OMNI NEWSLETTER #1 ON NATIONALISM, Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace. April 9, 2012.

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See: Control of Information, Ethnocentrism, Fear, Identity, Imperialism, Jingoism, Militarism, National Security State, Patriotism, Permanent War, Preemptive Invasion, Torture, War on Terror, Xenophobia, and many other related topics in the Newsletters (see the Index).

These assessments of nationalism should be read by people of all nations. I'll add that degrees of self-regarding nationalism exist, from the Nazi ocean of blood, to US hyper-nationalism, to Danish low-key cultural pride. An essential exploration of US nationalism is *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights*, ed. Michael Ignatieff. Noam Chomsky's books on US foreign policy elaborate the subject. See criticism of the US National Security State, which leads to examination of US wars and a host of related subjects. Dick

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WHY WARS, WHY MASS SLAUGHTER?
*Nations Have the Right to Kill: Hitler the Holocaust and War*
By Richard Koenigsberg

From Intro.: .....But what if destruction and self-destruction are the fundamental purpose of warfare? This is the conclusion that I have reached. More precisely, perhaps warfare is undertaken as a form of sacrifice—a gigantic potlatch—whereby human beings give over their bodies and possessions to objects of worship with names like France, Germany, Japan, America, etc.

We would prefer not to know that this is the case. We still exist within the heart of the storm. Nationalism is a living religion, so powerful that we barely conceive of it as a religion. Yet Carolyn Marvin in her ground-breaking *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation* (1999) develops a theory similar to the one I present in this book. She shows how warfare and sacrifice function to support and sustain the idea of the nation.

I explore this idea in Chapter III of this book, “As the Soldier Dies, So the Nation Comes Alive,” as well as in Chapter V, in which I examine parallels between the First World War and the Aztec performance of warfare as a ritual sacrifice. Are we in the Western World similar to the Aztecs in that we sacrifice human beings in the name of our Gods?

Sadly, it would appear that this is the case. The difference is that the Aztecs were aware that warfare was a sacrificial ritual, whereas we in the West are not yet aware of this. One objective of this book is to help us to become conscious of the central role of sacrifice in our political rituals.

Marvin writes about blood sacrifice in war as the “totem secret.” The fact that nations create
warfare as a sacrificial ritual is something that we are not supposed to know. Indeed, we don’t wish to know that this is the case. What would it mean if people were to become aware that warfare is an institution whose purpose is to sacrifice—or kill—people? Hitler nearly understood this. He realized that nations have the right to kill. The purpose of this book is to provide documentation showing how nations act in the name of killing or sacrificing people. We understand that nations have the right to kill, but assume there are specific reasons why states find it necessary to go to war.

But what if it turns out that the production of sacrificial violence and victims is an essential function of the nation-state? What if wars are waged not for specific reasons, rather in order to produce opportunities for killing and dying? What if it turns out that killing (producing sacrificial victims) is one of the fundamental purposes of collective acts of violence? If we become capable of knowing this, will it make a difference?

DYING AND KILLING FOR LOVE
Lecture by Richard A. Koenigsberg, Ph. D.

Co-sponsored by the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP) and the Philosophy Department of the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research
Moderator, Mathias Beier. Discussant, Sy Coopersmith
Friday, January 11, 2008, 8 PM

What is the nature of the human attraction to warfare? What psychological processes transform killing, destruction and the maiming of human bodies into a good thing? War is conceived as a good thing because people die and kill in the name of a beloved object, one’s nation. . . .
According to the ideology of warfare, bad things (killing, destruction and the maiming of human bodies) become good things because they are undertaken in the name one’s beloved nation and its sacred ideals. Collective forms of violence articulate the project or shared fantasy of sacrificing human beings in the name of entities or ideas conceived as greater than the self.

Richard Koenigsberg received his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research and formerly taught at the New School. INFORMATION AGE PUBLISHING recently released new editions of his books: Hitler’s Ideology: Embodied Metaphor, Ideology and History; The Nation: A Study in Ideology and Fantasy; and The Fantasy of Oneness and the Struggle to Separate: A Study in the Psychology of Culture.

oanderson@ideologiesofwar.com
CIVILIZATION AND THE FANTASY OF IMMORTALITY:
Review by Richard A. Koenigsberg of The King's Two Bodies by Ernst Kantorowicz (Princeton UP, paperback)

Ernst Kantorowicz was a historian of political and intellectual history who taught at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, where he published his masterpiece, The King’s Two Bodies.

“Kantorowicz’s book—one of the most significant titles ever published on political theory—traces the nation-state or body politic to the mystical body of the church. The author shows how the idea of death on the battlefield—dying for one’s country—descended from Christian martyrdom. Though we imagine we live in a secular society, we still are immersed within a mystical body. As once we sought immortality through Christianity, now civilization’s dream of eternal life is bound to the idea of the nation. We identify our own bodies with this omnipotent entity. We die and kill in defense of our dream of eternal life.”

The King’s Two Bodies is available now through Amazon.com at special, discounted rates. We urge you to obtain a copy of this classic work—that reveals the fundamental structure of Western political thought.

For information on how to to the paperback edition, PLEASE CLICK HERE.

Read at no charge: Excerpts from THE KING'S TWO BODIES

In The King’s Two Bodies (1957), Ernst Kantorowicz describes a profound transformation in the concept of political authority that occurred over the course of the Middle Ages. Kantorowicz found in Edmund Plowden’s reports (1571)—a collection of law cases written under Queen Elizabeth I—the first clear elaboration of “that mystical talk with which the English crown jurists enveloped and trimmed their definitions of kingship and royal capacities.” The following discussion of the “King’s Two Bodies” is based on Kantorowicz’s presentation and analysis of Plowden’s reports.

The King, Plowden says, has two bodies: “a Body Natural and a Body Politic.” The King’s Body Natural is his mortal body, subject to “all infirmities come by nature or accident,” the “imbecility of infancy or old age,” and the “defects that happen to the natural bodies of all people.” In short, it is the biological body that the King has in common with each of us—a body that ages and eventually dies. However, the King also has a Second Body, a Body Politic. This body—that “cannot be seen or handled” is “utterly void of old age and other natural defects and imbecilities” to which the Body Natural is subject. The King’s Second Body, in other words, is invulnerable,
immortal and “cannot be invalidated or frustrated by any disability in his natural body.”

Still, his Body Natural is not “distinct or divided” from his Body Politic. Rather, the King’s Body Natural and Body Politic are “together indivisible.” The two bodies are “incorporated in one person.” The body corporate is contained within the Body Natural; and the Body Natural within the body corporate. The King’s Two Bodies thus form “one unit indivisible, each fully contained in the other.” Yet, Plowden explains, while the King’s two bodies form an indivisible unity, no doubt can arise regarding the “superiority of the Body Politic over the Body Natural.” Not only is the Body Politic “more ample and large than the Body Natural,” but in the Body Politic dwell certain “truly mysterious forces which reduce, or even remove, the imperfections of the fragile human nature.” Although the King contains within himself two bodies—one and indivisible—the Body Politic is the greater of the two.

To comment on Koenigsberg’s review essay, please click here.

This Body Politic draws the King’s Body Natural into itself, altering the latter. The Body Politic “takes away the imbecility of the Body Natural.” When the Body Natural fuses with the Body Politic, when these two bodies unite, the Body Politic acts to “wipe away every imperfection” of the Body Natural. By merging with the Body Politic, one’s natural body is transformed into an omnipotent body. The King’s Body Natural (like other human beings’) is subject to passions and death—but not when it is united with his Second Body. For as his Body Politic, “the King never dies.” When a King dies, his Second Body is “transferred and conveyed over from the Body Natural now dead to another Body Natural.” In short: “The King is dead—long live the King.”

The idea of the King’s Second Body has profound implications for our understanding of the human being’s relationship to civilization. The King’s Second Body, I suggest, symbolizes culture itself, that which (as Anthropology and Sociology texts used to say) “lives on.” The Second Body of the king—the Body Politic—is culture: that part of human beings which endures even while individuals pass away.

Social theorists typically view the self as created and shaped by culture. However, we may also view culture as the creation of the self. I propose the idea of culture as a double of the self: the King’s Second Body; fantasy of an immortal self bound to our mortal selves. We project our bodies into the symbolic order. We create and nurture cultural objects that symbolize our Bodies. Culture thus constitutes the Second Body of the King: the fantasy of an immortal, self-perpetuating body not subject to death or decay.

Egyptian pyramids mark the beginning of Western civilization. Well before the Middle Ages, Kings were conceived as partaking of immortality. A pyramid was the Pharaoh’s Body Politic: his immortal body that transcended his natural body. Egyptians believed that the Pharaoh could live forever—within a massive structure that contained
and symbolized his body. Pyramids constituted a double of the Pharaoh’s self: the King’s Second Body. The Pyramids were the result of hundreds of thousands of hours of labor and the expenditure of enormous wealth. Human energies were poured into building these gigantic structuresóthat had no practical value whatsoever. Civilizations begin with the fantasy of immortalityóprojected into monumental creations that stand as a double of the self. Monumental structures such as the pyramids embody the fantasy of living on even as our actual bodies die.

To comment on Koenigsberg’s review essay, please click here.

Each of us is like a King or Pharaoh: we project our bodiesóour life energiesóinto the creation of cultural objects which, we imagine, will live on even though we are fated to die. Cultural objects are the Second Body of the King: symbolizing a body (politic) not subject to death or decay; the superorganic; that which transcends the lives of individuals and lives on.

Nations function like the Second Body of the King. One’s nation is a double of one’s self: a larger, “more ample” body with which we identify. Our nation is a Body Politic that seems more powerful than our actual body. We identify with a nation as if it were our own body. We project our bodies into a Body Politic. We wage war in the name of our nation to defend the fantasy of an omnipotent body that will live forever.

Whatever theories scholars put forth, we nevertheless exist: each human being lives within his or her biological body. In order to escape one’s biological body (and the death that it contains), we identify with nations, cultures and the symbolic order. The Body Politicóour Second Bodyóis conceived as an omnipotent body that will wash away weakness, defect and death.

We seek to bind our actual body to this symbolic body: The King is dead, long live the King. Or as the song from a James Bond movie puts it: “You only live twice: one life for yourself and one for your dreams.” Our life in culture is a dream life: the projection of a fantasy. Our actual bodies are small, frail and vulnerable. The Body Politic is large and apparently invulnerable. What’s more, the national body seems to contain “everything” within itself. We want it all, and we want it all forever. We project our beings into this dream body.

The “split subject” is a human being that exists in two places; two dimensions of reality. On the one hand, we exist in a concrete place and time. On the other hand, we are “spirited away” by the symbolic order. We identify our existence with another dimension of realityónone other than “culture” itself: a world that seems to exist “out there,” separate from us and moving eternally through time and space like a film that never ends.

We want to be part of this never-ending movie. We would prefer to be a character in itóa Queen or King ourselves (“Fame, I want to live forever, baby remember my name”). If this is not possible, we link
ourselves to individuals who seem to be part of the Body Politic; to exist within it. Famous people—those who are written up in history books—are like bodies contained within the Body Politic: part of the cellular structure of a nation. The immortal bodies with which we connect may be sports figures (Babe Ruth or Lou Gehrig), singers (Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley or Michael Jackson), movie stars (James Dean or Marilyn Monroe), political figures (John F. Kennedy or Lee Harvey Oswald), scientists (Albert Einstein), or academic heroes (Lacan). Each is dead, yet we experience them as if they still exist: they constitute the Second Body of the King.

Human beings pour their life-energies into the creation of cultural objects—symbols of our own bodies—that we hope will become elements of culture: fusing with the Body Politic. In this sense, the pyramids represent a paradigm for how human beings connect or relate to civilization. Pyramids symbolize our aspiration to create, preserve and identify with “permanent” objects. A poem by the baseball umpire Grantland Rice concludes: “For all men die, but the Record lives.” To create a cultural object is to create a double of the self: a symbol of one’s body that makes its way into the external world. One pours one’s energies into the creation of an object which, one hopes, will continue to exist after one dies. One dreams that one’s own body will be preserved within one’s creation. The created object (a Beethoven sonata, a Picasso painting) is the Second Body of the King.

One may create and produce a “book,” hoping it will rest on the shelves of a library, snuggled next to the other symbolic bodies. If a book becomes a “classic” (part of the canon), we imagine that this entity will survive forever. Huckleberry Finn will live forever, as will its author, Mark Twain. Catcher in the Rye will live on, as will J. D. Salinger. Though Salinger hid himself away through his lifetime, his Second Body is seen, touched, held and read by millions.

Perhaps the fundamental fantasy sustaining civilization is the idea that human beings exist or are preserved within the cultural objects they create. We imagine that the created object is the Second Body of the King: a body without defect, subject to neither decay nor death. One’s life may revolve around the fantasy of fashioning an immortal object containing one’s self. We imagine that a “piece” of our body will continue to exist, contained within and preserved by the cultural object one has created.

Today, mass media functions as the Second Body of the King. We possess our own lives, but also possess another: the life we lead by virtue of identifying with events and people “brought to us” by television, radio, the Internet, movies, etc. For some, this world constitutes reality itself.

Do we exist where we are or “out there”? Do we identify with our concrete existence, or with significant events and famous people that are quite distant from our lives. It is common and ordinary for
people to bind their lives to Another World (the title of a
television soap opera). This other world seems to contain abundance
and infinite possibilities. What’s more, this other world keeps
moving on endlessly. When one anchorwoman leaves the show, another
takes her place: The Queen is dead, long live the Queen.
What are the consequences of identifying so deeply with the cultural
world? I’ve been discussing this tendency as if it’s a benign
fantasy. However, there is a profound price to be paid. Norman O.
Brown states that the essence of sublimation is the “reification of
the superfluous sacred into monumental, enduring form.” Using the
pyramids as a paradigm, Brown suggests that sexual energies are
siphoned off for the purpose of creating sacred structures that exist
solely to materialize fantasies of immortality. Death is overcome,
Brown says, on condition that the “real actuality of life pass into
these immortal and dead things.”
According to Plowden, there is no doubt that the Body Politic is
superior to the Body Natural. Hitler explained to his people: “You
are nothing, your nation is everything.” Lacanians often claim:
“There is no other but the Other.” What happens when a Body Politic
with which an individual identifies overwhelms his or her actual
body? What is the price we pay in order to sustain our belief that we
possess a second, immortal body?
To comment on Koenigsberg’s review essay, please click here.

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Americentrism
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
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Americentrism is a term referring to the ethnocentric and xenophobic practice of viewing the world from an explicitly American perspective, with an implied belief, either consciously or subconsciously, in the preeminence of American (and, more generally, of Western) culture.\[1\]
Among others, U.S. broadcasting networks and U.S. celebrities such as Quentin Tarantino have been accused of being Americentric.
See also
- American exceptionalism
- Manifest Destiny

Geocultural perspectives:
- Afrocentrism
- Eurocentrism
- Sinocentrism

Notes
Nationalism and Color

The New White Nationalism in America: its challenge to integration by Carol Miller Swain Cambridge University Press, 2002 - Social Science - 526 pages

Over the past ten years, a new white nationalist movement has gained strength in America, bringing with it the potential to disrupt already fragile race relations. Eschewing violence, this movement seeks to expand its influence mainly through argument and persuasion directed at its target audience of white Americans aggrieved over racial double standards, race-based affirmative action policies, high black-on-white crime rates, and liberal immigration policies. The movement has also been energized, Swain contends, by minority advocacy of multiculturalism. Due to its emphasis on group self-determination, multiculturalism has provided white nationalists with justification for advocating a parallel form of white solidarity. In addition, as Swain illustrates, technological advances such as the Internet have made it easier than ever before for white nationalists to reach a more mainstream audience. Swain's study is intended as a wake-up call to all Americans who cherish the Civil Rights Era vision of an integrated America, a common humanity, and equality before God and the law.

More at http://books.google.com/books/about/The_new_white_nationalism_in_America.html?id=HB1wyFPRGm4C

Nationalism and Economics

International Socialist Review Issue 7, Spring 1999

“U. S. Imperialism: A Century of Slaughter” By Lance Selfa

THIS YEAR marks the 100th anniversary of the emergence of the U.S. as a major world power. Under the pretext of responding to a bombing on the USS Maine anchored in Havana, Cuba, the U.S. went to war with Cuba's colonial overlord, Spain, in 1899. After routing Europe's weakest colonial power, the U.S. made off with all of Spain's colonial possessions in Latin America and Asia, seizing control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines.

The Spanish-American War marked the entrance of the U.S. into the worldwide scramble for colonies among the advanced powers. Novelist Mark Twain made no bones about what this meant:

How our hearts burned with indignation against the atrocious Spaniards. . . But when the smoke was over, the dead buried and the cost of the war came back to the people in an increase in the price of commodities and rent--that is, when we sobered up from our patriotic spree--it suddenly dawned on us that the cause of the Spanish-American war was the price of sugar. . . . that the lives, blood, and money of the American people were used to protect the interests of American capitalists.

A century later, the U.S. stands alone as the world's superpower. It is the only country with the ability to go to war anywhere in the world.

The U.S. attained its position of dominance through competition with other powerful nations. The U.S. and the world's other major powers--Britain, Russia, China, France and Germany--fought two world wars, threatened each other with nuclear annihilation and divided and redivided the world between them.

How can we explain this madness?
It is important to understand that wars and violence stem not from the whims of politicians but from the nature of the system itself. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the vast majority of the world's population by a small minority who own and control all the resources. A recent United Nations (UN) study showed that all of the world's poor could be lifted out of poverty by spending the wealth of the world's seven richest billionaires.

At the heart of a system which produces this kind of obscene inequality is ruthless competition between corporations constantly on the lookout for new ways to make profits. The process of competition forces capitalists to look beyond their own national boundaries to gain access to new and cheap raw materials and workers.


**NATIONALISM AND WWI: VERDUN**


[http://www.spectator.co.uk/books/19850/part_2/the-battle-that-has-never-ended.thtml](http://www.spectator.co.uk/books/19850/part_2/the-battle-that-has-never-ended.thtml)
War is a force that gives us meaning

by Chris Hedges

Amnesty International NOW magazine, Winter 2002

War and conflict have marked most of my adult life. I have been in ambushes on desolate stretches of Central American roads, locked in unnerving firefights in the marshes in southern Iraq, imprisoned in the Sudan, beaten by Saudi military police, deported from Libya and Iran, captured and held for a week by Iraqi Republican Guards, strafed by Russian Mig-21s in central Bosnia, shot at by Serb snipers and shelled with deafening rounds of artillery in Sarajevo that threw out thousands of deadly bits of iron fragments. I have seen too much of violent death. I have tasted too much of my own fear. I have painful memories that lie buried most of the time. It is never easy when they surface.

And yet there is a part of me that remains nostalgic for war's simplicity and high. The enduring attraction of war is this: Even with its destruction and carnage it gives us what we all long for in life. It gives us purpose, meaning, a reason for living. Only when we are in the midst of conflict does the shallowness and vapidness of our lives become apparent. Trivia dominates our conversations and increasingly our news. And war is an enticing elixir. It gives us resolve, a cause. It allows us to be noble. And those that have the least meaning in their lives—the impoverished refugees in Gaza, the disenfranchised North African immigrants in France, even the lost legions of youth that live in the splendid indolence and safety of the industrialized world—are all susceptible to war's appeal.

WAR AS CULTURE

I learned early on that war forms its own culture. The rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction, for war is a drug, one I ingested for many years. It is peddled by myth makers—historians, war correspondents, filmmakers novelists and the state—all of whom endow it with qualities it often does possess: excitement, exoticism, power, chances to rise above our small stations in life, and a bizarre and fantastic universe that has a grotesque and dark beauty. It dominates culture, distorts memory, corrupts language and infects everything around it, even humor, which becomes preoccupied with the grim perversities of smut and death. Fundamental questions about the meaning, or meaninglessness, of our place on the planet are laid bare when we watch those around us sink to the lowest depths. War exposes the capacity for evil that lurks just below the surface within all of us.

And so it takes little in wartime to turn ordinary men into killers. Most give themselves willingly to the seduction of unlimited power to destroy, and all feel the peer pressure. Few, once in bottle, can find the strength to resist.
The historian Christopher Browning noted the willingness to kill in Ordinary Men, his study of Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Poland during World War II. On the morning of July 12, 1942, the battalion was ordered to shoot 1800 Jews in the village of Jozefow in a day-long action. The men in the unit had to round up the Jews, march them into the forest and one by one order them to lie down in a row. The victims, including women, infants, children and the elderly, were shot dead at close range.

Battalion members were offered the option to refuse, an option only about a dozen men took, although more asked to be relieved once the killing began. Those who did not want to continue, Browning says, were disgusted rather than plagued by conscience. When the men returned to the barracks they "were depressed, angered, embittered and shaken." They drank heavily. They were told not to talk about the event, "but they needed no encouragement in that direction."

WAR AS MYTH

The most recent U.S. conflicts have insulated the public and U.S. troops from both the disgust and pangs of conscience. The Gulf War-waged from bombers high above the fray and reported by carefully controlled journalists-made war fashionable again. It was a cause the nation willingly embraced. It exorcised the ghosts of Vietnam. It gave us heroes and the heady belief in our own military superiority and technology. It almost made war fun. And the chief culprit was, as in many conflicts, not the military but the press. Television reporters happily disseminated the spoon-fed images that served the propaganda effort of the military and the state. These images did little to convey the reality of war. Pool reporters, those guided around in groups by the military, wrote once again about "our boys" eating packaged army food, practicing for chemical weapons attacks and bathing out of buckets in the desert. It was war as spectacle, war, if we are honest, as entertainment. The images and stories were designed to make us feel good about our nation, about ourselves. The families and soldiers being blown to bits by iron fragmentation bombs just over the border in Iraq were faceless and nameless phantoms.

The moment I stepped off an Army C-130 military transport in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, to cover the Persian Gulf War, I was escorted to a room with several dozen other reporters and photographers. I was told to sign a paper that said I would abide by the severe restrictions placed on the press. The restrictions authorized "pool reporters" to be escorted by the military on field trips. Most of the press sat in hotel rooms and rewrote the bland copy filed by the pool or used the pool video and photos. I violated this agreement the next morning when I went into the field without authorization. The rest of the war, most of which I spent dodging Military Police and trying to talk my way into units, was a forlorn and lonely struggle against the heavy press control.
The notion that the press was used in the war is incorrect. The press wanted to be used. It saw itself as part of the war effort. Most reporters sent to cover a war don't really want to go near the fighting. They do not tell this to their editors and indeed will moan and complain about restrictions. The handful who actually head out into the field have a bitter enmity with the hotel room warriors. But even those who do go out are guilty of distortion—maybe more so. For they not only believe the myth, feed off of the drug, but also embrace the cause. They may do it with more skepticism. They certainly expose more lies and misconceptions. But they believe. We all believe. When you stop believing you stop going to war.

I knew a Muslim soldier, a father, who fought on the front lines around Sarajevo. His unit, in one of the rare attempts to take back a few streets controlled by the Serbs, pushed across Serb lines. They did not get very far. The fighting was heavy. As he moved down the street, he heard a door swing open and fired a burst from his AK-47 assault rifle. A 12-year-old girl dropped dead. He saw in the body of the unknown girl lying prostrate in front of him the image of his own 12-year-old daughter. He broke down. He had to be helped back to the city. He was lost for the rest of the war, shuttered inside his apartment, nervous, morose and broken. This experience is far more typical of warfare than the Rambo heroics we are fed by the state and the entertainment industry. The cost of killing is all the more bitter because of the deep disillusionment that war usually brings.

WAR AS CRUSADE

The disillusionment comes later. Each generation again responds to war as innocents. Each generation discovers its own disillusionment—often at a terrible price.

"We believed we were there for a high moral purpose," wrote Philip Caputo in his book on Vietnam, Rumor of War. "But somehow our idealism was lost, our morals corrupted, and the purpose forgotten."

Once again the United States stands poised on the threshold of war. "We go forward," President George W. Bush assures us, "to defend freedom and all that is good and just in the world." He is not shy about warning other states that they either stand with us in the war on terrorism or will be counted as aligned with those that defy us. This too is a crusade.

But the war on terrorism is different in that we Americans find ourselves in the dangerous position of going to war not against a state but a phantom. The crusade we have embarked upon in the war on terrorism is targeting an elusive and protean enemy. The battle we have begun is never-ending. But it may be too late to wind back the heady rhetoric. We have embarked on a campaign as quixotic as the one mounted to destroy us. As it continues, as terrorist attacks intrude on our lives, as we feel less and less secure, the acceptance of all methods to lash out at real and perceived enemies will distort and deform our democracy.
And yet, the campaign's attraction seems irresistible. War makes the world understandable, a black-and-white tableau of them and us. It suspends thought, especially self-critical thought. All bow before the supreme effort. We are one. Most of us willingly accept war as long as we can fold it into a belief system that paints the ensuing suffering as necessary for a higher good; for human beings seek not only happiness but also meaning. And tragically, war is sometimes the most powerful way in human society to achieve meaning.

Chris Hedges is a reporter with the New York Times where he was part of the team that won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for reporting on global terrorism. He won Al's 2002 Global Award for Human Rights Journalism. This article was adapted from War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning (Public Affairs, Perseus Group, 2002).

Call for Papers: Nationalism, War and Sacrifice
oanderson@libraryofsocialscience.com via uark.edu
April 9, 2012 to jbennet

Nationalism, War and Sacrifice: Dying for One’s Country
Library of Social Science, Publishers is seeking submissions for an edited collection. The Anthology will consist of twelve papers, each of approximately 3,000 words in length.
Editor, Richard A. Koenigsberg, Library of Social Science
Submission Guidelines

Abstracts should be 300-400 words, and should identify the theoretical grounding for the essay or piece. Please also include a brief biography (100 words).
Deadline for abstracts:
May 28, 2012
Send abstracts to:
oanderson@libraryofsocialscience.com
Notification of acceptance:
June 25, 2012
Accepted papers will be due: October 27, 2012

NAZISM AS DESTRUCTION AND SELF-DESTRUCTION
Two million German soldiers died in the First World War. Yet Hitler declared that “the most precious blood had sacrificed itself joyfully.” In the mid-1930s, Hitler said that he would not hesitate to go to war because of “ten million young men I shall be sending to their death.” Declaring war on September 1, 1939, Hitler asked every German to “lay down his life for his people and country.” If anyone thought he could “evade this national duty,” he would “perish.” Hitler’s declaration of war contained the essence of Nazism: either
die for Germany, or we will kill you. Historian Michael Geyer notes that the German military’s “machinery of destruction and annihilation” went into high gear at the very moment Hitler and the Nazi leadership knew the war was lost. Casualties peaked at 450,000 in January 1945, when Germany became—in the words of Richard Bessel—the site of “the greatest killing frenzy the world has ever seen.”

Despite defeat at Stalingrad, Goebbels in 1943 persuaded the German people to embrace “total war.” Insofar as millions of German soldiers were dying on the battlefield, individuals at home likewise were obligated to “bring the hardest sacrifices of blood.” As the carnage reached its climax, Goebbels observed with satisfaction that the German people had “surpassed themselves as a result of the bombing raids,” heroically overcoming fear—finally coming together to form a genuine national community.

In his classic, “What is a Nation?” (1882), Ernest Renan explained that love of country is proportional to the “sacrifices to which one has consented and the ills one has suffered.” Nazism represented the apotheosis of national sacrifice, generating suffering and destruction on a monumental scale. In the end, Geyer says, the Third Reich was about “collective death.” The distillation of Nazism, according to Bessel, lay in the “senseless destruction of human life” as Hitler and his cohorts turned Europe into a “sea of blood.”

Building on the case study of Nazi Germany, this volume will explore nationalism in its relationship to warfare and sacrificial death.

BLOOD SACRIFICE GIVES RISE TO THE NATION

General Douglas MacArthur told West Point graduates in 1962 that as soldiers, they were required to practice “the greatest act of religious training—sacrifice.” General John Hackett stated that the essence of a soldier is not to slay, but to “offer oneself to be slain.” In Blood Sacrifice and the Nation, Carolyn Marvin says that the irrefutable sign of patriotism is “making one’s body an offering, a sacrifice.”

Soldiers’ sacrificial acts possess profound meaning for society. Babak Rahimi says that their blood bestows “new life on the community.” Marvin theorizes that society “depends upon the death of its own members at the hands of the group;” while Richard Koenigsberg declares that in war the “blood and body of the sacrificed soldier gives rise to the reality of the nation, anchoring belief in material reality.”

THE INDIVIDUAL MUST DIE SO THE NATION MIGHT LIVE

Fighting to the last breath on the Eastern Front, most German soldiers continued to believe in the nobility of their struggle because while “individuals die, the Volk lives on.” Nazi Germany represents an extreme case, but the idea that individuals must die so nations may live lies at the heart of Western warfare. The Roman poet Horace declared, “It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.” What is the nature and meaning of this dynamic that conceives death in battle as a noble act that enhances and valorizes one’s nation?
This volume will interrogate and explore the meaning of this idea or fantasy: that in order for a nation to live and flourish, human beings must die.

Questions to consider include, but are not limited to:
- The self versus the enemy as sacrificial victim
- Warfare as potlatch, or conspicuous destruction
- Sacrifice, honor and masculinity
- Heroism
- Human bodies and the body politic
- Death for one’s comrades: “Greater love hath no man…”
- Sacrificial death and memorialization
- Nations and the fantasy of immortality
- Implications for Critical Security Studies

Hitler stated that the liberal deification of the individual must lead to the destruction of the people; whereas Nazism sought to safeguard the people “if necessary at the expense of the individual.” When Hitler speaks about “the people,” he is not referring to actual human beings, but to an abstract concept— for which he caused the death of millions of Germans and the destruction of German society.

How are we to understand an impulse that seeks security for “nations” at the expense of actual human lives? When trying to protect one’s “country,” what is it one seeks to protect?

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