

Violence and Democracy

In this provocative book, John Keane calls for a fresh understanding of the vexed relationship between democracy and violence. Taking issue with the common-sense view that 'human nature' is violent, Keane shows why mature democracies do not wage war upon each other, and why they are unusually sensitive to violence. He argues that we need to think more discriminatingly about the origins of violence, its consequences, its uses and remedies. He probes the disputed meanings of the term violence, and asks why violence is the greatest enemy of democracy, and why today's global 'triangle of violence' is tempting politicians to invoke undemocratic emergency powers. Throughout, Keane gives prominence to ethical questions, such as the circumstances in which violence can be justified, and argues that violent behaviour and means of violence can and should be 'democratised' – made publicly accountable to others, so encouraging efforts to erase surplus violence from the world.

John Keane is Professor of Politics at the University of Westminster. Born in Australia and educated at the universities of Adelaide, Toronto and Cambridge, he is a frequent contributor to radio programmes and newspapers and magazines around the world. Among his books are *The Media and Democracy* (1991), which has been translated into more than twenty languages; the prize-winning biography *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (1995); *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions* (1998); a biography of power, *Václav Havel: A Political Tragedy in Six Acts* (1999); and *Global Civil Society?* (2003). He was recently Karl Deutsch Professor of Political Science at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin and a Fellow of the influential London based think-tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research. He is currently writing a full-scale history of democracy – the first for over a century.

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THEORY

Series Editor

Ian Shapiro

Editorial Board

Russell Hardin Stephen Holmes Jeffrey Isaac
 John Keane Elizabeth Kiss Susan Okin
 Phillipe Van Parijs Philip Pettit

As the twenty-first century begins, major new political challenges have arisen at the same time as some of the most enduring dilemmas of political association remain unresolved. The collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War reflect a victory for democratic and liberal values, yet in many of the Western countries that nurtured those values there are severe problems of urban decay, class and racial conflict, and failing political legitimacy. Enduring global injustice and inequality seem compounded by environmental problems, disease, the oppression of women, racial, ethnic and religious minorities, and the relentless growth of the world's population. In such circumstances, the need for creative thinking about the fundamentals of human political association is manifest. This new series in contemporary political theory is needed to foster such systematic normative reflection.

The series proceeds in the belief that the time is ripe for a reassertion of the importance of problem-driven political theory. It is concerned, that is, with works that are motivated by the impulse to understand, think critically about, and address the problems in the world, rather than issues that are thrown up primarily in academic debate. Books in the series may be interdisciplinary in character, ranging over issues conventionally dealt with in philosophy, law, history and the human sciences. The range of materials and the methods of proceeding should be dictated by the problem at hand, not the conventional debates or disciplinary divisions of academia.

Other books in the series

Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordón (eds.)
Democracy's Value

Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordón (eds.)
Democracy's Edges

Brooke A. Ackerly
Political Theory and Feminist Social Criticism

Clarissa Rile Hayward
De-Facing Power

John Kane
The Politics of Moral Capital

Ayelet Shachar
Multicultural Jurisdictions

John Keane
Global Civil Society?

Rogers M. Smith
Stories of Peoplehood

Gerry Mackie
Democracy Defended

Violence and Democracy

JOHN KEANE



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
0521836999 - Violence and Democracy - John Keane
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
<http://www.cambridge.org>

© John Keane 2004

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2004

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Trump Mediaeval 9.5/15 pt. *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [T_B]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Keane, John, 1949–

Violence and democracy / John Keane.

p. cm. – (Contemporary political theory)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 83699 9 (hb) – ISBN 0 521 54544 7 (pb)

1. Violence. 2. Democracy. I. Title. II. Series.

HM886.K43 2004

303.6 – dc22 2003067574

ISBN 0 521 83699 9 hardback

ISBN 0 521 54544 7 paperback

Cambridge University Press
0521836999 - Violence and Democracy - John Keane
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

For Bhikhu Parekh

Contents

	Introduction: surplus violence	<i>page</i> 1
1	Muskets, terrorists	15
2	Thinking violence	30
3	Civilisation	42
4	Barbarism?	54
5	Why violence?	89
6	Uncivil wars	109
7	Ethics	128
8	Ten rules for democratising violence	165
	Further reading	210
	Index	214