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0521792843 - State Identities and the Homogenisation of Peoples

Heather Rae

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State Identities and the Homogenisation of Peoples

Why have forced displacement, ethnic cleansing and genocide been an enduring feature of the modern state system? In this ground-breaking book, Heather Rae locates these practices of 'pathological homogenisation' in the processes of state-building. Political elites have repeatedly used available cultural resources to redefine bounded political communities as exclusive moral communities, from which outsiders must be expelled. Showing that these practices predate the age of nationalism, Rae examines cases from both the pre-nationalist and nationalist eras: the expulsion of the Jews from fifteenth-century Spain, the persecution of the Huguenots under Louis XIV and, in the twentieth century, the Armenian genocide and the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. She argues that those atrocities have prompted the development of international norms of legitimate state behaviour that increasingly define sovereignty as conditional. Rae concludes by examining two 'threshold' cases – the Czech Republic and Macedonia – to identify the factors that may inhibit pathological homogenisation as a method of state-building.

HEATHER RAE is Research Fellow and Deputy Director of the Graduate Studies in International Affairs program in the Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.

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For my sister Lesley Cleary
and in memory of my father
John Douglas Rae
1914–1999

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Preface

This book is the result of an abiding interest – perhaps puzzlement would be more apt – in how human beings can come to accept that systematic mistreatment of other human beings is somehow morally justifiable. That the project has taken the particular form it has, as an inquiry into what I call pathological homogenisation – forced assimilation, expulsion, genocide – practised by state-builders, is due to my good fortune in being taught as an undergraduate by Andrew Linklater, now Woodrow Wilson Professor of International Relations at the University of Wales at Aberystwyth.

As well as being an inspirational teacher of international relations, Andrew drew my attention to the problem of inclusion and exclusion in the modern system of states and how the boundary of the state has been drawn not only in territorial form but also as a moral boundary. My sense was that while it is important to search for more inclusive forms of political community, work remained to be done on how exclusion – the sort of moral exclusion that justifies mass slaughter of civilians, for example – can come about. Although this interest has taken me off in a different direction I hope that my intellectual debt to Andrew is obvious, though any shortcomings are of course my own responsibility.

Another important influence that animates this project, though one that I was not perhaps aware of for quite some time, was my father's history as a soldier in the British army between 1933 and the mid-1950s. Starting with a tour of duty in India he then went on to 'scoop the pool' (or the bottom of the barrel) of mid-twentieth-century conflict, serving in Europe during World War II, then Palestine, Korea, Malaya. Like many men of his generation, so much was left unsaid about his experiences – words literally failed him. Despite all that was left unsaid, or perhaps because of it, I have inherited a deep interest (and puzzlement) with the nature and consequences of systematic violence. I hope that words have not failed me in the account that follows.

Of course there is a significant difference between my father's experiences, horrifying as they no doubt were, and those of the people whose

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stories I tell in this book. My father was a trained soldier, he was armed, and he stood a fighting chance. This has not been the case for the great majority of those who over the last 500 years have been displaced or murdered *by their own rulers* in the name of a unified sovereign identity within the state.

I have benefited greatly from the assistance and encouragement of a number of teachers, colleagues and friends over the years during which this book took shape, first as a Ph.D. thesis submitted to Monash University. From my time at Monash I wish to thank Michael Janover, for his patience and feedback as the project evolved, Roger Spegele, Hugh Emy, Paul Muldoon, Margaret Nash, Robyn Eckersley, Richard Shapcott, Catherine Welch and Christian Reus-Smit. For their support while working on the Ph.D., I would like to thank Lesley and Michael Cleary, Sandra Hacker, Margaret Leunig, Janet Reus-Smit, Tor Roxburgh and Pamela Storm. At Deakin University, Melbourne, I thank Joan Beaumont for her support and also gratefully acknowledge the study leave granted to me by Deakin University from January to June 2000. This time was spent as a Visiting Fellow in the Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, where much of the work on chapter 7 was undertaken.

Since then I have had the good fortune to return to this department as a staff member and it is a great privilege to work in such a vibrant and collegial environment. In the Department of International Relations many thanks are due to Thuy Do for her enthusiastic research assistance and also to Mary-Louise Hickey for her painstaking work in preparing the manuscript for publication. Thanks too to Robin Ward for preparation of the index. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Graduate Studies in International Affairs programme, the Director Greg Fry, Farnaz Salehzadeh and Suzanne Harding, for their patience and support during the final stages of the book.

Parts of this project have been presented in seminars at the Australian National University, Deakin University, Monash University, The University of Queensland, the Melbourne International Relations Discussion Group, the 'Ethics of Armed Intervention' Workshop held at the University of Melbourne in 1998 and at the APSA Annual Conference, 2000 in Washington, DC. I have benefited greatly from the comments of participants at these seminars. For their comments on various incarnations of the project, or the ideas therein, I thank Peter Katzenstein, Richard Little, Adrian Hastings and once again, Andrew Linklater. Thanks also to Henry Shue, Peter Christoff, Jacqui True, Lynn Savery, Stefan Auer, Jeffrey Checkel, David Wippman, V. P. Gagnon Jr, Valerie Bunce and Matthew Evangelista. While I have gained immeasurably from the comments of,

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and conversations with, those mentioned above, any failures of omission or interpretation remain my own.

Finally, thanks are due to my partner Chris Reus-Smit for his unfailing love and support, for his inexhaustible commitment to intellectual engagement, and for his close reading of the manuscript as it evolved. I write this in Canberra, which means we no longer live in our 'House in the Woods'. Instead, these acknowledgements come from our new home, which has been dubbed fondly 'Parrot Point'.