocide is about "finishing everybody off" and if this isn't practical, hurting them as much as possible so that the group will not be able to recover quickly. Particular cruelty is usually shown towards the weakest, because they are the ones who are capable of stirring the most sensitivity in the other side: women, even pregnant ones, children, babies, the elderly. There is a need to make people suffer, and not just kill them, such as was the case with the acts of sadism carried out by the Nazi, Serbian, and Latin American military.

Contrary to what one would expect, acts of genocide are rarely based on decisions made in the heat of the moment, as was the case with the killing of Sikhs by Hindus in India following the murder of Indira Gandhi. On the contrary, they arise from coldly-taken decisions, or important meetings where the only item on the agenda is exterminating the "enemy". We usually see genocide as an attack against our very spirit and yet, it is no more than a logical consequence of thought patterns which we openly accept every day. In our daily behaviour we shamelessly divide the world into "my people", "my enemies", and "those I'm not bothered about". Once we accept this pattern of thought, as we have seen, the discourse which justifies the wellbeing of "my people" follows, as does that which justifies the opposite for "my enemies". In order to support this mentality, the American industry produces dozens of films each year that monotonously divide "goodies" and "baddies", films that are seen in all the continents of the world. In such films, violence committed by the bad people is shown to be unjustifiable, while violence committed by the good people is more than justified. This desire to make all the "baddies" disappear is at the root of the paranoiac and genocidal mind which flourished in the likes of Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Reagan, Miloseviç and Karadziç.

V. CONCLUSION: TODAY'S OVERSIGHTS, TOMORROW'S WARS

The violence of the 20th century has overtaken us in many ways and, at the same time, originated in our own hearts. It has "overtaken" us because it has spilled out into the domain of "high politics" in some cases, (such as in the post-colonial distribution of territories), in which we feel we have hardly any influence. It "originated in our hearts" because politics often puts what its citizens feel into practice. Let's not deceive ourselves, if there is genocide in the world it's because we are "anonymous genocidal people" on the inside. If not, why do we consume so many violent films and support so many warlike competitive sports? If not, why do we identify ourselves so often with a group and desire the weakening or disappearance of this group's supposed enemies?

Many of the violent phenomenon of the last one hundred years have been the consequence of previous forgotten incidents. When an obvious historical injustice is overlooked or forgotten, with the ridiculous excuse that time heals all wounds, what actually happens over time is that people attempt to avenge the injustice through violence. Who were those "privileged minds" that drew up the post-colonial division between the Tsutsis and Hutus in the Great Lakes Region or who in Washington, London or Paris invented countries on a map? Whose brilliant mind decided that capitalists from the North could travel all over the world, while the workers from the South would have to beg their way to Europe or the U.S.A., and with no permission to enter when they got there either? Who decided that humanity should be classified into races based on skin colour? Who decided that people should be classified according to nationality? Perhaps it's more important to have a passport than to be a person?

Human history is a path full of forgotten things, oversights, and injustices that all offer false promises of a better tomorrow. It is like a land that has been fertilised to produce acts of future violence through the compulsion to exact revenge. As I said at the start of this study, I am aware that I am both ignorant of and perplexed by the absurd nature of violence. However, I like many others agree that the only way to avoid or to reduce violence in the future is by actively working for the social and economic wellbeing of all those who are part of humanity's current history, and by sowing the seeds for a culture of universal fraternity as a way of overcoming today's culture that divides humanity into opposing groups. I make a point of saying "universal fraternity", and not "uniformity". I am not attacking diversity, but rather giving my support to the peaceful and harmonious co-existence of diversity. It is true that I am not saying anything new here. In fact, man was created to live like this. At least, that is my belief and my faith.

José Sols
Barcelona
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[i] KEANE, J.: *Reflexiones sobre la violencia*, Alianza Ed., Madrid, 2000, 110. (Original: *Reflections on Violence*, 1996).

[ii] AGUIRRE, M.: *China. Capitalismo rojo. Los desafíos del viaje a la riqueza*, Flor del Viento, Barcelona, 2000, 28.

[iii] KEANE, J.: *Reflexiones sobre la violencia*, op. cit., 13.

[iv] TORRES, R.: "Menores acusados de genocidio", *Noticias Obreras* 1.204 (16 November 1997), Madrid, 1. Cit. in: SEDKY-LAVANDERO, J.: *Ni un solo niño en la guerra. Infancia y conflictos armados*, Icaria-Antrazyt, Barcelona, 1999, 37.

[v] Over the next few pages I will be including ideas already discussed in my article "Violence: when uniformity devours diversity", *Razón y Fe* 1.241 (March 2002), Madrid, 267-278. Some sentences have been taken from that text, and will not be acknowledged on every occasion.

[vi] KEANE, J.: *Op. cit.*, 61-62.

[vii] ELLACURÍA, I.: *Teología Política,* Ediciones del Secretariado Social Interdiocesano, San Salvador, El Salvador, 1973, 94.

[viii] 2nd Conference of the Latin American Episcopacy: *Church and Human Liberation*, Medellín, Colombia, 1968, cap. II, n.16.

[ix] GALTUNG, J.: *Essays in Peace Research*, Vol. I: *Peace: Research, Education, Action*, Christian Ejlers, Copenhagen, 1975, 111.

[x] LORENZ, K. (1972): *Sobre la agresión: el pretendido mal*, Siglo XXI, Madrid, 1972, 53. (Original: *Das sogennante Böse. Zur Naturgeschichte der Agression,* 1963).

[xi] The latest version of this article wrongly translates the expression "*intraspezifische Agression*" as "inter-species", when it is, in fact, "intra-species aggression", that is, between members of the same species. *Ibid.,* 59.

[xii] *Ibid.,* 60-61.

[xiii] ELLACURÍA, I.: *Op. cit.,* 97.

[xiv] BASABE, J.M. (1981): "Condicionamientos biológicos de la conducta violenta", in: DOU, A.(ed.): *Sobre la violencia*, Mensajero, Bilbao, 1981, 30.

[xv] HOBBES, Th.: *Leviatán*, Nacional, Madrid, 1979, 222. (Original: *Leviathan*, 1651).

[xvi] *Ibid.,* 263.

[xvii] RUIZ, P: *Antropología y religión en René Girard*, Thesis for Doctorate in Philosophy, Faculty of Philiosophy, Ramón Llull University, Barcelona, 2000, 70.

[xviii] GIRARD, R.: *El chivo expiatorio*, Anagrama, Barcelona, 1986, 151. (Original: *Le bouc émissaire*, 1982).

[xix] For a brief discussion on the three steps of this dialectic, see: SOLS, J.: "Filosofía y teología de Gaston Fessard acerca de la actualidad histórica en el período 1936-46", *Pensamiento* 205 (1997), Madrid, 74-76.

[xx] BASABE, J.M.: *Op. cit.,* 29.

[xxi] UNDP: *Human Development Report 2001*, Chapter 1.

[xxii] FESSARD, G.: *De l'actualité historique,* vol. I, Desclée de Brouwer, 1960, 122.

[xxiii] HOUBALLAH, A.: *Le virus de la violence. La guerre civile est en chacun de nous,* Albin Michel, Paris, 1996, 171-180.

[xxiv] *Ibid.,* 178.

[xxv] *Ibid.* 179.