
CHAPTER 19

COMPARATIVE LAW

This is online Chapter 19 of the third edition of the law school textbook Firearms Law and the Second Amendment: Regulation, Rights, and Policy (3d ed. 2022), by Nicholas J. Johnson, David B. Kopel, George A. Mocsary, E. Gregory Wallace, and Donald Kilmer.

All of the online chapters are available at no charge from either <https://www.AspenPublishing.com/Johnson-SecondAmendment3> or from the book's separate website, firearmsregulation.org. These chapters are:

- 17.** *Firearms Policy and Status. Including race, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation.*
- 18.** *International Law. Global and regional treaties, self-defense in classical international law, modern human rights issues.*
- 19.** *This chapter.*
- 20.** *In-Depth Explanation of Firearms and Ammunition. The different types of firearms and ammunition. How they work. Intended to be helpful for readers who have little or no prior experience, and to provide a brief overview of more complicated topics.*
- 21.** *Antecedents of the Second Amendment. Self-defense and arms in global historical context. Confucianism, Taoism, Greece, Rome, Judaism, Christianity, European political philosophy.*
- 22.** *Detailed coverage of arms rights and arms control in the United Kingdom from the ninth century to the early twentieth century. A more in-depth examination of the English history from Chapter 2.*
- 23.** *The Evolution of Firearms Technology from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century.*

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Online Chapter 18 covers international law—that is, law, such as treaties, that applies among nations. This Chapter studies comparative law—comparing and contrasting the “domestic” (noninternational) gun laws of various nations and examining the possible effects of those different laws. Because international law is derived in part from the “norms” of civilized nations, the study of comparative law can yield useful insights for international law.¹

Part A covers national constitutions and reviews the following topics: (1) the three nations besides the United States that have an express constitutional right to arms; (2) constitutional guarantees of self-defense; (3) constitutional affirmations of the right and duty to resist tyranny or illegitimate government; (4) constitutional support for national liberation movements in other nations; (5) a short case study of Ghana and its constitutional duty of forcible resistance to usurpation of government; and (6) the constitutional right to security in the home.

Part B excerpts studies examining the consequences of varying rates of gun ownership among a large number of countries. One purpose of Part B is for students to develop skills in evaluating statistical studies. Accordingly, Part B begins with an explanation of some basic statistical methods and terminology. The first excerpted article, by Don Kates and Gary Mauser, observes similarities and difference of the United States and Europe.

The next Section introduces complex statistical analysis. It begins with a summary of statistical research methods and vocabulary. Next is an article by Professor Gary Kleck examining the strengths and weaknesses of various studies on the relationship between gun ownership levels and homicide levels. Although Kleck analyzes data within the United States, his methodological cautions provide a foundation for evaluating the international studies that follow. As Professor Kleck explains, one of the most daunting problems is accurately estimating levels of gun ownership, especially over time.

The third Section of Part B presents an especially sophisticated article, by John N. van Kesteren, that examines 26 countries, mostly European plus the United States, to look for relationships between gun ownership levels and violence.

The last Section of Part B directs attention to the importance of culture in comparative scholarship. An article by Irshad Altheimer and Matthew Boswell reports the diverse effects of higher rates of gun ownership in Western developed nations, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. A second article, by David Kopel, Carlisle Moody, and Howard Nemerov, investigates the relationship between gun density and various measures of economic freedom, economic prosperity, political freedom, civil freedom, and noncorruption in 78 nations.

Finally, in Section B.5, Nicholas J. Johnson describes “the remainder problem”: if social science did prove that greater gun density causes the United States to have higher rates of homicide and other gun crime than some other countries, what can be done meaningfully to reduce U.S. gun density?

Part C presents case studies of gun control and gun rights in several nations. It begins with the United Kingdom, starting in the early twentieth century. (For earlier U.K. history, see Chapter 2.) For contrast, the next nation is Switzerland, with its thriving militia system.

1. The authors thank Vincent Harinam (M.A. Criminology, Univ. Toronto 2017) for contributing to the third edition of this chapter.

The Western Hemisphere comes next, with Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela. Asia and the Pacific are covered in sections on Australia, Japan, China, and Thailand. Kenya and South Africa are the case studies for Africa. Some Notes & Questions following sections on particular countries present material about other nearby countries.

Part D considers broad perspectives in the three different ways. First, an article by Professor Carlisle Moody investigates European homicide trends over the last 800 years, and observes that growing availability of firearms that could be kept always ready for self-defense (wheel locks and flintlocks) paralleled a sharp decline in homicides.

An essay by Professor Kopel compares and contrasts homicides in the United States and Europe during the twentieth century. Europe's homicide rate is vastly higher—once one takes into account murder by government. If one makes certain assumptions designed to produce the highest possible figure, the United States had as many as 745,000 additional gun homicides in the twentieth century because the United States did not have gun control laws as restrictive as those in Europe. Conversely, Europe had about 87.1 million additional homicides by government because Europeans did not have a right to arms. The essay describes the gun control policies of dictators in Europe and elsewhere. It concludes with a pair of case studies showing the accomplishments of armed resistance to genocide: by Armenians and other Christians in the Ottoman Empire during World War I, and by Jews in Europe during World War II.

The third section of Part D investigates at length the largest mass homicide in history: the murders of over 86 million Chinese by the Mao Zedong dictatorship in 1949-76. The essays also detail armed resistance to Mao, and include a detailed description of Tibetan uprisings. While Mao adopted diverse arms control policies at different times, the objective was always the same: his political supporters would be armed and his opponents would not.

The excerpted article, John N. van Kesteren, *Revisiting the Gun Ownership and Violence Link: A Multilevel Analysis of Victimization Survey Data*, *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 54, pages 53-72 (2014), is republished by permission of Oxford University Press.

A. NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONS

1. *Constitutional Rights to Arms*

Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos [C.P.], as amended, art. 10, Diario Oficial de la Federación [DO], 5 de Febrero de 1917 (Mex.). The inhabitants of the United States of Mexico have the right to possess arms in their domiciles, for security and legitimate defense, with the exception of the prohibitions by federal law and the reservations for exclusive use of the military, army, air force, and national guard. Federal law will determine the cases, conditions, requirements, and place under which the inhabitants will be authorized to carry arms.

Constitution de la République d'Haïti art. 268-1. Every citizen has the right to armed self-defense, within the bounds of his domicile, but has no right to bear arms without express well-founded authorization from the Chief of Police.

Guatemala Constitution art. 38. Possession and carrying of arms. The right of possession of arms, not prohibited by law, for personal use is recognized, in the home. There will be no obligation to surrender them, save in cases that are ordered by a competent judge. The right of carrying of arms is recognized, and regulated by the law.

Constitution of the Czech Republic, Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, art. 41(3). The right to defend fundamental rights and freedoms with a weapon is guaranteed under the conditions laid down by law. (See Online Ch. 18.B.4.a.)

United Kingdom, Bill of Rights, § 7. The subjects which are protestants may have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions and as allowed by law. See Chs. 2.H.4, 19.C.1, 22.H.4.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think that the five nations listed above (and the United States) *do* expressly recognize a right to arms?

2. Textually, how do the rights to arms recognized in the five nations' constitutions compare with the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution? With the Second Amendment as construed by *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570 (2008) (Ch. 11.A), and *McDonald v. City of Chicago*, 561 U.S. 742 (2010) (Ch. 11.B)? With U.S. state constitutional rights to arms provisions? See Ch. 10 App'x.

3. *Mexico*. Constitutional rights typically limit the power of the legislature. Mexico's constitutional right to *possess* arms in homes for security and lawful self-defense is subject to federal law "prohibitions." Additionally, any right to *carry* arms is determined by federal law. Given these provisions, to what extent is Mexican federal law constrained by its constitutional right to arms? Mexico is the subject of a country study presented in Section C.4.

4. *Haiti*. Although the Haiti Constitution guarantees the constitutional right to arms, the constitutional article is not honored at present. For more on Haiti, see Tophier L. McDougal, Athena Kolbe, Robert Muggah & Nicholas Marsh, *Ammunition Leakage from Military to Civilian Markets: Market Price Evidence from Haiti, 2004-2012*, Def. & Peace Econ. (July 2018) (military ammunition supplies often end up being illicitly transferred to citizens); Robert Muggah, *Securing Haiti's Transition: Reviewing Human Insecurity and the Prospects for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration*, Small Arms Survey occasional paper (2005).

5. Express constitutional protections of the right to keep and bear arms are relatively uncommon globally, compared to related rights, such as self-defense, resistance to tyranny, or security of the home, each which is discussed below. Why do you think express arms rights are not common?

2. *Constitutional Right of Self-Defense*

Fifteen nations, all of which have legal systems derived from English law, use nearly identical language to constitutionalize self-defense: Antigua and Barbuda (art. 4), the Bahamas (art. 16.), Barbados (art. 12), Belize (art. 4), Cyprus

(art. 7.), Grenada (art. 2), Guyana (art. 138), Jamaica (art. 14), Malta (§ 33), Nigeria (art. 33), Samoa (art. 5), St. Kitts and Nevis (art. 4), Saint Lucia (art. 2), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (art. 2), and Zimbabwe (art. 12). Another country, Slovakia (art. 15), uses a variation of the formula.

The language in these nations' constitutions is a more elaborate version of the European Convention on Human Rights (online Ch. 18.B.3) protection of the rights to life and self-defense. The standard language in these constitutions provides:

(1) No person shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been convicted.

(2) A person shall not be regarded as having been deprived of his life in contravention of subsection (1) if he dies as the result of the use, to such extent and in such circumstances as are permitted by law, of such force as is reasonably justifiable in the circumstances of the case

(a) for the defence of any person from violence or for the defence of property;

(b) in order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained;

(c) for the purpose of suppressing a riot, insurrection or mutiny or of dispersing an unlawful gathering; or

(d) in order to prevent the commission by that person of a criminal offence, or if he dies as the result of a lawful act of war.

Two other countries constitutionally enumerate a right of self-defense. In Honduras, "the right of defense is inviolable" (art. 82). In Peru, "[e]very person has the right: . . . § 23 To legitimate defense."

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. What are the arguments for and against expressly constitutionalizing a right to self-defense?

2. Suppose that one of the constitutional provisions above were repealed, and a statute were enacted that forbade self-defense. In what sense, if any, could persons in the country assert that they have a right of self-defense? **CQ:** The materials on the origins of international law (online Ch. 18.C) and antecedents of the Second Amendment (online Ch. 21) address this issue.

3. Section 2(a) recognizes legal justification for the reasonable use of deadly force for defense of persons against violence *and* "for the defence of property." Does the right to defend persons necessarily include the right to defend property? If not, why was the defense of property added?

4. If a constitution recognizes an essential right, such as food or education, can the government properly outlaw exercise of the right, such as growing food or teaching children to read? What if the government supplies everyone with plenty of food and excellent education? What if the government aspires to supply sufficient food and education, but is unable to do so? Is there a right to a government that is not tyrannical or oppressive?

3. *Constitutional Resistance to Tyranny*

Many nations' constitutions affirm a right or even a duty of citizens to resist usurpation of power, destruction of constitutional order, or other unlawful acts of persons purporting to exercise governmental power. These constitutions vary widely in their texts and details. Some expressly limit resistance only to nonviolent modes, such as civil disobedience. Others expressly declare a right and duty of forcible resistance. Many others have language for which the use (or nonuse) of force is left to implication. Similarly, constitutions also differ in the specificity of what kinds of acts trigger the rights of resistance.

This section groups the relevant constitutions geographically: Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. After that, a subsection presents the handful of nations' constitutions that offer express moral or other support for liberation movements in other nations.

The constitutional provisions quoted in this section are only those that are currently in effect. A separate document, available online on this textbook's website, [reproduces all constitutional resistance texts past and present](#). The texts have been translated into English and into Chinese.

The next section presents a short case study of Ghana; the section discusses a Ghanaian scholar's argument that Ghana's constitutional right of resistance creates an implicit right of Ghanians to possess arms.

In addition to the constitutions quoted below, there are three nations whose constitutions specifically incorporate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (online Ch. 18.A.1), which recognizes the right of resistance to tyranny. Those nations are Andorra (art. 5), Mauritania (pmb.) (also incorporating African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights), and Romania (art. 20).

a. Europe

Czech Const. art. 23. "Citizens have the right to put up resistance to any person who would do away with the democratic order of human rights and fundamental freedoms established by this Charter, if the actions of constitutional institutions or the effective use of legal means have been frustrated."

France Const. art. 2. "The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression."

Germany Const. art. 20(4). "All Germans shall have the right to resist any persons seeking to abolish this constitutional order, if no other remedy is available."

Greece Const. art. 120(4). "Observance of the Constitution is entrusted to the patriotism of the Greeks who shall have the right and the duty to resist by all possible means against anyone who attempts the violent abolition of the Constitution."

Fundamental Law of Hungary art. C. "(2) No one shall act with the aim of acquiring or exercising power by force, and/or of exclusively possessing it. Everyone shall have the right and obligation to resist such attempts in a lawful way. (3) Only state authorities shall have the exclusive right to use force in order to enforce the Constitution and laws."

Lithuania Const. art. 3. “The People and each citizen shall have the right to oppose anyone who encroaches on the independence, territorial integrity, or constitutional order of the State of Lithuania by force.”

Const. of the Portuguese Repub. art. 21. “Everyone has the right to refuse to comply with an order that infringes his or her rights, freedoms or guarantees and to resist by force any form of aggression when recourse to a public authority is impossible.”

Const. of the Slovak Repub. art. 32. “The citizens shall have the right to resist anyone who would abolish the democratic order of human rights and freedoms set in this Constitution, if the activities of constitutional authorities and the effective application of legal means are restrained.”

b. Latin America

Argentina Const. pt. I, ch. 2, § 36.

This Constitution shall rule even when its observance is interrupted by acts of force against the institutional order and the democratic system. These acts shall be irreparably null.

Their authors shall be punished with the penalty foreseen in Section 29, disqualified in perpetuity from holding public offices and excluded from the benefits of pardon and commutation of sentences.

Those who, as a consequence of these acts, were to assume the powers foreseen for the authorities of this Constitution or for those of the provinces, shall be punished with the same penalties and shall be civil and criminally liable for their acts. The respective actions shall not be subject to prescription.

All citizens shall have the right of resistance to those committing the acts of force stated in this section.

The Argentina Constitution was extensively revised in 1994, including by the addition of a second chapter to Part I’s declarations, rights, and guarantees. The resistance section is the first item in the 1994 additions, because it is the first section in chapter 2. The resistance section refers to section 29, which provides:

Congress may not vest on the National Executive Power—nor may the provincial legislatures vest on the provincial governors—extraordinary powers or the total public authority; it may not grant acts of submission or supremacy whereby the life, honor, or wealth of the Argentine people will be at the mercy of governments or any person whatsoever. Acts of this nature shall be utterly void, and shall render those who formulate them, consent to them or sign them, liable to be condemned as infamous traitors to their fatherland.

Id. pt. I, ch. 1, § 29.

Regarding section 36, a leading Argentinian constitutional treatise asks: “What is this right of resistance; it is not defined. Maybe it can be joined with section 21,

which *oblige*s every citizen *to arm themselves in defense of the constitution*.² We say that the right of resistance—even with arms—has a minimum and essential content that comes directly from section 36, and that the *defense of the constitution*—which is the objective of the defense—is equivalent to the institutional order and of the democratic system contained in it.”³ German J. Bidart Campos, *Manual de la Constitución Reformada* 35 (2008) (translation by this work’s authors); cf. *David Baigún, El delito de « atentado al orden constitucional y la vida democrática » y la reforma de la constitución nacional* (Univ. of Fribourg).³

On the other hand, when section 36 was presented at the 1994 **constitutional convention**, the first speaker said that it referred only to forms of nonviolent resistance—for example, the recent examples of people whistling political songs that had been forbidden by military governments. The convention transcript does not shed more light on the interpretation of the section 36 Resistance Clause.

Cuba Const. art. 3. “When no other recourse is possible, all citizens have the right to resist through all means, including armed struggle, anyone who tries to overthrow the political, social and economic order established in this Constitution.” Like most of the rest of the text of the Cuban Constitution, this provision is a sham. The regime founded by Fidel Castro is and always has been a totalitarian military dictatorship.

Dominican Repub. Const. art. 8(5). “No person is obligated to comply with what is not required by law; nor can they legitimately be impeded from actions not prohibited by law.” See also art. 46 (“All laws, decrees, resolutions, regulations or acts are null and void if contrary to the rights in this constitution.”).

Ecuador Const. art. 98. “Individuals and groups may exercise the right of resistance against acts or omissions of public authorities, persons or legal entities that may violate or infringe their constitutional rights, and demand the recognition of new rights.”

El Salvador Const. art. 87.

The right of the people to insurrection is recognized, for the sole object of reestablishing constitutional order altered by the transgression of the norms relative to the form of government or to the established political system, or for serious violations of the rights consecrated in this Constitution.

The exercise of this right shall not produce the abrogation nor the reform of this Constitution, and shall be limited to the removal insofar as necessary of transgressing officials, replacing them in a transitory manner until they are substituted in the form established by this Constitution.

2. “Every Argentine citizen is obliged to bear arms [*armarse*. lit. “to arm oneself”] in defense of the fatherland and of this Constitution, in accordance with the laws issued by Congress and the Decrees of the National Executive Power to this effect. Citizens by naturalization are free to render or not this service for a period of ten years as from the date they obtain naturalization papers.” *Id.* pt. I, ch. 1, § 29.

3. **David Baigún** had a long and eminent career as an Argentinian law professor and human rights advocate.

Under no circumstances shall the powers and jurisdictions which correspond to the fundamental organs established by this Constitution be exercised by the same person or by a sole institution.

Id. art. 88: “The principle that a President cannot succeed himself [*alternabilidad*] is indispensable for the maintenance of the established form of government and political system. Violation of this norm makes insurrection an obligation.”

Const. of the Rep. of Guatemala art. 5.

Any person has the right to do whatever the law does not prohibit; he is not obligated to obey orders not based on the law or issued according to it. Neither can he be harassed or persecuted for his opinions or for acts that do not involve violation of same.

Id. art. 45: “Action to prosecute the violators of human rights is public and can be exercised through a simple denunciation, without any guarantee or formality whatever. The opposition of the people to protect and defend the rights and guarantees granted in the Constitution is legitimate.”

Honduras Const. art. 3. “No one owes obedience to a usurping government or to those who assume public functions or jobs by force of arms or using means or procedures that violate or ignore what this Constitution and the laws establish. The acts verified by such authorities are null. The people have the right to resort to insurrection in defense of the constitutional order.”

Mexico Const. art. 136: “This Constitution shall not lose its force and effect, even if its observance is interrupted by rebellion. In the event that a government whose principles are contrary to those that are sanctioned herein should become established through any public disturbance, as soon as the people recover their liberty, its observance shall be reestablished, and those who have taken part in the government emanating from the rebellion, as well as those who have cooperated with such persons, shall be judged in accordance with this Constitution and the laws that have been enacted by virtue thereof.”

Paraguay Const. art. 138. “(1) Citizens are hereby authorized to resist usurpers through every means available to them. If a person or a group of persons, acting in the name of any principle or representation contrary to this Constitution, was to seize public power, their action will be null, nonbinding, and of no value, and therefore, exercising their right to resist oppression, the people will be excused from having to comply with such actions. (2) Those foreign states that, under any circumstance, cooperate with such usurpers will not be able to demand compliance with any pact, treaty, or agreement signed with or authorized by an usurping government as if these were obligations or commitments of the Republic of Paraguay.”

Const. of Peru art. 46. “No one owes obedience to a usurping government or to anyone who assumes public office in violation of the Constitution and the law. The civil population has the right to insurrection in defense of the constitutional order. Acts of those who usurp public office are null and void.”

c. Africa

Algeria Const. art. 33. “Individual or associative defence of the fundamental human rights and individual and collective liberties is guaranteed.”

Benin Const. art. 66. “In case of a coup d’état, of a putsch, of aggression by mercenaries or of any action by force whatsoever, any member of a constitutional agency shall have the right and the duty to make an appeal by any means in order to re-establish the constitutional legitimacy, including recourse to existing agreements of military or defense co-operation. In these circumstances for any Beninese to disobey and organize himself to put a check to the illegitimate authority shall constitute the most sacred of rights and the most imperative of duties.”

Cape Verde Const. art. 18. “Any citizen shall have the right not to obey any order that offends his right, liberties and guarantees and to resist by force any illegal aggression, when the recourse to the public authority is not possible.”

Chad Const. pmb.

We the Chadian people: . . .

- Proclaim solemnly our right and duty to resist and disobey any individual or group of individuals, any corps of State that would assume power by force or would exercise it in violation of the present Constitution;
 - Affirm our total opposition to any regime whose policy would be founded on the arbitrariness, dictatorship, injustice, corruption, extortion, nepotism, clanism, tribalism, confessionalism, or confiscation of power; . . .
- . . . Adopt solemnly the present Constitution as the supreme law of the State.

This Preamble is an integral part of the Constitution.

Dem. Repub. of Congo (Brazzaville) Const. art. 64. “All Congolese have the duty to oppose any individual or group of individuals who seize power by force or who exercise it in violation of the provisions of this Constitution.”

Ghana Const. *See* Section A.5.

Guinea Const. art. 21. “The people of Guinea shall freely and sovereignly determine its institutions and the economic and social organization of the Nation. . . . They shall have the right to resist oppression.”

Mali Const. art. 121. “The people have the right to civil disobedience in order to preserve the republican form of the State. Any coup d’Etat or putsch is a crime against the Malian People.”

Mozambique Const. art. 80. “All citizens shall have the right not to comply with orders that are unlawful or that infringe on their rights, freedoms and guarantees.”

Niger Const. art. 6. “The people shall have the right and duty to resist an oppressive regime through civil disobedience. Any regime that deliberately violates

the carrying out of this present Constitution shall be considered an oppressive regime. The people shall have the right to defend the established democratic regime against a coup d'état through civil disobedience. Civil disobedience shall be exercised peacefully and only as a last resort."

Rwanda Const. art. 48. "In all circumstances, every citizen, whether civilian or military, has the duty to respect the Constitution, other laws and regulations of the country. Every citizen has the right to defy orders received from his or her superior authority if the orders constitute a serious and manifest violation of human rights and public freedoms."

d. Asia

Armenia Const. art. 18. "Everyone shall have a right to protect his/her rights and freedoms by any means not prohibited by the law."

Azerbaijan Const. art. 52(2). "Every citizen of the Azerbaijan Republic has the right to independently show resistance to the attempt of a mutiny against the State or forced change of the constitutional order."

Maldives Const. art. 64. "No employee of the State shall impose any orders on a person except under authority of a law. Everyone has the right not to obey an unlawful order." *Id.* art. 245: "No person shall give an illegal order to a member of the security services. Members of the security services shall not obey a manifestly illegal order."

Thailand Const. § 69. "A person shall have the right to resist peacefully any act committed for the acquisition of the power to rule the country by a means which is not in accordance with the modes provided in this Constitution."

4. *Support for National Liberation Movements*

Some constitutions offer moral support, at least, for liberation movements in other nations:

Algeria Const. art. 27. "Algeria associates itself with all the peoples fighting for their political and economic liberation, for the right of self-determination and against any racial discrimination."

Angola Const. art. 16. Angola "shall support and be in solidarity with the struggles of peoples for national liberation."

Cuba Const. art. 12(g). Cuba "recognizes the legitimacy of struggles for national liberation, as well as armed resistance to aggression, and considers its internationalist obligation to support the one attacked and [stands] with the peoples who fight for their liberation and self-determination."

Ecuador Const. art. 416(8). "The Ecuadoran State condemns all forms of colonialism, neocolonialism and racial discrimination or segregation. It recognizes the right of peoples to liberate themselves from these oppressive systems."

Portugal Const. art. 7(3). "Portugal recognises the right of peoples to rebel against all forms of oppression, in particular colonialism and imperialism."

Suriname Const. art. 7(4). “The Republic of Suriname promotes the solidarity and collaboration with other peoples in the combat against colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, genocide and in the combat for national liberation, peace and social progress.”

Only Portugal’s national-liberation provision was enacted by a democratic government. The Angolan government was put in power by Cuban troops during a post-colonial civil war among anticolonial groups, following Portugal’s 1975 relinquishment of its Angolan colony.

5. *Ghana: An Explicit Right and Duty to Restore Constitutional Order*

Under Ghana’s Constitution, adopted in 1992,

- (4) All citizens of Ghana shall have the right and duty at all times—
 - (a) to defend this Constitution, and in particular, to resist any person or group of persons seeking to commit any of the acts referred to in clause (3) of this article; and
 - (b) to do all in their power to restore this Constitution after it has been suspended, overthrown, or abrogated as referred to in clause (3) of this article.

Ghana Const. ch. I, art. 4. The acts that must be resisted are listed in article 3: establishment of a one-party state, suppression of anyone’s lawful political activity, violent overthrow of government, abrogation of the constitution or any part of it, and high treason. Articles 5, 6, and 7 provide indemnity and immunity to all citizens exercising their Article 4 “right and duty.”

The 1992 right and duty of resistance are based in part on Ghana’s history of military coups and dictatorship. The timeline is as follows: 1957— independence from the United Kingdom; 1958— independence leader and President Kwame Nkrumah begins establishing a one-party state; 1964— Nkrumah suspends the constitution; 1966— military coup ousts Nkrumah while he is in China visiting Chairman Mao; 1969— political parties are relegalized, and free elections are held; 1972— another junta takes power in a coup; 1979— the highly corrupt junta is removed in a coup led by Lt. Jerry Rawlings, who leads the way in putting a right to resist into the new constitution, and new elections are held; 1981— Rawlings takes power in another coup; 1992— a new constitution is enacted, free elections are held, and Rawlings wins the election. Since then, free elections have taken place every four years.

Ishmael Norman, a professor at Ghana’s University of Health and Allied Sciences, argues that “[t]he 1992 Constitution provides explicit instructions to the citizens of Ghana to defend it. That is to say, the citizens are inured with the correlative constitutional right to acquire arms, to keep and to bear them in anticipation of national defense.” Ishmael Norman, *The Right to Keep and Bear Arms, Ghana*, 8 *Advances in Applied Sociol.* 668 (2018).

Professor Norman argues that current Ghanaian arms laws violate the right. He places blame on the National Commission on Small Arms and on a regional gun control convention, the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) [Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons](#). The present laws have roots

in colonial days, when the British Empire forbade Ghanaians to make firearms, lest anticolonial forces obtain them. Emmanuel Addo Sowatey, *Small Arms Proliferation and Regional Security in West Africa: The Ghanaian Case*, in 1 News from the Nordic Afr. Inst. 6, 6 (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet 2005).

Yet Ghana has a thriving firearms manufacturing business. With little more than “a pair of bellows to fan the fire, a hammer, and an iron pipe,” an individual Ghanaian gunsmith can produce several working guns per day; collectively, about a hundred thousand per year are produced. *Id.* at 8. Illegally made firearms have become common, and their quality continues to improve. Some fall into the hands of street criminals. Kai Ryssdal, *Ghana Blacksmiths Fuel Gun Crime*, Marketplace, July 10, 2009. The clandestine gun-making skills that were originally learned during colonial days have made Ghana a regional exporter of quality firearms. Emmanuel Kwesi Aning, *The Anatomy of Ghana’s Secret Arms Industry*, in *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the ECOWAS Region* 78 (Nicolas Florquin & Eric G. Berman eds. 2005) (Geneva, Small Arms Survey).

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. *Constitutional order.* All of the resistance articles seem to say that the constitution is always the law—even when the government suspends, annuls, or violates the constitution. This is so even if a dictatorship’s puppet legislature purported to repeal the constitution. How could a document that the current government does not consider binding be called “law”?

2. *Enforcers of the constitutions.* Imagine a nation in which the duty of resistance was constitutionally triggered—such as by establishment of a one-party state or the violent abolition of the constitution. In such circumstances, judges would probably have little or no independence from the dictatorship. Saving the constitutional order would be the right and the duty of the people directly. Thus, the resistance articles function as a last-resort safety instruction: when all the other checks and balances have failed, the people must restore constitutional order. How can instructions to commit insurrection or engage in unauthorized mass public protests be called “law”?

3. All of the constitutions with resistance provisions are relatively new and from times when memories were fresh of cruel “governments” run by communists, fascists, or other military dictators.⁴ With tyranny having been common globally in the last century, why do you think these particular nations, and not others in their regions, have resistance articles?

4. Professor Norman argues that the resistance article of the Ghana Constitution implies an individual right to possess arms. Do you agree? Can any of the other constitutions in this section also be read to imply a right to arms? Can there be effective resistance to violent tyranny without bearing arms?

5. Hypothesize a right to arms derived from the above constitutional provisions. How would this right be similar to or different from the Second Amendment

4. France’s provision first appeared in the 1795 constitution, following the French Revolution. The constitution did not survive. The resistance provision was restored by a new constitution in 1958, creating France’s “Fifth Republic.”

right? **CQ:** Recall from Chapters 6 and 7 the nineteenth-century American concept of what Professor Michael O’Shea calls the “hybrid right,” which was a popular interpretation of the Second Amendment in the American South, in order to allow for certain gun controls. The hybrid right, in its most restrictive form, allowed for the home possession of all types of arms that could be used in a militia—for example, rifles or large handguns suitable for military use—but not small and easily concealable handguns. It did not include a right to bear arms in public for personal defense when not in militia service. *See Aymette v. State*, 21 Tenn. (2 Humph.) 154 (1840) (Ch. 6.B.2) (noting that the Tennessee Constitution’s arms-bearing provision was intended to protect against tyranny of the type experienced by the colonists under the Stuart monarchs (Ch. 2.H)). Is the hybrid right a possible model for an anti-tyranny right to arms based on some of the above constitutional provisions?

6. Some of the above constitutions expressly recognize the right of “insurrection” in their text. Greece’s “duty to resist by all possible means” seems to the same effect. Portugal, however, recognizes “the right . . . to repel by force any form of aggression when recourse to public authority is impossible.” Does the Portuguese provision authorize the use of force only if a dictatorship acts violently? Suppose, for example, that the Portuguese government announced that all future elections were cancelled, turned off all telephones and electronic communications, shut down the postal system, and closed the borders—but did not initiate violence. What should a constitutionally scrupulous Portuguese citizen do?

7. In Hungary, everyone has “the right and obligation to resist such activities in such ways as permitted by law.” What is the effect of the “permitted by law” language? Suppose a democratically elected government requires a government license to publish books or newspapers and institutes a prior restraint censorship regime to prevent published criticism of the government. Some patriotic Hungarian dissidents want to illegally publish an underground newspaper criticizing the government, and they want to be sure that they are acting within the bounds of Hungary’s constitutional system of resistance. Is their publication of the newspaper in violation of the statute compliant with Hungary’s article 2? Does the answer depend on what “law” is? **CQ:** See the discussion of “pretend laws” in Ch. 4.B.5 Note 2 (laws such as those of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime in France were denounced as “pretend laws”; although they had the form of real laws, there was no moral obligation to obey them).

8. *When to resist?* All of the above nations (except Andorra) at some point in the twentieth century suffered the destruction of self-government and constitutional order. Sometimes the destruction was obvious and abrupt, as in the 1939 Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia or the 1940 Soviet invasion of Lithuania.⁵ Or the destruction may be perpetrated by domestic traitors abetted by an outside power, as in the 1948 communist coup in Czechoslovakia (*see* online Ch. 18.B.4.a).

5. Lithuania was a large and powerful state during the Middle Ages but was later conquered by the Russian Empire. Its independence was proclaimed in 1918, and then defended for the next several years in fighting with the Soviets, Germans, and Poles. Pursuant to the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact, Lithuania was secretly given to the Soviets, who invaded in 1940. The Soviets were expelled by the 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. The Soviets returned in 1944. Thereafter, Lithuania was incorporated in the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics. Independence was declared in 1990, and firmly established in 1991 as the Soviet Union collapsed.

Foreign conquest or the abrupt and unconstitutional seizure of power by domestic totalitarians may be obvious signals that the duty of constitutional resistance arisen. But often domestic dictatorships do not arise all at once. The Hugo Chávez regime first came to power in Venezuela through democratic elections in 1998. The regime's destruction of constitutional order took place over the next two decades. Today, Chávez's successor, Nicolás Maduro, rules a communist tyranny and narco-state, and has sworn never to relinquish power. (For more on Venezuela, see Section C.5.) Similarly, the Turkish dictator Recep Tayyip Erdoğan won elections, then exterminated Turkish liberty in stages, not all at once. Even Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist German Workers Party (*Nazi*) first came to power by winning a plurality in a free election and being chosen to head a multiparty coalition government.

In a situation of gradual tyrannization, how does one determine that the time has come for the resistance that the nation's constitution demands? How did the American colonists decide during the growing political crisis with Great Britain in the 1770s? What factors did Patrick Henry consider decisive in his 1776 "Give me liberty" speech urging Virginia to fight? (Ch. 4.A.6). What British actions provoked the Americans to start arming themselves in earnest? To turn a long-running political dispute with Great Britain into a shooting war?

9. *Spain's statutory right of resistance.* Although the Spanish Constitution does not mention a right of resistance, Spain's statutes do. Under Spanish law, certain acts of the public administration are null and void: acts damaging constitutional rights and freedoms; dictates of an organ that is manifestly incompetent because it lacks territorial or subject matter jurisdiction; acts that have impossible content; acts that constitute a criminal offense; dictates totally and absolutely disregarding the legally established procedures for creating laws; usurpations of power; unconstitutional administrative acts; and ex post facto laws. Régimen Jurídico de las Administraciones Públicas y del Procedimiento Administrativo Común, ch. IV, art. 62 ("Nulidad de pleno derecho") (Spain) (*Ley 4/1999*, de 13 de enero, de modificación de la Ley 30/1992, de 26 de noviembre). Accordingly, persons have a right (but not a duty) of self-defense against such acts. Diego M. Luzón Peña, Aspectos Esenciales de la Legítima Defensa 282-83 (Julio César Faria ed., Buenos Aires 2d ed. 2006) (1978) (discussing 1992 and 1978 texts of the same law). From 1936 to 1975, Spain was ruled by the fascist dictator Francisco Franco. Franco's death in 1975 led to the restoration of the monarchy under King Juan Carlos I, and the beginning of transition to democracy. A new constitution was established in 1978, along with the above statute governing public administration.

10. Nineteenth-century Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant argued that a legal order must, by its nature, always retain its supremacy over the governed. Accordingly, citizens may not pass judgment on the legal order; it is immoral for citizens to resist abuses of government power, no matter how extreme. Immanuel Kant, *The Science of Right* 60 (W. Hastie transl., U. Adelaide 2005) (1790). For criticism of Kant, see Shannon K. Brincat, "*Death to Tyrants*": *The Political Philosophy of Tyrannicide—Part I*, 4 J. Int'l Pol. Theory 212 (2008). Cf. Shannon K. Brincat, *The Legal Philosophy of Internationally Assisted Tyrannicide*, 34 Australian J. Legal Phil. 151 (2009). **CQ:** Compare Kant's argument with the English Stuart kings who claimed

unlimited power to rule by “divine right” (Ch. 2.H.2) and to the long argument in Chinese and European history over whether resistance to government can ever be legitimate (online Ch. 21).

11. *Further reading*: Tim Ginsburg, Daniel Lansberg-Rodriguez & Mila Versteeg, *When to Overthrow Your Government: The Right to Resist in the World’s Constitutions*, 60 UCLA L. Rev. 1184 (2013); Edward Rubin, *Judicial Review and the Right to Resist*, 97 Geo. L.J. 61 (2008) (American judicial review was premised on centuries of development in political thought holding that governments are bound to obey higher law); Roberto Gargarella, *The Last Resort: The Right of Resistance in Situations of Legal Alienation*, Yale Law School SELA (Seminario en Latinoamérica de Teoría Constitucional y Política) Papers (2003) (supporting right of resistance in situations of “legal alienation” —when the legal order is not supported by the community).

As of the early eighteenth century, a quarter of constitutions included a right to resist. Ginsburg et al., at 1217. As new countries emerged, the right was not usually included in new constitutions. In recent decades, though, the right has proliferated, although not quite returning to its eighteenth-century peak percentage. *Id.* at 1217-18. The Ginsburg et al. article divides resistance clauses into two types: Forward-looking clauses aim to encourage the citizenry to resist the next coup, and are the type found in Europe. Backward-looking clauses are essentially post-hoc justifications for the coup that put the current government in power, and are typical of Latin America. In our view, although this geographical division is overstated, the insight that some resistance clauses may actually just be excuses for dictatorship is important; the Cuban Constitution imposed by the Castro dictatorship is a good example of Ginsburg’s theory of resistance clauses serving as pretexts for the endless perpetuation of the existing tyranny.

EXERCISE: FORMULATING A RIGHT TO RESISTANCE

The constitutional convention of a new nation has asked you to draft a provision for the right to resistance. Write a proposed constitutional article, which may combine and modify the above provisions, or incorporate other ideas. Also write a short commentary explaining why you chose the particular language; your commentary will become part of the official records of the convention.

6. *Constitutional Security Against Home Invasion*

National constitutions that include a bill of rights very frequently contain a provision protecting the right to security against home invasion. Sometimes—as in the U.S. Fourth Amendment—the right is stated in terms that implicitly or explicitly apply only to home invasions committed by the government. Often, however, the right is stated in terms that are not limited to government actors. For example, Afghanistan’s Constitution insists that “no one, including the state, is allowed to enter or inspect a private residence without prior permission of the resident or holding a court order.” [Afghanistan Const.](#) art. 38. The Slovak Constitution similarly combines protection against state action and nongovernment action:

(1) A person's home is inviolable. It must not be entered without the resident's consent.

(2) A house search is admissible only in connection with criminal proceedings and only on the basis of the judge's written and substantiated order. The method of carrying out a house search will be set out in a law.

(3) Other infringements upon the inviolability of one's home can be permitted by law only if this is inevitable in a democratic society in order to protect people's lives, health, or property, to protect the rights and liberties of others, or to ward off a serious threat to public order. If the home is used also for business or to perform some other economic activity, such infringements can be permitted by law also when this is unavoidable in meeting the tasks of public administration.

Constitution of the Slovak Republic art. 21 (1992).

Other provisions protecting the home:

Andorra Const. art. 14. "No one shall enter a dwelling or any other premises against the will of the owner or without a warrant, except in case of flagrant delicto."

Angola Const. art. 44. "The State shall guarantee the inviolability of the home. . . ."

Antigua and Barbuda Const. ch. 2(3)(c). "protection for his family life, his personal privacy, the privacy of his home and other property . . ."

Armenia Const. art. 21. "It is prohibited to enter a person's dwelling against his or her own will except under cases prescribed by law."

Azerbaijan Const. art. 33.1-2. "With the exception of cases specified by Law or Court no one shall be authorized to enter the Apartment against the will of the Resident."

Bahamas Const. ch. 3.15(c). "protection for the privacy of his home and other property . . ."

Belarus Const. art. 29. "No person shall have the right, save in due course of law to enter the premises or other legal property of a citizen against one's will."

Belgium Const. art. 15. "The domicile is inviolable; no visit to the individual's residence can take place except in the cases provided for by law and in the form prescribed by law."

Belize Const. art. II.9.1. "Except with his own consent, a person shall not be subjected to the search of his person or his property or the entry by others on his premises."

Benin Const. art. 20. "The domicile is inviolable. There may be no inspections or searches except according to the forms and conditions envisaged by the law."

Bolivia Const. art. 21. "Every house is an inviolable asylum; at night, no one may enter without the consent of the inhabitants, and by day only by written authorization of a competent authority or in case of flagrante delicto."

Brazil Const. art. 5. “The home is the inviolable asylum of the individual; it is forbidden to enter except with the consent of those who live there, in case of a crime detected in the act, a disaster, or to give aid, according to a judicial determination.”

Bulgaria Const. art. 33.2. “(2) Entering a residence or staying in it without the consent of its occupant or without the permission of the judicial authority may be allowed only for the purpose of preventing an imminent crime or a crime in progress, for the capture of a criminal, or in extreme necessity.”

Burkina Faso Const. art. 6. “[T]he residence, the domicile, the private and family life, the secrecy of the correspondence of every person are inviolable.”

Burundi Const. art. 23. “No one can be the subject of arbitrary interference [with] his private life, his family, his residence or his correspondence. . . . There may not be orders for searches or home inspections except by the forms and the conditions envisaged by the law.”

Cambodia Const. art. 40. “The rights to privacy of residence . . . shall be guaranteed.”

China Const. art. 39. “Unlawful search of, or intrusion into, a citizen’s home is prohibited.”

Congo Const. art. 29. “The home is inviolable. There may not be inspections or searches except according to the forms and conditions envisaged by the law.”

Cuba Const. art. 56. “Nobody can enter the home of another against his will, except in those cases foreseen by law.”

Dominican Rep. Const. art. 8.3. “Inviolability of the home. No domiciliary inspection can be legitimate but in the cases anticipated by the law and with the formalities that it prescribes.”

Egypt Const. art. 39. “Private homes are inviolable. With the exception of cases of immediate danger and distress, they may not be entered, searched or monitored, except in cases defined by law, and by a causal judicial warrant which specifies place, timing and purpose. Those in a home shall be alerted before the home is entered or searched.”

El Salvador Const. art. 20. “The dwelling is inviolable and it will only be able to be entered by consent of the person who inhabits it, by judicial mandate, in case of a flagrant crime or imminent danger of its perpetration, or of serious risk to the people.”

Eritrea Const. art. 18(2). “No person shall be subjected to unlawful search, including his home or other property.”

Estonia Const. art. 33. “No one’s dwelling . . . shall be forcibly entered or searched, except in the cases and pursuant to procedure provided by law.”

Ethiopia Const. art. 26.1. “Everyone has . . . the right not to be subjected to searches of his home, person or property.”

Germany Const. art. 13.1. “The home is inviolable.”

Grenada Const. ch. 1.7. “Except with his own consent, no person shall be subjected to the search of his person or his property or the entry by others on his premises.”

Guatemala Const. art. 23. “The home is inviolable. No one can enter another’s dwelling without the permission of the inhabitants, except by written order of a competent judge, specifying the reason for the investigation, and never before 6:00 or after 18:00. Such investigation should be carried out in the presence of the person concerned, or his authorized representative.”

Guyana Const. art. 40.1(c). “Protection for the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation.”

Honduras Const. art. 99. “The domicile is inviolable. No entrance or search will be able to be authorized without consent of the person who inhabits it or approval of competent authority.”

Hong Kong Const. art. 29. “Arbitrary or unlawful search of, or intrusion into, a resident’s home or other premises shall be prohibited.”

Iran Const. art. 22. “The dignity, life, property, rights, residence, and occupation of the individual are inviolate, except in cases sanctioned by law.”

Ireland Const art. 40.5. “The dwelling of every citizen is inviolable and shall not be forcibly entered save in accordance with law.”

Italy Const. art. 14. “(2) No one’s domicile may be inspected, searched, or seized save in cases and in the manner laid down by law.”

Jamaica Const. art. 19.1. “Except with his own consent, no person shall be subject to the search of his person or his property or the entry by others on his premises.”

Jordan Const. art. 10. “Dwelling houses shall be inviolable and shall not be entered except in the circumstances and in the manner prescribed by law.”

Kuwait Const. art. 38. “Places of residence shall be inviolable. They may not be entered without the permission of their occupants except in the circumstances and manner specified by law.”

Latvia Const. art. 96. “Everyone has the right to inviolability of a private life, place of residence and correspondence.”

Lebanon Const. art. 14. “The citizen’s place of residence is inviolable. No one may enter it except in the circumstances and manners prescribed by law.”

Liberia Const. art. 16. “No person shall be subjected to interference with his privacy of person, family, home or correspondence except by order of a court of competent jurisdiction.”

Libya Const. art. 12. “The home is inviolable and shall not be entered or searched except under the circumstances and conditions defined by the law.”⁶

6. This is the relevant article from the Libyan constitution as it stood under Moamar Gaddafi’s government. As of 2021, the Libyan people have not yet adopted a replacement.

Luxembourg Const. art. 15. “No domiciliary visit may be made except in cases and according to the procedure laid down by the law.”

Macedonia Const. art. 26.1. “The inviolability of the home is guaranteed.”

Madagascar Const. art. 13.1. “Everyone shall be assured of protection of his person, his residence, and his correspondence.”

Mongolia Const. art. 16.13. “Privacy of citizens, their families, correspondence, and homes are protected by law.”

Nepal Const. art. 22. “Except as provided by law, the privacy of the person, house, property, document, correspondence or information of anyone is inviolable.”

Nicaragua Const. art. 26. “Every person has the right: 1. To his private life and that of his family. 2. To the inviolability of his domicile, his correspondence and his communications of all types.”

Nigeria Const. art. 37. “The privacy of citizens, their homes, correspondence, telephone conversations and telegraphic communications is hereby guaranteed and protected.”

Oman Const. art. 27. “Dwellings are inviolable and it is not permitted to enter them without the permission . . . except in the circumstances specified by the Law.”

Panamá Const. art. 26. “The domicile or residence is inviolable.”

Paraguay Const. art. 33. “Personal and family privacy, as well as respect for privacy, are inviolable”; *id.* art. 34: “Every private enclosure is inviolable.”

Perú Const. art. 2.9. Every person has a right “[t]o the inviolability of the domicile.”

Portugal Const. art. 34. “The individual’s home and the privacy of his correspondence and other means of private communication are inviolable. . . .”

Qatar Const. art. 37: “The sanctity of human privacy shall be inviolable, and therefore interference into privacy of a person, family affairs, home of residence . . . may not be allowed save as limited by the provisions of the law stipulated therein.”

Romania Const. art. 27.1. “No one shall enter or remain in the domicile or residence of a person without his consent.”

Russia Const. art. 25. “No one shall have the right to penetrate the home against the will of those residing in it unless in cases provided for by the federal law or upon the decision of the court.”

Rwanda Const. art. 22. “A person’s home is inviolable.”

St. Kitts and Nevis Const. art. 9.1. “Except with his own consent, a person shall not be subject to the search of his person or his property or the entry by others on his premises.”

Saint Lucia Const. art. 7.1. (same as St. Kitts and Nevis).

Saint Vincent Const. art. 7.1. (same as St. Kitts and Nevis).

Saudi Arabia Const. art. 37. “The home is sacrosanct and shall not be entered without the permission of the owner or be searched except in cases specified by statutes.”

Slovakia Const. art. 21.1. “Entrance without consent of the person residing therein is not permitted.”

South Korea Const. art. 16. “All citizens are free from intrusion into their place of residence.”

Spain Const. art. 18.2. “The home is inviolable.”

Suriname Const. art. 17.1. “Everyone has a right to respect of his privacy, his family life, his home.”

Switzerland Const. art. 13.1. “Every person has the right to receive respect for their private and family life, home, and secrecy of the mails and telecommunications.”

Syria Const. art. 31. “Homes are inviolable.”

Thailand Const. §35. “The entry into a dwelling place without consent of its possessor or the search thereof shall not be made except by virtue of the law.”

Trinidad and Tobago Const. art. 4(c). “the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life”

Tunisia Const. art. 23. “The state protects the right to privacy and the sanctity of domiciles, and the confidentiality of correspondence and communications, and personal information. Every citizen has the right to choose a place of residence and to free movement within the country and the right to leave the country.”

Turkey Const. art. 21.1. “The domicile of an individual shall not be violated.”

Uruguay Const. art. 11. “The home is an inviolable asylum. At night nobody may enter without consent of the head of the house, and by day, only by express order of a competent judge, in writing and according to cases determined by the law.”

Venezuela Const. art. 47. “The domestic home and all private personal enclosures are inviolable.”

Vietnam Const. art. 73.1-2. “No one is allowed to enter another person’s home without the latter’s consent, unless otherwise authorised by the law.”

Zambia Const. art. 17.1. “Except with his own consent, no person shall be subjected to the search of his person or his property or the entry by others on his premises.”

Zimbabwe Const. art. 17.1. “Except with his own consent . . . no person shall be subjected to the search of his person or his property or the entry by others on his premises.”

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. *Derivative or penumbral rights.* Explicit constitutional rights to arms are much less common internationally than rights to be secure against home invasion. Could the right to be secure against home invasion imply derivative rights to resist home invasion—for example, a derivative right to door and window locks? Would it be a violation of the right to be secure against home invasion if the government outlawed reinforced glass? Window bars? Dogs trained to attack intruders? Dogs trained to raise an alarm? Defensive weapons, such as chemical sprays? Contact weapons, such as clubs or bats? What about firearms?

2. The Castle Doctrine of English common law (“That the house of everyone is to him as his castle and fortress, as well for his defense against injury and violence as for his repose.” *Semayne’s Case*, 77 Eng. Rep. 194, 195 (K.B. 1603)) is discussed in Chapter 2.E. Is it analogous to the explicit home protection provisions of the national constitutions?

3. Is *District of Columbia v. Heller’s* (Ch. 11.A) strong protection of self-defense inside the home consistent with international norms?

4. The actual practices of many nations diverge considerably from what their written constitutions require. For example, although many constitutions strongly guarantee the inviolability of the home, warrantless intrusions by police may be common. Likewise, as detailed Section C.4, Mexico’s current laws on arms control are vastly more restrictive than what the Mexican Constitution seems to allow. Does the frequent violation of constitutions prove that constitutions are unimportant? Are certain human rights so universally respected that even oppressive governments at least pay lip service to them?

5. Tunisia’s constitution was ratified in January 2014. It provides “The state protects the right to privacy and the sanctity of domiciles. . . .” Tunisia’s previous constitution, which was in place under a politically moderate kleptocracy, stated: “The inviolability of the home and the secrecy of correspondence are guaranteed, save in exceptional cases established by the law.” Tunisia Const. of 1956, art. 9. As a purely textual matter, what is the difference between the two provisions? Does the type of regime under which the constitution exists influence your view as to which you would prefer?

B. MULTINATIONAL COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF THE EFFECTS OF PRIVATE GUN OWNERSHIP ON CRIME AND VIOLENCE

Arguments about American firearms policy often refer to the experiences of other countries. It is common to assume that the effects of policies or practices in one nation will translate into another. A comparison of American crime rates (and other social ills such as suicide), not with a few isolated examples of other countries, but with a broad range of jurisdictions that have varying levels of gun regulation and rates of gun ownership, is worthwhile.

The comparative studies excerpted below try to assess the relationship between firearms policy and outcomes across nations. In reading them, pay attention to the

correlations (and lack of correlations!) that each study claims. Consider the arguments that each study makes about whether the correlations are *caused* by the rate of gun ownership in each country.

All the studies examine gun density as a variable among nations. One of the difficulties of conducting such studies is estimating the actual number of firearms in a nation. Many governments have gun registration data, but the data by definition include only the guns that have been registered with the government. Especially when the government makes it difficult or expensive for people to acquire firearms lawfully and register them, the number of firearms in a nation may vastly exceed the number of registered firearms. Mexico, Part C.5, is a case in point, in which unregistered guns comprise the vast majority of the gun stock. Professor Johnson's article, Section B.5, provides a list of other nations where unregistered guns far outnumber registered ones—based, of course, on rough estimates of the quantity of unregistered guns.

Some scholars, such as those at the Small Arms Survey (a research institute in Geneva, Switzerland), start with registration data, and then use other sources to estimate the total gun supply in a nation. The Kopel et al. article, Section B.4, relies on the Small Arms Survey for national data.

Another source for estimates is annual data about firearms manufacture, imports, and exports in a particular nation. Chapter 1.B uses over half a century of U.S. data to estimate the U.S. gun supply. In most nations, however, the long-term data on manufacture, imports, and exports are not nearly so complete.

Some scholars, such as Professor Gary Kleck, dismiss the Small Arms Survey figures as near-worthless and prefer to use "Percentage Gun Suicide" (PGS) to estimate the firearms inventory. Under this approach, a country where 18 percent of suicide victims use guns would presumably have 9 times more guns per capita than a country where 2 percent of suicides were committed with guns. PGS is considered a reasonably valid indicator of gun availability in the general population.

Because suicide itself is far more prevalent among older males than among the general population, however, PGS might be more representative of gun possession within this group, rather than of the general population. In addition, one unexplored subject of research is whether, from country to country, there are different attitudes and influences affecting the use of guns as suicide instruments such that people in countries with relatively equal gun inventories would be differently inclined to use guns in suicide.

Keep these points of uncertainty in mind as you read the following studies. You will see how different researchers take diverse approaches to a vexing challenge in social science and to the challenge of assembling data worth analyzing.

Section 1 presents a fairly sophisticated example of the simplest type of comparative international study. In this *observational study*, the authors detail the past and present homicide rates and gun ownership rates in various European nations, plus the United States, and look to see if there is any pattern.

Although observational studies can be informative, a more complex form of analysis attempts to account for national differences in other social factors, such as poverty rates, percentage of the population that are young males, and so on. These types of studies are called *multivariate studies*.

Section 2 presents a brief guide for evaluating statistical research, including multivariate studies. A lawyer may not have had training in statistical analysis, but

client representation may sometimes require addressing statistical research. Section 2 is a helpful guide to the process, with introductions to the vocabulary and methods of analysis. The section concludes with an excerpt from an article by Gary Kleck explaining the pitfalls of studies that fail to properly consider variables and causation.

Section 3 provides a lengthy excerpt from a sophisticated international study of the complex effects of varying rates of handgun and long gun ownership in different nations.

Not all differences between nations can be statistically quantified. Yet the influence of culture on how arms are used or misused in a nation can be profound. Section 4 excerpts two statistical studies that attempt to consider arms data in broader social context. The first study contrasts the effects of increased gun density in Eastern Europe with the effects in Latin America. The second study looks at whether there is any relationship between higher rates of gun density and political or civil liberty, economic freedom and prosperity, or noncorrupt government.

The studies below come to different conclusions about whether increased or decreased density of guns in general (or some types of guns) have beneficial, harmful, or insignificant social effects. Assuming *arguendo* that the effects of high rates of gun ownership are mainly harmful, a resulting question is what, if anything, can be done in the United States, where the per-capita gun ownership rate vastly exceeds that of any other nation, and there are already more guns than people. The article in Section 5, by Professor Johnson, addresses this “remainder problem.”

1. *Observational Study*

The simplest approach to comparative analysis is just to compare a few nations with each other, based on some basic statistics. For example: The United States has more guns per capita than do the United Kingdom, Canada, or Japan, and the United States also has higher homicide rates than the other three nations; therefore, one might conclude that greatly reducing gun ownership in the United States would greatly reduce homicide. This sort of argument has been part of the U.S. gun control debate for decades.

When one is trying to make international comparisons, an important question is what makes one country “like” another? For example, what makes another country “like” the United States? Having an English common law heritage? Having a diverse ethnic mix? An advanced economy? A history of slavery that persisted until the nineteenth century? Should one compare the United States to Luxembourg (a microstate with an advanced economy, a homogeneous population, total prohibition of citizen firearms, and a low homicide rate) or to Mexico (less developed economically, but more like the United States in terms of size and population diversity, with very restrictive but not prohibitory gun laws, and a very high homicide rate)? If one compares the United States to Western Europe, the United States has a much higher homicide rate. If one compares the United States to other counties in the Western Hemisphere, the U.S. homicide rate looks low. The U.S. rate is also low in comparison to a broad group of high- and middle-income nations. See Ryan McMaken, *The Mistake of Only Comparing US Murder Rates to “Developed” Countries*, Mises Wire (Oct. 12, 2015).

Similar questions arise for quantifying mass shootings. If a drug cartel murders ten members of a rival cartel, is that a “mass shooting”? If religiously motivated terrorists murder a dozen people of a different religion (or of the same religion, but with different practices) is that a “mass shooting”? Using a narrow definition, the United States has a higher per-capita death rate from mass shootings than most but not all European countries. If one counts drug cartel murders in Mexico, Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria, and so on, then the United States looks relatively peaceful by comparison. Some mass shootings, such as the Islamist murders of the staff of the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine in Paris in January 2015 are not counted as “mass shootings” in many databases because they were terrorist attacks. Jaclyn Schildkraut & H. Jaymi Elsass, *Mass Shootings: Media, Myths, and Realities* 113 (2016). Professors Schildkraut and Elsass call President Barack H. Obama’s claim that mass shootings happen with unique frequency in the United States a “myth.” *Id.* at 84. If we consider per-capita rates, and the many types of mass shootings that are somehow not labeled as a “mass shooting,” then “it is probable the statistics would show even less disparity in terms of the ‘frequency’ of mass shootings in other countries.” *Id.* at 114.

The following article is an observational study of European nations plus the United States. It looks at homicide, gun homicide, suicide, gun suicide, and gun ownership rates, past and present, to see if there is a correlation between rates of gun ownership and the various causes of death.

Don B. Kates & Gary Mauser

Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide? A Review of International and Some Domestic Evidence

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INTRODUCTION

International evidence and comparisons have long been offered as proof of the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths. Unfortunately, such discussions are all too often afflicted by misconceptions and factual error and focus on comparisons that are unrepresentative. It may be useful to begin with a few examples. There is a compound assertion that (a) guns are uniquely available in the United States compared with other modern developed nations, which is why (b) the United States has by far the highest murder rate. Though these assertions have been endlessly repeated, statement (b) is, in fact, false and statement (a) is substantially so.

Since at least 1965, the false assertion that the United States has the industrialized world’s highest murder rate has been an artifact of politically motivated Soviet minimization designed to hide the true homicide rates. Since well before that date, the Soviet Union possessed extremely stringent gun controls that were effectuated by a police state apparatus providing stringent enforcement. So successful was that regime that few Russian civilians now have firearms and very few murders involve them. Yet, manifest success in keeping its people disarmed did not prevent the Soviet Union from having far and away the highest murder rate in the developed world. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the gunless Soviet Union’s murder rates

paralleled or generally exceeded those of gun-ridden America. While American rates stabilized and then steeply declined, however, Russian murder increased so drastically that by the early 1990s the Russian rate was three times higher than that of the United States. Between 1998-2004 (the latest figure available for Russia), Russian murder rates were nearly four times higher than American rates. Similar murder rates also characterize the Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and various other now-independent European nations of the former U.S.S.R. Thus, in the United States and the former Soviet Union transitioning into current-day Russia, “homicide results suggest that where guns are scarce other weapons are substituted in killings.”⁸ While American gun ownership is quite high, Table 1 shows many other developed nations (e.g., Norway, Finland, Germany, France, Denmark) with high rates of gun ownership. These countries, however, have murder rates as low or lower than many developed nations in which gun ownership is much rarer.

Table 1 European Gun Ownership and Murder Rates (Rates Given Are per 100,000 People and in Descending Order)

Nation	Murder Rate	Rate of Gun Ownership
Russia	20.54 [2002]	4,000
Hungary	2.22 [2003]	2,000
Finland	1.98 [2004]	39,000
Sweden	1.87 [2001]	24,000
Poland	1.79 [2003]	1,500
France	1.65 [2003]	30,000
Denmark	1.21 [2003]	19,000
Greece	1.12 [2003]	11,000
Switzerland	0.99 [2003]	16,000
Germany	0.93 [2003]	30,000
Luxembourg	0.90 ⁷ [2002]	c. 0
Norway	0.81 [2001]	36,000
Austria	0.80 [2002]	17,000

...

The same pattern appears when comparisons of violence to gun ownership are made within nations. Indeed, “data on firearms ownership by constabulary area in England,” like data from the United States, show “a *negative* correlation,”¹⁰ that is, “where firearms are most dense violent crime rates are lowest, and where guns

8. Gary Kleck, *Targeting Guns: Firearms and Their Control* 20 (1997).

7. [In the original article, the authors relied on a source that misstated the Luxembourg homicide rate as 9.01. They acknowledged the error as soon as it was brought to their attention, and their subsequent citations of the article mentioned the error. In this excerpt, we have inserted appropriate corrections.—Eds.]

10. Joyce Lee Malcolm, *Guns and Violence: The English Experience* 204 (2002).

are least dense violent crime rates are highest.”¹¹ Many different data sets from various kinds of sources are summarized as follows by the leading text:

[T]here is no consistent significant positive association between gun ownership levels and violence rates: across (1) time within the United States, (2) U.S. cities, (3) counties within Illinois, (4) country-sized areas like England, U.S. states, (5) regions of the United States, (6) nations, or (7) population subgroups. . . .¹²

A second misconception about the relationship between firearms and violence attributes Europe’s generally low homicide rates to stringent gun control. That attribution cannot be accurate since murder in Europe was at an all-time low *before* the gun controls were introduced. For instance, virtually the only English gun control during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the practice that police patrolled without guns.⁸ During this period gun control prevailed far less in England or Europe than in certain American states which nevertheless had—and continue to have—murder rates that were and are comparatively very high.

In this connection, two recent studies are pertinent. In 2004, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences released its evaluation from a review of 253 journal articles, 99 books, 43 government publications, and some original empirical research. It failed to identify any gun control that had reduced violent crime, suicide, or gun accidents. The same conclusion was reached in 2003 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control’s review of then extant studies.

Stringent gun controls were not adopted in England and Western Europe until after World War I. Consistent with the outcomes of the recent American studies just mentioned, these strict controls did not stem the general trend of ever-growing violent crime throughout the post-WWII industrialized world including the United States and Russia. Professor Malcolm’s study of English gun law and violent crime summarizes that nation’s nineteenth and twentieth century experience as follows:

The peacefulness England used to enjoy was not the result of strict gun laws. When it had no firearms restrictions [nineteenth- and early twentieth-century] England had little violent crime, while the present extraordinarily stringent gun controls have not stopped the increase in violence or even the increase in armed violence.¹⁷

Armed crime, never a problem in England, has now become one. Handguns are banned but the Kingdom has millions of illegal firearms. Criminals have no trouble finding them and exhibit a new willingness to use them. In the decade after 1957, the use of guns in serious crime increased a hundredfold.¹⁸

11. Hans Toch & Alan J. Lizotte, *Research and Policy: The Case for Gun Control*, in *Psychology & Social Policy* 223, 232 (Peter Suedfeld & Philip E. Tetlock eds., 1992). . . .

12. Kleck, *supra* note 8, at 22-23.

8. [This is generally true, with the exception of the Seizure of Arms Act, which attempted to disarm revolutionaries in selected cities and counties in 1819-21, and, less importantly, the requirement that handgun buyers purchase a no-questions-asked tax stamp from the post office, starting in 1870. See Chs. 2J.4, 2J.4. — Eds.]

17. Malcolm, *supra* note 10, at 219.

18. *Id.* at 209.

In the late 1990s, England moved from stringent controls to a complete ban of all handguns and many types of long guns. Hundreds of thousands of guns were confiscated from those owners law-abiding enough to turn them in to authorities. . . . Today, English news media headline violence in terms redolent of the doleful, melodramatic language that for so long characterized American news reports. One aspect of England's recent experience deserves note, given how often and favorably advocates have compared English gun policy to its American counterpart over the past 35 years. A generally unstated issue in this notoriously emotional debate was the effect of the Warren Court and later restrictions on police powers on American gun policy. Critics of these decisions pointed to soaring American crime rates and argued simplistically that such decisions caused, or at least hampered, police in suppressing crime. But to some supporters of these judicial decisions, the example of England argued that the solution to crime was to restrict guns, not civil liberties. To gun control advocates, England, the cradle of our liberties, was a nation made so peaceful by strict gun control that its police did not even need to carry guns. The United States, it was argued, could attain such a desirable situation by radically reducing gun ownership, preferably by banning and confiscating handguns.

The results discussed earlier contradict those expectations. On the one hand, despite constant and substantially increasing gun ownership, the United States saw progressive and dramatic reductions in criminal violence in the 1990s. On the other hand, the same time period in the United Kingdom saw a constant and dramatic increase in violent crime to which England's response was ever-more drastic gun control including, eventually, banning and confiscating all handguns and many types of long guns. . . .

To conserve the resources of the inundated criminal justice system, English police no longer investigate burglary and "minor assaults." As of 2006, if the police catch a mugger, robber, or burglar, or other "minor" criminal in the act, the policy is to release them with a warning rather than to arrest and prosecute them. It used to be that English police vehemently opposed the idea of armed policing. Today, ever more police are being armed. Justifying the assignment of armed squads to block roads and carry out random car searches, a police commander asserts: "It is a massive deterrent to gunmen if they think that there are going to be armed police."²⁵ How far is that from the rationale on which 40 American states have enacted laws giving qualified, trained citizens the right to carry concealed guns? Indeed, news media editorials have appeared in England arguing that civilians should be allowed guns for defense. . . .

The divergence between the United States and the British Commonwealth became especially pronounced during the 1980s and 1990s. During these two decades, while Britain and the Commonwealth were making lawful firearm ownership increasingly difficult, more than 25 states in the United States passed laws allowing responsible citizens to carry concealed handguns. . . .

Although the reason is thus obscured, the undeniable result is that violent crime, and homicide in particular, has plummeted in the United States over the

25. Matthew Beard, *Armed Police to Man Checkpoints in London as Drug-Related Crime Soars*, Independent (London), Sept. 7, 2002, at 2.

past 15 years. The fall in the American crime rate is even more impressive when compared with the rest of the world. In 18 of the 25 countries surveyed by the British Home Office, violent crime increased during the 1990s. . . . Perhaps the United States is doing something right in promoting firearms for law-abiding responsible adults. Or perhaps the United States' success in lowering its violent crime rate relates to increasing its prison population or its death sentences. Further research is required to identify more precisely which elements of the United States' approach are the most important, or whether all three elements acting in concert were necessary to reduce violent crimes.

I. VIOLENCE: THE DECISIVENESS OF SOCIAL FACTORS

One reason the extent of gun ownership in a society does not spur the murder rate is that murderers are not spread evenly throughout the population. Analysis of perpetrator studies shows that violent criminals—especially murderers—“*almost uniformly* have a long history of involvement in criminal behavior.”³⁷ So it would not appreciably raise violence if all law-abiding, responsible people had firearms because they are not the ones who rape, rob, or murder. By the same token, violent crime would not fall if guns were totally banned to civilians. As the example of Russia suggests, individuals who commit violent crimes will either find guns despite severe controls or will find other weapons to use.

Startling as the foregoing may seem, it represents the cross-national norm, not some bizarre departure from it. If the mantra “more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death” were true, broad based cross-national comparisons should show that nations with higher gun ownership per capita consistently have more death. Nations with higher gun ownership rates, however, do not have higher murder or suicide rates than those with lower gun ownership. Indeed many high gun ownership nations have much lower murder rates. Consider, for example, the wide divergence in murder rates among Continental European nations with widely divergent gun ownership rates.

The non-correlation between gun ownership and murder is reinforced by examination of statistics from larger numbers of nations across the developed world. Comparison of “homicide and suicide mortality data for thirty-six nations (including the United States) for the period 1990-1995” to gun ownership levels showed “no significant (at the 5% level) association between gun ownership levels and the total homicide rate.”⁴¹ Consistent with this is a later European study of data from 21 nations in which “no significant correlations [of gun ownership levels] with total suicide or homicide rates were found.”⁴²

37. See Delbert S. Elliott, *Life-Threatening Violence is Primarily a Crime Problem: A Focus on Prevention*, 69 Colo. L. Rev. 1081, 1089 (1998) (emphasis added).

41. Kleck, *supra* note 8, at 254. The study also found no correlation to suicide rates. *Id.*

42. Martin Killias et al., *Guns, Violent Crime, and Suicide in 21 Countries*, 43 Can. J. Criminology & Crim. Just. 429, 430 (2001). . . . [T]he authors, who are deeply anti-gun, emphasize the “very strong correlations between the presence of guns in the home and suicide committed with a gun”—as if there were some import to the death being by gun rather than by hanging, poison, or some other means. . . .

II. ASKING THE WRONG QUESTION

However unintentionally, the irrelevance of focusing on weaponry is highlighted by the most common theme in the more guns equal more death argument. Epitomizing this theme is a World Health Organization (WHO) report asserting, “The easy availability of firearms has been associated with higher *firearm* mortality rates.”⁴³ The authors, in noting that the presence of a gun in a home corresponds to a higher risk of suicide, apparently assume that if denied firearms, potential suicides will decide to live rather than turning to the numerous alternative suicide mechanisms. The evidence, however, indicates that denying one particular means to people who are motivated to commit suicide by social, economic, cultural, or other circumstances simply pushes them to some other means. Thus, it is not just the murder rate in gun-less Russia that is four times higher than the American rate; the Russian suicide rate is also about four times higher than the American rate.

There is no social benefit in decreasing the availability of guns if the result is only to increase the use of other means of suicide and murder, resulting in more or less the same amount of death. Elementary as this point is, proponents of the more guns equal more death mantra seem oblivious to it. One study asserts that Americans are more likely to be shot to death than people in the world’s other 35 wealthier nations. While this is literally true, it is irrelevant—except, perhaps to people terrified not of death per se but just death by gunshot. A fact that should be of greater concern—but which the study fails to mention—is that per capita murder *overall* is only half as frequent in the United States as in several other nations where *gun* murder is rarer, but murder by strangling, stabbing, or beating is much more frequent.

Of course, it may be speculated that murder rates around the world would be higher if guns were more available. But there is simply no evidence to support this. Like any speculation, it is not subject to conclusive disproof; but the European data in Table 1 and the studies across 36 and 21 nations already discussed show no correlation of high gun ownership nations and greater murder per capita or lower gun ownership nations and less murder per capita.

To reiterate, the determinants of murder and suicide are basic social, economic, and cultural factors, not the prevalence of some form of deadly mechanism. In this connection, recall that the American jurisdictions which have the highest violent crime rates are precisely those with the most stringent gun controls. This correlation does not necessarily prove gun advocates’ assertion that gun controls actually encourage crime by depriving victims of the means of self-defense. The explanation of this correlation may be political rather than criminological: jurisdictions afflicted with violent crime tend to severely restrict gun ownership. This, however, does not suppress the crime, for banning guns cannot alleviate the socio-cultural and economic factors that are the real determinants of violence and crime rates. . . .

Once again, we are not arguing that the data in Table 2 shows that gun control *causes* nations to have much higher murder rates than neighboring nations that

43. World Health Organization, *Small Arms and Global Health* 11 (2001) (emphasis added).

permit handgun ownership. Rather, we assert a political causation for the observed correlation that nations with stringent gun controls tend to have much higher murder rates than nations that allow guns. The political causation is that nations that have violence problems tend to adopt severe gun controls, but these do not reduce violence, which is determined by basic socio-cultural and economic factors.

Table 2 Murder Rates of European Nations that Ban Handguns as Compared to Their Neighbors that Allow Handguns (Rates are per 100,000 Persons)

Nation	Handgun Policy	Murder Rate	Year
A. Belarus	banned	10.40	late 1990s
[Neighboring countries with gun law and murder rate data available]			
Poland	allowed	1.98	2003
Russia	banned	20.54	2002
B. Luxembourg	banned	0.90	2002
[Neighboring countries with gun law and murder rate data available]			
Belgium	allowed	1.70	late 1990s
France	allowed	1.65	2003
Germany	allowed	0.93	2003
C. Russia	banned	20.54	2002
[Neighboring countries with gun law and murder rate data available]			
Finland	allowed	1.98	2004
Norway	allowed	0.81	2001

The point is exemplified by the conclusions of the premier study of English gun control. Done by a senior English police official as his thesis at the Cambridge University Institute of Criminology and later published as a book, it found (as of the early 1970s), “Half a century of strict controls . . . has ended, perversely, with a far greater use of [handguns] in crime than ever before.”⁵¹ The study also states that:

No matter how one approaches the figures, one is forced to the rather startling conclusion that the use of firearms in crime was very much less [in England before 1920] when there were no controls of any sort and when anyone, convicted criminal or lunatic, could buy any type of firearm without restriction.⁵²

Of course the point of this analysis is not that the law should allow lunatics and criminals to own guns. The point is that violence will be rare when the basic

51. Colin Greenwood, *Firearms Control: A Study of Armed Crime and Firearms Control in England and Wales* 243 (1972).

52. *Id.*

socio-cultural and economic determinants so dictate; and conversely, crime will rise in response to changes in those determinants—without much regard to the mere availability of some particular weaponry or the severity of laws against it. . . .

IV. MORE GUNS, LESS CRIME?

Anti-gun activists are not alone in their belief that widespread firearm ownership substantially affects violent crime rates. The same understanding also characterizes many pro-gun activists. Of course, pro-gun activists' belief leads them to the opposite conclusion: that widespread firearm ownership reduces violence by deterring criminals from confrontation crimes and making more attractive such nonconfrontation crimes as theft from unoccupied commercial or residential premises. Superficially, the evidence for this belief seems persuasive. Table 1, for instance, shows that Denmark has roughly half the gun ownership rate of Norway, but a 50% higher murder rate, while Russia has only one-ninth Norway's gun ownership rate but a murder rate 2500% higher. Looking at Tables 1-3, it is easy to find nations in which very high gun ownership rates correlate with very low murder rates, while other nations with very low gun ownership rates have much higher murder rates. Moreover, there is not insubstantial evidence that *in the United States* widespread gun availability has helped reduce murder and other violent crime rates. On closer analysis, however, this evidence appears uniquely applicable to the United States.

More than 100 million handguns are owned in the United States primarily for self-defense, and 3.5 million people have permits to carry concealed handguns for protection. Recent analysis reveals “a great deal of self-defensive use of firearms” in the United States, “in fact, more defensive gun uses [by victims] than crimes committed with firearms.”⁸⁷ It is little wonder that the

National Institute of Justice surveys (Ch. 1.K.2) among prison inmates find that large percentages report that their fear that a victim might be armed deterred them from confrontation crimes. “[T]he felons most frightened ‘about confronting an armed victim’ were those from states with the greatest relative number of privately owned firearms.” Conversely, robbery is highest in states that most restrict gun ownership.⁸⁸ . . .

Ironically, to detail the American evidence for widespread defensive gun ownership's deterrent value is also to raise questions about how applicable that evidence would be even to the other nations that have widespread gun ownership but low violence. There are no data for foreign nations comparable to the American data just discussed. Without such data, we cannot know whether millions of Norwegians own handguns and carry them for protection, thereby deterring Norwegian criminals from committing violent crimes. Nor can we know whether guns are commonly kept for defense in German homes and stores, thus preventing German criminals from robbing them.

87. James B. Jacobs, *Can Gun Control Work?* 14 (2002).

88. Don Kates, *The Limited Importance of Gun Control from a Criminological Perspective*, in *Suing the Gun Industry: A Battle at the Crossroads of Gun Control and Mass Torts* 70 (Timothy D. Lytton ed. 2005).

Moreover, if the deterrent effect of gun ownership accounts for low violence rates in high gun ownership nations other than the United States, one wonders why that deterrent effect would be amplified there. . . . [T]he United States murder rate is still eight times higher than Norway's—even though the U.S. has an almost 300% higher rate of gun ownership. That is consistent with the points made above. Murder rates are determined by socio-economic and cultural factors.

In the United States, those factors include that the number of civilian-owned guns nearly equals the population—triple the ownership rate in even the highest European gun-ownership nations—and that vast numbers of guns are kept for personal defense. That is not a factor in other nations with comparatively high firearm ownership. . . .

In sum, though many nations with widespread gun ownership have much lower murder rates than nations that severely restrict gun ownership, it would be simplistic to assume that at all times and in all places widespread gun ownership depresses violence by deterring many criminals into nonconfrontation crime. There is evidence that it does so in the United States, where defensive gun ownership is a substantial socio-cultural phenomenon. But the more plausible explanation for many nations having widespread gun ownership with low violence is that these nations never had high murder and violence rates and so never had occasion to enact severe anti-gun laws. On the other hand, in nations that have experienced high and rising violent crime rates, the legislative reaction has generally been to enact increasingly severe antigun laws. This is futile, for reducing gun ownership by the law-abiding citizenry—the only ones who obey gun laws—does not reduce violence or murder. The result is that high crime nations that ban guns to reduce crime end up having both high crime and stringent gun laws, while it appears that low crime nations that do not significantly restrict guns continue to have low violence rates.

Thus both sides of the gun prohibition debate are likely wrong in viewing the availability of guns as a major factor in the incidence of murder in any particular society. . . . Whether gun availability is viewed as a cause or as a mere coincidence, the long term macrocosmic evidence is that gun ownership spread widely throughout societies consistently correlates with stable or declining murder rates. Whether causative or not, the consistent international pattern is that more guns equal *less* murder and other violent crime. . . .

V. GEOGRAPHIC, HISTORICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

If more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death, it should follow, all things being equal, (1) that geographic areas with higher gun ownership should have more murder than those with less gun ownership; (2) that demographic groups with higher gun ownership should be more prone to murder than those with less ownership; and (3) that historical eras in which gun ownership is widespread should have more murder than those in which guns were fewer or less widespread. As discussed earlier, these effects are not present. Historical eras, demographic groups, and geographic areas with more guns do not have more murders than those with fewer guns. Indeed, those with more guns often, or even generally, have fewer murders.

Of course, all other things may not be equal. Obviously, many factors other than guns may promote or reduce the number of murders in any given place or time or among particular groups. And it may be impossible even to identify these factors, much less to take account of them all. Thus any conclusions drawn from the kinds of evidence presented earlier in this paper must necessarily be tentative.

Acknowledging this does not, however, blunt the force of two crucial points. The first regards the burden of proof. Those who assert the mantra, and urge that public policy be based on it, bear the burden of proving that more guns do equal more death and fewer guns equal less death. But they cannot bear that burden because there simply is no large number of cases in which the widespread prevalence of guns among the general population has led to more murder. By the same token, but even more importantly, it cannot be shown consistently that a reduction in the number of guns available to the general population has led to fewer deaths. Nor is the burden borne by *speculating* that the reason such cases do not appear is that other factors always intervene.

The second issue, allied to the burden of proof, regards plausibility. On their face, the following facts from Tables 1 and 2 suggest that gun ownership is irrelevant, or has little relevance, to murder: France and neighboring Germany have exactly the same, comparatively high rate of gun ownership, yet the French murder rate is nearly twice the German . . . ; Germany has almost double the gun ownership rate of neighboring Austria yet a similarly very low murder rate; the Norwegian gun ownership rate is over twice the Austrian rate, yet the murder rates are almost identical.

And then there is Table 3 [not reproduced in this excerpt], which shows Slovenia, with 66% more gun ownership than Slovakia, nevertheless has roughly one-third less murder per capita; Hungary has more than 6 times the gun ownership rate of neighboring Romania but a lower murder rate; the Czech Republic's gun ownership rate is more than 3 times that of neighboring Poland, but its murder rate is lower; Poland and neighboring Slovenia have exactly the same murder rate, though Slovenia has over triple the gun ownership per capita. . . .

On their face, Tables 1, 2, and 3 and the comparisons gleaned from them suggest that gun ownership is irrelevant, or has little relevance, to murder. Historical and demographic comparisons offer further evidence. Again, all the data may be misleading. It is conceivable that more guns do equal more murder, but that this causation does not appear because some unidentifiable extraneous factor always intervenes. That is conceivable, but ultimately unlikely. As Hans Toch, a senior American criminologist who 35 years ago endorsed handgun prohibition and confiscation, but then recanted based on later research, argues "it is hard to explain that where firearms are most dense, violent crime rates are lowest and where guns are least dense, violent crime rates are highest."⁹⁰ . . .

B. Macro-Historical Evidence: From the Middle Ages to the 20th Century

The Middle Ages were a time of notoriously brutal and endemic warfare. They also experienced rates of ordinary murder almost double the highest recorded U.S. murder rate. But Middle Age homicide "cannot be explained in terms of the availability of firearms, which had not yet been invented."¹⁰¹ The invention provides

90. Toch & Lizotte, *supra* note 11, at 232.

101. [Roger Lane, *Murder in America: A History 151* (1997).] *See generally id.* Ch.1.

some test of the mantra. If it is true that more guns equal more murder and fewer guns equal less death, murder should have risen with the invention, increased efficiency, and greater availability of firearms across the population.⁹

Yet, using England as an example, murder rates seem to have fallen sharply as guns became progressively more efficient and widely owned during the five centuries after the invention of firearms. During much of this period, because the entire adult male population of England was deemed to constitute a militia, every military age male was required to possess arms for use in militia training and service.

The same requirement was true in America during the period of colonial and post-colonial settlement. Indeed, the basic English militia laws were superceded by the colonies' even more specific and demanding legal requirements of *universal* gun ownership. Under those laws, virtually all colonists and every household were required to own guns. Depending on the colony's laws, male youths were deemed of military age at 16, 17, or 18, and every military age man, except for the insane, infirm, and criminals, had to possess arms. They were subject to being called for inspection, militia drill, or service, all of which legally required them to bring and present their guns. To arm those too poor to afford guns, the laws required that guns be purchased for them and that they make installment payments to pay back the cost.

It bears emphasis that these gun ownership requirements were not limited to those subject to militia service. Women, seamen, clergy, and some public officials were automatically exempt from militia call up, as were men over the upper military age, which varied from 45 to 60, depending on the colony. But every household was required to have a gun, even if all its occupants were otherwise exempt from militia service, to deter criminals and other attackers. Likewise, all respectable men were theoretically required to carry arms when out and abroad.¹⁰

These laws may not have been fully enforced (except in times of danger) in areas that had been long-settled and peaceful. Nevertheless, "by the eighteenth century, colonial Americans were the most heavily armed people in the world."¹⁰⁶ Yet, far from more guns equaling more death, murders in the New England colonies were "rare," and "few" murderers in all the colonies involved guns "despite their wide availability."¹⁰⁷

America remained very well armed yet homicide remained quite low for over two hundred years, from the earliest settlements through the entire colonial period and early years of the United States. Homicide in more settled areas only began rising markedly in the two decades before the Civil War. By that time the universal militia was inoperative and the universality of American gun ownership had disappeared as many people in long-settled peaceful areas did not hunt and had no other need for a firearm.

9. [A study by Professor Carlisle Moody, excerpted in Section D.1, examines the relationship between growing availability of firearms and homicide rates in Europe.—Eds.]

10. [The above two paragraphs are generally accurate, although not perfectly so. For the precise laws of early America, see Chapters 3 and 4.—Eds.]

106. John Morgan Dederer, *War in America to 1775*, at 116 (1990).

107. Lane, *supra* note [101], at 48, 59-60.

The Civil War acquainted vast numbers of men with modern rapid-fire guns, and, in its aftermath, provided a unique opportunity to acquire them. Before the Civil War, reliable multi-shot rifles or shotguns did not exist and revolvers (though they had been invented in the 1830s) were so expensive they were effectively out of reach for most of the American populace. The Civil War changed all that. Officers on both sides had to buy their own revolvers, while sidearms were issued to non-commissioned officers generally, as well as those ordinary soldiers who were in the artillery, cavalry, and dragoons. The fact that over two million men served in the Union Army at various times while the Confederates had over half that number suggests the number of revolvers involved.

At war's end, the U.S. Army and Navy were left with vast numbers of surplus revolvers, both those they had purchased and those captured from Confederate forces. As the Army plummeted to slightly over 11,000 men, hundreds of thousands of military surplus revolvers were sold at very low prices. In addition, when their enlistments were up, or when they were mustered out at war's end, former officers and soldiers retained hundreds of thousands of both revolvers and rifles. These commandeered arms included many of the new repeating rifles the Union had bought (over the fervent objections of short-sighted military procurement officers) at the command of President Lincoln, who had tested the Spencer rifle himself. After his death the Army reverted to the single-shot rifle, disposing of all its multi-shots at surplus and thereby ruining Spencer by glutting the market.

Thus over the immediate post-Civil War years "the country was awash with military pistols" and rifles of the most modern design.¹¹⁵ The final three decades of the century saw the introduction and marketing of the "two dollar pistol," which were very cheap handguns manufactured largely out of pot metal. In addition to being sold locally, such "suicide specials" were marketed nationwide through Montgomery Ward catalogs starting in 1872 and by Sears from 1886. They were priced as low as \$1.69, and were marketed under names like the "Little Giant" and the "Tramp's Terror."

Thus, the period between 1866 and 1900 saw a vast diffusion of commercial and military surplus revolvers and lever action rifles throughout the American populace. Yet, far from rising, homicide seems to have fallen off sharply during these thirty years.

Whether or not guns were the cause, homicide steadily declined over a period of five centuries coincident with the invention of guns and their diffusion throughout the continent. In America, from the seventeenth century through the early nineteenth century, murder was rare and rarely involved guns, though gun ownership was universal by law and "colonial Americans were the most heavily armed people in the world."¹¹⁹ By the 1840s, gun ownership had declined but homicide began a spectacular rise through the early 1860s.¹¹ From the end of the Civil War

115. David T. Courtwright, *Violent Land: Single Men and Social Disorder from the Frontier to the Inner City* 42 (1996).

119. Dederer, *supra* note 106, at 116.

11. [For more on gun ownership in America, from colonial days through the antebellum period, see Clayton E. Cramer, *Lock, Stock, and Barrel: The Origins of American Gun Culture* (2018); Clayton E. Cramer, *Armed America: The Remarkable Story of How and Why Guns Became as American as Apple Pie* (2007); and Chapters 3 through 7 of the printed textbook. Cramer and the textbook differ from Kates and Mauser on some details.—EDS.]

to the turn of the twentieth century, however, America in general, and urban areas in particular, such as New York, experienced a tremendous spurt in ownership of higher capacity revolvers and rifles than had ever existed before, but the number of murders sharply declined.

In sum, the notion that more guns equal more death is not borne out by the historical evidence available for the period between the Middle Ages and the twentieth century. Yet this conclusion must be viewed with caution. While one may describe broad general trends in murder rates and in the availability of firearms, it is not possible to do so with exactitude. Not until the late 1800s in England, and the mid-1900s in the United States were there detailed data on homicide. Information about the distribution of firearms is even more sparse. For instance, Lane's generalizations about the rarity of gun murders and low American murder rates in general are subject to some dispute. Professor Randolph Roth, for example, has shown that early American murder rates and the extent to which guns were used in murder varied greatly between differing areas and time periods.

C. Later and More Specific Macro-Historical Evidence

Malcolm presents reliable trend data on both gun ownership and crime in England for the period between 1871 and 1964. Significantly, these trend data do not at all correlate as the mantra would predict: violent crime did not increase with increased gun ownership nor did it decline in periods in which gun ownership was lower.

In the United States, the murder rate doubled in the ten-year span between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s. Since this rise coincided with vastly increasing gun sales, it was viewed by many as proof positive that more guns equal more death. That conclusion, however, does not follow. It is at least equally possible that the causation was reversed: that is, the decade's spectacular increases in murder, burglary, and all kinds of violent crimes caused fearful people to buy guns. The dubiousness of assuming that the gun sales caused the rise in murder rather than the reverse might have been clearer had it been known in this period that virtually the same murder rate increase was occurring in gun-less Russia. Clearly there is little basis to assume guns were the reason for the American murder rate rise when the Russian murder rate exhibited the same increase without a similar increase in the number of guns.

Reliable information on both gun ownership and murder rates in the United States is available only for the period commencing at the end of World War II. Significantly, the decade from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s is a unique exception to the general pattern that, decade-by-decade, the number of guns owned by civilians has risen steadily and dramatically but murder rates nevertheless have remained stable or even declined. As for the second half of the twentieth century, and especially its last quarter, a study comparing the number of guns to murder rates found that during the 25-year period from 1973 to 1997, the number of handguns owned by Americans increased 160% while the number of all firearms rose 103%. Yet over that period, the murder rate declined 27.7%. It continued to decline in the years 1998, 1999, and 2000, despite the addition in each year of two to three million handguns and approximately five million firearms of all kinds. By the end of 2000,

the total American gunstock stood at well over 260 million—951.1 guns for every 1,000 Americans—but the murder rate had returned to the comparatively low level prior to the increases of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s period.

In sum, the data for the decades since the end of World War II also fails to bear out the more guns equal more death mantra. The per capita accumulated stock of guns has increased, yet there has been no correspondingly consistent increase in either total violence or gun violence. The evidence is consistent with the hypothesis that gun possession levels have little impact on violence rates.

D. Geographic Patterns Within Nations

Once again, if more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death, areas within nations with higher gun ownership should in general have more murders than those with less gun ownership in a similar area. But, in fact, the reverse pattern prevails in Canada, “England, America, and Switzerland, [where the areas] with the highest rates of gun ownership were in fact those with the lowest rates of violence.”¹²⁹ A recent study of all counties in the United States has again demonstrated the lack of relationship between the prevalence of firearms and homicide.¹³⁰

This inverse correlation is one of several that seems to contradict more guns equal more death. For decades the gun lobby has emphasized that, in general, the American jurisdictions where guns are most restricted have consistently had the highest violent crime rates, and those with the fewest restrictions have the lowest violent crime rates. For instance, robbery is highest in jurisdictions which are most restrictive of gun ownership. . . . Also of interest are the extensive opinion surveys of incarcerated felons, both juvenile and adult, in which large percentages of the felons replied that they often feared potential victims might be armed and aborted violent crimes because of that fear. The felons most frightened about confronting an armed victim were those “from states with the greatest relative number of privately owned firearms.”¹³⁵

E. Geographic Comparisons: European Gun Ownership and Murder Rates

This topic has already been addressed at some length in connection with Tables 1-3, which contain the latest data available. Tables 4-6 contain further, and somewhat more comprehensive, data from the early and mid-1990s. These statistics reinforce the point that murder rates are determined by basic socio-cultural and economic factors rather than mere availability of some particular form of weaponry. Consider Norway and its neighbors Sweden, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Norway has far and away Western Europe’s highest household gun ownership rate (32%), but also its lowest murder rate. The Netherlands has the lowest gun ownership rate in Western Europe (1.9%), and Sweden lies midway between (15.1%) the Netherlands and Norway. Yet the Dutch gun murder rate is higher than the Norwegian, and the Swedish rate is even higher, though only slightly. . . .

129. Malcolm, *supra* note 10, at 204.

130. Tomislav Kovandzic, Mark E. Schaffer, & Gary Kleck, Gun Prevalence, Homicide Rates and Causality: A GMM Approach to Endogeneity Bias 39-40 (Ctr. for Econ. Policy Research, Discussion Paper No. 5357, 2005).

135. James D. Wright & Peter H. Rossi, Armed and Considered Dangerous: A Survey of Felons and Their Firearms 147, 150 (1986) (Ch. 1.K.2).

Table 4 Intentional Deaths: United States vs. Continental Europe: Rates in Order of Highest Combined Rate; Nations Having Higher Rates than the United States Are Indicated by Asterisk (Suicide Rate) or + Sign (Murder Rate)

Nation	Suicide	Murder	Combined Rates
Russia	41.2*	30.6+	71.8
Estonia	40.1*	22.2+	62.3
Latvia	40.7*	18.2+	58.9
Lithuania	45.6*	11.7+	57.3
Belarus	27.9*	10.4+	38.3
Hungary	32.9*	3.5	36.4
Ukraine	22.5*	11.3+	33.8
Slovenia	28.4*	2.4	30.4
Finland	27.2*	2.9	30.1
Denmark	22.3*	4.9	27.2
Croatia	22.8*	3.3	26.1
Austria	22.2*	1.0	23.2
Bulgaria	17.3*	5.1	22.4
France	20.8*	1.1	21.9
Switzerland	21.4*	1.1	24.1
Belgium	18.7*	1.7	20.4
United States	11.6*	7.8	19.4
Poland	14.2*	2.8	17.0
Germany	15.8*	1.1	16.9
Romania	12.3*	4.1	16.4
Sweden	15.3*	1.0	16.3
Norway	12.3*	0.8	13.1
Holland	9.8	1.2	11.0
Italy	8.2	1.7	9.9
Portugal	8.2	1.7	9.9
Spain	8.1	0.9	9.0
Greece	3.3	1.3	4.6

...

Table 5 European Gun/Handgun Violent Death [Columns 2 and 3 are per 100,000 population]

Nation	Suicide with Handgun (per 100,000 Popul.)	Murder with Handgun (per 100,000 Popul.)	% of Households with Guns	% of Households with Handguns
Belgium	18.7	1.7	16.6%	6.8%
France	20.8	1.1	22.6%	5.5%
West Germany	15.8	1.1	8.9%	6.7%
Holland	9.8	1.2	1.9%	1.2%
Italy	8.2	1.7	16.0%	5.5%
Norway	12.3	0.8	32.0%	3.8%
Sweden	15.3	1.3	15.1%	1.5%
Switzerland	20.8	1.1	27.2%	12.2%

Table 6 European Firearms—Violent Deaths [All figures are per 100,000 population]

Nation	Suicide	Suicide with Gun	Murder	Murder with Gun	Number of Guns . . .
Austria	N/A	N/A	2.14	0.53	41.02
Belarus	27.26	N/A	9.86	N/A	16.5
Czech Rep.	9.88	1.01	2.80	0.92	27.58
Estonia	39.99	3.63	22.11	6.2	28.56
Finland	27.28	5.78	3.25	0.87	411.20
Germany	15.80	1.23	1.81	0.21	122.56
Greece	3.54	1.30	1.33	0.55	77.00
Hungary	33.34	0.88	4.07	0.47	15.54
Moldova	N/A	N/A	17.06	0.63	6.61
Poland	14.23	0.16	2.61	0.27	5.30
Romania	N/A	N/A	4.32	0.12	2.97
Slovakia	13.24	0.58	2.38	0.36	31.91
Spain	5.92	N/A	1.58	0.19	64.69
Sweden	15.65	1.95	1.35	0.31	246.65

These comparisons are reinforced by Table 6, which gives differently derived (and non-comparable) gun ownership rates, overall murder rates, and rates of gun murder, for a larger set of European nations. Table 6 reveals that even though Sweden has more than double the rate of gun ownership as neighboring Germany, as well as more gun murders, it has 25% less murder overall. In turn, Germany, with three times the gun ownership rate of neighboring Austria, has a substantially lower murder rate overall and a lower gun murder rate. Likewise, though Greece has over twice the per capita gun ownership rate of the Czech Republic, Greece has

substantially less gun murder and less than half as much murder overall. Although Spain has over 12 times more gun ownership than Poland, the latter has almost a third more gun murder and more overall murder than the former. Finally, Finland has 14 times more gun ownership than neighboring Estonia, yet Estonia's gun murder and overall murder rates are about seven times higher than Finland's.

F. Geographic Comparisons: Gun Ownership and Suicide Rates

The mantra more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death is also used to argue that "limiting access to firearms could prevent many suicides."¹⁴¹ Once again, this assertion is directly contradicted by the studies of 36 and 21 nations (respectively) which find no statistical relationship. Overall suicide rates were no worse in nations with many firearms than in those where firearms were far less widespread.¹⁴² . . .

There is simply no relationship evident between the extent of suicide and the extent of gun ownership. People do not commit suicide because they have guns available. In the absence of firearms, people who are inclined to commit suicide kill themselves some other way. Two examples seem as pertinent as they are poignant. The first concerns the 1980s increase in suicide among young American males, an increase that, although relatively modest, inspired perfervid denunciations of gun ownership. What these denunciations failed to mention was that suicide of teenagers and young adults was increasing throughout the entire industrialized world, regardless of gun availability, and often much more rapidly than in the United States. The only unusual aspect of suicide in the United States was that it involved guns. The irrelevancy of guns to the increase in American suicide is evident because suicide among English youth actually increased 10 times more sharply, with "car exhaust poisoning [being] the method of suicide used most often."¹⁴⁵ By omitting such facts, the articles blaming guns for increasing American suicide evaded the inconvenience of having to explain exactly what social benefit nations with few guns received from having their youth suicides occur in other ways.

Even more poignant are the suicides of many young Indian women born and raised on the island of Fiji. In general, women are much less likely to commit suicide than are men. This statistic is true of Fijian women overall as well, but not of women in the large part of Fiji's population that is of Indian ancestry. As children, these Indian women are raised in more-or-less loving and supportive homes. But upon marriage they are dispersed across the island to remote areas where they live with their husbands' families, an often overtly hostile situation the husbands do little to mitigate. Indian women on Fiji have a suicide rate nearly as high as that of Indian men, a rate many times greater than that of non-Indian Fijian women. It also bears emphasis that the overall Fijian suicide rate far exceeds that of the United States.

141. Arthur L. Kellermann et al., *Suicide in the Home in Relation to Gun Ownership*, 327 *New Eng. J. Med.* 467, 467, 471-72 (1992). . . .

142. See Killias et al., *supra* note 42, at 430 (study of 21 nations). See generally Kleck, *supra* note 8.

145. Keith Hawton, *By Their Own Young Hand*, 304 *Brit. Med. J.* 1000 (1992). . . .

The method of suicide is particularly significant. Fijian women of Indian ancestry commit suicide without using guns, perhaps because guns are unavailable. About three-quarters of these women hang themselves, while virtually all the rest die from consuming the agricultural pesticide paraquat. The recommendation of the author whose article chronicles all these suicides is so myopic as to almost caricature the more guns equal more death mindset: to reduce suicide by Indian women, she recommends that the Fijian state stringently control paraquat.¹⁴⁸ Apparently she believes decreased access to a means of death will reconcile these women to a life situation they regard as unendurable. At the risk of belaboring what should be all too obvious, restricting paraquat will not improve the lives of these poor women. It will only reorient them towards hanging, drowning, or some other means of suicide.

Guns are just one among numerous available deadly instruments. Thus, banning guns cannot reduce the amount of suicides. Such measures only reduce the number of suicides by firearms. Suicides committed in other ways increase to make up the difference. People do not commit suicide because they have guns available. They kill themselves for reasons they deem sufficient, and in the absence of firearms they just kill themselves in some other way.

CONCLUSION

This Article has reviewed a significant amount of evidence from a wide variety of international sources. Each individual portion of evidence is subject to cavil—at the very least the general objection that the persuasiveness of social scientific evidence cannot remotely approach the persuasiveness of conclusions in the physical sciences. Nevertheless, the burden of proof rests on the proponents of the more guns equal more death and fewer guns equal less death mantra, especially since they argue public policy ought to be based on that mantra. To bear that burden would at the very least require showing that a large number of nations with more guns have more death and that nations that have imposed stringent gun controls have achieved substantial reductions in criminal violence (or suicide). But those correlations are not observed when a large number of nations are compared across the world.

Over a decade ago, Professor Brandon Centerwall of the University of Washington undertook an extensive, statistically sophisticated study comparing areas in the United States and Canada to determine whether Canada's more restrictive policies had better contained criminal violence. When he published his results it was with the admonition:

If you are surprised by [our] finding[s], so [are we]. [We] did not begin this research with any intent to “exonerate” handguns, but there it is—a negative finding, to be sure, but a negative finding is nevertheless a positive contribution. It directs us where not to aim public health resources.¹⁵⁰

148. Ruth H. Haynes, *Suicide in Fiji: A Preliminary Study*, 145 *Brit. J. Psychiatry* 433 (1984).

150. Brandon S. Centerwall, *Author's Response to "Invited Commentary: Common Wisdom and Plain Truth,"* 134 *Am. J. Epidemiology* 1264, 1264 (1991).

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. Are you persuaded by Kates and Mauser's thesis that social and cultural factors are far more important than gun density in determining a nation's homicide rate?
2. What follows if Kates and Mauser are correct? What measures should citizens and governments pursue to reduce suicides and criminal homicides?
3. Rather than using formal statistical tests, Kates and Mauser produce a great deal of observational data, such as by comparing neighboring countries, or looking at changes over time in national homicide rates. Is this informal method useful for analyzing policy questions, or should any such analysis conform to formal statistical methods, including the use of significance tests? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches?

2. *Brief Guide for Evaluating Statistical Studies*

The quality of social science research varies. A researcher's study design and methods can overlook important elements or may be incapable of properly assessing the topic of study. Faulty research methods produce incorrect findings that in turn generate improper conclusions about the relationship between variables. More broadly, improper conclusions may be used to promulgate potentially disastrous policies. In this section, we will consider elements of social science research that should be evaluated in order to determine the quality of gun control studies.

The majority of social science research seeks to determine the relationship between an *independent variable* (X) and a *dependent variable* (Y). As the name suggests, an independent variable is not affected by other variables but instead produces a change in other variables. Naturally, a dependent variable is one that is affected by the independent variable. In evaluating social science research, we must determine if there is *internal validity*.

Internal validity is the extent to which a causal relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables. There are three fundamental criteria for establishing internal validity. First, is there statistical association between X and Y (*concomitant variation*)? For example, a study finds that on days when the outside air temperature is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, ice cream cone sales are much higher. So there is a concomitant variation between air temperature and sales.

Second, is X causally antecedent to Y and not the reverse (*temporal sequencing*)? In other words, when X and Y increase together, are we sure that X causes Y? Or could it be possible that Y causes X? It is also possible that a third factor causes both X and Y. For ice cream sales, we can be sure of the temporal sequencing, since we know from climate science that ice cream cone sales cannot increase air temperature in the short run.

But with guns, the temporal sequencing may not be so clear. A study shows that neighborhoods with high crime tend to have higher rates of gun ownership. Is this because the presence of guns leads more people to commit crimes? Or does the pre-existing high crime level cause more people to buy guns, because self-defense needs are greater? More information is needed to determine temporal sequencing: which came first, the high crime, or the high gun ownership?

Similarly, a study might find that gang members perpetrate more crimes than people who are not gang members. Is this because joining a gang makes people commit more crimes? Or do people who are already predisposed to commit crimes decide to join gangs?

Third, a study must be able to rule out *confounding effects*—alternative explanations for the observed relationship. In the ice cream study, perhaps the reason that sales are high on hot days is because schools are on summer vacation, so children can run to the ice cream truck when they hear it jingling at 2 p.m. Perhaps they would buy just as much ice cream in April as they do in July—if only they were not stuck in a classroom in April.

Thus, a well-structured study would include a *control variable* for whether or not school is in session. The data might show that the school variable fully or partially accounts for differences in ice cream sales. Or if the school variable turns out to have little effect, then we can be more confident that the study has found a genuine causal relationship between hot weather and ice cream sales.

As a methodological rule of thumb, the more confounding factors for which a researcher controls, the more likely the study is to accurately identify the actual effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The best studies of the relationship between guns and crime include controls for many confounding variables that might affect crime rates, such as gang membership, poverty, police per capita, etc.

When evaluating the quality of a study, one must also consider *construct validity*. Because social scientists are often studying broad concepts that cannot be perfectly measured, they must select proxies that accurately represent these concepts. As such, construct validity is the extent to which the measures chosen accurately represent the independent and dependent variables.

To determine whether gun ownership is associated with crime rates, it is necessary to consider construct validity. Without proper measures, it is impossible to compute a valid statistical association between gun levels and crime rates. Consider whether the proxies used in the following studies to measure various concepts (e.g., firearm prevalence, gun ownership, violence) meet the criteria of construct validity.

Suppose one wanted to understand the relationship between intelligence and academic success. These are of course very broad concepts that can be measured in a number of different ways. IQ might be employed as a proxy for intelligence and grade point average to measure academic success. Do these measurements accurately represent the concepts of study?

There is no simple formula for determining the validity of a measure. As with internal validity, one must depend on a set of overlapping criteria for evaluating construct validity.

First, one must examine a measure's *face validity*. Simply put, is the measure, on its face, measuring what it purports to be measuring? Determining face validity is often a matter of using intuitive logic. In the case of IQ, one can, presumably, be confident that IQ is an accurate metric for many but not all aspects of human intelligence. This does not mean that IQ is the best, or even only, measure of intelligence.

Second, and a bit more advanced, is *content validity*. Content validity simply asks whether or not all of the essential elements of a concept have been captured by the measure. Additionally, one must also determine whether all the elements not representative of the concept have been excluded.

Does GPA alone measure academic success? Certainly not. Academic success can also include, for example, the number of academic papers published, the number of academic awards and scholarships won, citations by other scholars, the number of advanced degrees earned, and other measures of academic success. Content validation pushes researchers to consider all critical elements of a concept they are seeking to measure.

Finally, one must also consider *criterion validity*. This evaluates whether the measure predicts what it is intended to. Stated differently, does the measure for the independent variable predict for the measure of the dependent variable? In the case of intelligence and academic success, is there empirical evidence which suggests that IQ is a predictor of GPA? The short answer, in this case, is yes. Similarly, in a law school context, LSAT scores are by far the strongest predictor of first-year grades and of bar passage rates.

A final consideration in evaluating study quality, including studies examining gun ownership and crime, is *data disaggregation*. This is the practice of breaking the data within a large dataset into smaller units/components so as to better understand finer trends. Aggregated data tends to obscure important trends that are occurring at lower levels of analysis.

Suppose one wanted to know how levels of household income were distributed across the United States (i.e., which households brought home the most income). One would not get a very clear picture of household income in the United States by examining incomes at the state level. Such an analysis would only provide insight into the average household income by state. It would not shed light on how incomes differed within states, or within counties, cities, and so forth. On the other hand, a disaggregation of the state-level income data to also show household income by rural/urban residence, ethnic/cultural group affiliation, education level, and family size would provide a clearer idea about the profiles of households with low, average, and high incomes.

In studies of gun ownership and crime, it is important to consider whether the authors have aggregated the data according to large units of analysis (nations, states, regions, etc.) and whether this can provide a clear picture of a causal relationship. In general, the smaller the unit of analysis the easier it is to see how the data is actually distributed.

Following are the definitions of some of the specialized terms you will encounter in the articles in this chapter or in other professional contexts. Although law schools rarely offer training in social science statistics, attorneys who practice in fields involving public policy often need to be able to understand social science articles, and to present the findings of such articles to a court.

Significance. In general usage, “significant” means about the same as “important” or “meaningful.” Relatedly, the term “statistically significant” is widely misunderstood to mean something akin to “measurable” or “observable.”

The statistical meaning is much more precise. When a social science study shows a correlation between two things (e.g., the rate of heart attacks on a given day, and whether the temperature that day was above 100 degrees Fahrenheit), the question arises whether the correlation is due simply to chance. Statisticians use well-established formulas to estimate the probability that the correlation is random.

Usually, a result is said to be “significant” (or *statistically significant*) if the significance test’s *p*-value (see immediately *infra*) is 0.05 or lower.¹² In other words, there is a 95 percent probability that the correlation of the two things is not explained by mere chance, *assuming that no confounding factors—unknown outside influences—are skewing the results*. As a matter of standard practice, a correlation that is not statistically significant is ignored; it is treated as if it does not exist, as if there is no correlation.

Confounding factors can be eliminated fairly well in controlled laboratory experiments. But it is exceedingly difficult to eliminate the effect of outside variables in other contexts because it is impossible to compare real-world data—say, data obtained in a world where firearms exist—to equivalent data obtained from a counter-factual world—say, one in which firearms do not exist. That it is often difficult to estimate even those variables that the researcher intends to include in the study makes things even less certain.

It is important to remember that a mere finding of significance is not certain proof. There may be other factors that explain the relationship. For example, in the United States, blacks have a much higher rate of being convicted for felonies than do whites. The racial difference is statistically significant. However, this does *not* prove that race differences cause difference in crime rates. For example, it might be that other factors (e.g., disparate treatment by the criminal justice system, poverty rates, education levels, unemployment levels, broken families, etc.) account for all or most of the black/white differences.

In addition, that a correlation is statistically significant does not mean that it is *practically significant*. Practical significance, unlike statistical significance, is a measure of how important or meaningful an effect is. For example, there may be a statistically significant correlation between the number of letters in people’s names and the number of sunny days in those people’s neighborhoods, but, as common sense suggests, this finding has no practical significance.

p-value. Often referred to simply as “*p*,” *p*-value is the probability that the results are as extreme as those found, or more extreme (again, assuming no confounding variables). If *p* is less than 0.05 (in other words, the probability is less than 5 percent that an observed association between the dependent and independent variables is due to chance), then the results are considered significant.¹³

12. Sometimes, a looser standard of 0.10, or a more stringent standard of 0.01, is used.

13. For example, suppose a population consists of 50 percent Republicans and 50 percent Democrats, but the statistician does not actually know this. A sample of ten voters is drawn, and merely by chance, it contains seven Republicans and three Democrats. The statistician’s best guess is that the population is actually 70 percent Republican, but it is also possible that the population is really 90 percent Republican or 10 percent Republican or any other value, and the sample just happens by chance to differ from the population. A finding of statistical significance is a finding that results as extreme as those found—or more extreme—would be found less than 5 percent of the time, given some initial guess (the *null hypothesis*, often referred to simply as the *hypothesis*) about the population from which a sample was drawn. If the initial guess about the population was that it was 10 percent Republican and 90 percent Democrat, then it would be quite unlikely to draw a random sample of ten people consisting of seven Republicans and three Democrats, and the precise probability that this would occur is *p*-value.

Confidence Interval. Statistical significance is sometimes expressed as a range of values, and the result of an experiment is said to be significant if it is *outside* the “95-percent confidence interval.” For a given sample size, a confidence interval of a certain percentage denotes the percentage of samples taken from the population that will capture the true value. A confidence interval is primarily used as a measure of a study’s **precision**. The narrower the confidence interval, the more precise the study is.

Margins of error in surveys, for example, are typically expressions of 95-percent confidence intervals; a ± 3 percent margin of error means that one can be 95 percent certain that the true proportion of the population that would answer a survey question a certain way is within 3 percent of the result obtained in the survey. For example, a political poll samples 750 people in a state, and reports that candidate A is supported by 48 percent and candidate B is supported by 40 percent; the pollster states that the 95 percent confident interval is plus or minus 3 percent. This means that it is 95 percent likely that if the pollster had sampled every voter in the state, between 45 percent and 51 percent would have expressed support for candidate A, and between 37 percent and 43 percent would have expressed support for candidate B. In interpreting political polls, it is always important to note whether a candidate’s lead is *greater* than the confidence intervals, as candidate A’s lead is in the example above.

Because a confidence interval is calculated using the same equations as are used to calculate *p*-values, they can also be used as an alternate measure of statistical significance. If the confidence interval includes the possibility that the effect being tested is zero, then a result is not statistically significant. If the confidence interval does not include the possibility that the effect being tested is zero, then the result is statistically significant.

For example, if a study found that an expansion of the right to carry handguns reduced a state’s homicide rates from 4.7 per 100,000 to 4.5 per 100,000, with a 95 percent confidence interval of plus or minus .3; in other words, the 95 percent confidence interval was 4.2 to 4.8 per 100,000. The finding that the new gun law reduced homicide rates would not be statistically significant. Because the pre-measure rate of 4.7 per 100,000 is within the confidence interval, the 95 percent confidence interval includes the possibility of zero effect.

Readers should always remember that a 95 percent confidence interval is not the same as 100 percent. For example, the **final pre-election poll** conducted by Gallup reported Mitt Romney at 49 percent and Barack Obama at 48 percent; on election day, Mitt Romney won 47.2 percent of the popular vote (within the confidence interval), whereas Barack Obama won 51.1 percent (outside the 95 percent confidence interval).

r. The *r* is the strength of the correlation of two variables. It is important to distinguish *r* (strength of correlation) from *p* (probability that the correlation is not due to random chance). A weak correlation can still be statistically significant. For example, even though drunk driving is very dangerous, the majority of drunk driving events do not result in accidents. Thus the *r* will be low (closer to 0 than to 1) for both sober and drunk driving. If drunk driving events always resulted in an accident, then *r* would be 1. But we also know that driving drunk markedly increases the chances of an accident relative to sober driving, so it is not surprising that the correlation between drunk driving and an increase in accident rates is statistically significant. That is, $p < 0.05$.

N. N is the sample size. If you perform a study of 150 people, or 150 nations, then $N = 150$.

Spearman's rho. Spearman's rho is the same as *Spearman's rank correlation coefficient*, and similar to r . Sometimes the shorthand *rho* is used. In a formula, the shorthand is r_s . This is a formula for calculating the correlation between two things. The result will be between -1 and 1 . If the two things are closely correlated (e.g., the number of fans in a football stadium vs. the decibel level of crowd roars), then Spearman's rho will be close to 1 . If the two things are inversely correlated (e.g., obeying all traffic laws while driving vs. auto accident injury), then Spearman's rho will be close to -1 . If the two things have little correlation (e.g., sunspot activity vs. whether the National or American League wins the World Series), then Spearman's rho will be close to 0 .

Pearson's r. Pearson's r serves the same purpose as Spearman's rho, but the formula is different. Pearson's r is a formula for measuring the direction and the magnitude of the correlation between two variables. If increases in X are correlated with increases in Y, then the correlation of X and Y moves in the same direction. If a 50 percent increase in X is correlated with a 50 percent increase in Y, then the magnitude of the correlation is high. The Pearson's r formula produces a number between -1 and 1 . If the number is positive, then the direction is the same. If the number is close to -1 or 1 , and far from 0 , then the magnitude of the correlation is high.

Variance and Standard Deviation. Variance and standard deviation are ways of measuring the range over which a set of numbers is spread out. A higher value indicates that the numbers are more dispersed.

Type-I and Type-II Errors. The probability of a Type-I error is the probability that a study's authors conclude that a correlation exists where in fact there is no correlation. Where the standard 0.05 significance level is used as the decision rule, the probability of a Type-I error is 5 percent. The probability of a Type-II error is the probability that a correlation is not found where in fact one does exist. The probabilities of Type-I and Type-II errors are inversely correlated—as one increases, the other decreases. Type-II errors can only be calculated for a given strength of correlation.

Cross-Sectional Studies (CX). CX studies measure different populations at a fixed point in time, for example, a study that looks at data from all 50 states for the year 2018.

Interrupted Time-Series Design (ITSD). ITSD refers to before-and-after studies. Examining one or more populations, ITSD looks at changes that occurred after some event. For example, one could look at every state that adopted a “shall issue” concealed handgun carry law in the past 20 years. On a state-by-state basis, did the crime rates go up, go down, or not change, after the law came into force?

Panel Designs and Panel/Multiple Time-Series Designs. A panel design studies the same group of people (the “panel”) over a period of time. A multiple time-series design compares and contrasts two groups of people over time; one group was subject to an experimental intervention, while the control group was

not. For example, a Panel/Multiple Time-Series Design might look at states that enacted bans on “assault weapons” and states that did not enact such a ban (the control group), and see whether the two groups of states experienced similar or divergent changes in crime rates over time.

General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a major annual survey of the American population, conducted since 1972 by the [National Opinion Research Center](#) at the University of Chicago, and is a leading source for social science data.

As an introduction to comparative studies, the next short excerpt presents useful warnings about the types of errors that are often made in gun research. Professor Gary Kleck describes some methodological difficulties in social science studies about gun control. First, when a researcher is comparing different jurisdictions, how does the researcher know how many guns there really are in each jurisdiction? Since it is impossible to actually count all the guns, researchers must make a *proxy selection*; the proxy (e.g., the percentage of suicides in which guns are used) is taken as proxy for the prevalence of guns.

Second, how does the researcher account for cause and effect? For example, if a jurisdiction with more guns has more crime, is that because more guns causes more crime? Or because people who live in high-crime areas buy more defensive guns? Or both? This issue is called *reverse causality*.

Third, how has the author accounted for confounding factors that might independently affect crime rates, such as unemployment or police effectiveness?

Many studies comparing U.S. jurisdictions have serious deficiencies in addressing the above problems. When comparing nations, the difficulties become even worse, because comparable data are even harder to obtain. For example, unemployment data within the United States is compiled by the U.S. Department of Labor, and so unemployment is defined and measured exactly the same way in Montana that it is in Mississippi. But unemployment levels in two different countries may be measured in very different ways, and the data quality between the two countries may be very different.

Gary Kleck

The Impact of Gun Ownership Rates on Crime Rates: A Methodological Review of the Evidence

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper reviews 41 studies that tested the hypothesis that higher gun prevalence levels cause higher crime rates, especially higher homicide rates.

Methods: Each study was assessed as to whether it solved or reduced each of three critical methodological problems: (1) whether a validated measure of gun prevalence was used, (2) whether the authors controlled for more than a handful of possible confounding variables, and (3) whether the researchers used suitable causal order procedures to deal with the possibility of crime rates affecting gun rates, instead of the reverse.

Results: It was found that most studies did not solve *any* of these problems, and that research that did a better job of addressing these problems was less likely to support the more-guns-cause-more-crime hypothesis. Indeed, none of the studies that solved all three problems supported the hypothesis.

Conclusions: Technically weak research mostly supports the hypothesis, while strong research does not. It must be tentatively concluded that higher gun ownership rates do not cause higher crime rates, including homicide rates. . . .

WAS A GUNS-CRIME ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED? VALIDITY OF THE MEASURES OF GUN PREVALENCE

To determine whether the prevalence of guns is even associated with crime rates, it is of course necessary to have a valid measure of the prevalence of guns. Without this, it is impossible to even compute a valid statistical association between gun levels and crime rates. . . . Only the percent of suicides committed with guns (PSG) shows strong validity for purposes of measuring levels of gun ownership in different areas. Further, none of the proxies used in prior research, including PSG, have been shown to be valid for purposes of judging trends over time. . . .

This problem is therefore especially serious in studies using a longitudinal design, such as a panel design, since those using such designs appear to implicitly assume that any proxies that are valid for establishing differences in gun levels across areas must also be valid for establishing changes in gun levels over time. Direct tests of the validity of nearly 20 proxies used in this body of research clearly indicate that this assumption is false. . . . [M]ost of the variation (52%) in PSG is independent of variation over time in gun prevalence as measured in the [General Social Survey (GSS)]. By no stretch of the imagination can a proxy measure be regarded as having good validity if most of the variation in the proxy is independent of the target construct being measured. Further, . . . when year-to-year changes are analyzed, there is essentially no association over time between changes in PSG and changes in direct survey measures of gun prevalence. In sum, PSG is apparently useless for tracking changes in gun prevalence, despite its considerable ability to assess differences in gun prevalence across areas. The same is true of all other gun proxies tested for validity. Consequently, the findings of nearly all studies that have attempted to relate changes over time in gun ownership to changes in PSG are uninterpretable, because the researchers were not actually measuring changes in gun levels. . . .

An alternative to using proxies for gun levels is to use direct survey measures of gun ownership. Survey measures of gun ownership are themselves subject to serious error, mostly in the form of underreporting of gun ownership, but do have the merit of being fairly direct modes of measurement. The main problem with the studies that have used this method so far . . . , however, is that (a) the survey's sample sizes for the areas used in the study (typically Census regions or states) were far too small to provide meaningful estimates of changes in gun prevalence. The number of respondents in any one region in the GSS is often less than 100 . . . , so only the largest (and most implausible) changes in regional gun prevalence measures could be statistically significant. For example, [one study] claimed that region-level changes in survey measured gun prevalence caused changes in homicide rates, but they did not show that any of their survey-based year-to-year changes in regional

gun prevalence were statistically significant. In fact, reanalysis of the GSS regional data indicates that very few of the changes were significant, and the handful that were significant were implausibly large and erratic. For example, the GSS results indicate that in New England the percent of households with guns supposedly jumped from 16.6 in 1982 to 42.9 percent in 1984 (a 158% increase in two years!), and then dropped back to 25.1 in 1985. . . . It is highly unlikely that New England, or any other region actually experienced changes in gun prevalence this radical in such short time periods or that were this erratic. More likely, these apparent changes largely reflect sampling error and changes in the willingness of gun owners to their report gun ownership. [The researchers] were thus probably mostly modeling statistical noise.

CONTROLS FOR CONFOUNDING VARIABLES

It is also essential that researchers seeking to estimate the effect of gun levels on crime rates statistically control for confounding variables—those factors that affect crime rates, but that are also associated with gun prevalence rates. If this is not done, the supposed effects of gun levels will be confused with the effects of the confounding variables. The more of these likely confounding variables that a researcher controls, the less likely this problem will be a serious one. Statisticians describe this as the “omitted variables” problem, because researchers failed to include confounding variables in their multivariate equations predicting crime rates. For example, if an area was characterized by a culture that encouraged violent behavior, but gun ownership was also common in that area, then that violent subculture would be a confounding variable because it affects violence rates but is also correlated with gun ownership. Because the southern parts of the U.S. are thought to be characterized by a regional culture of violence, and also have higher gun ownership rates, more careful analysts control for the regional location of states or cities as a way of indirectly controlling for a possible Southern subculture of violence whose effects on violence might be confused with effects of gun levels.

A variable must, at minimum, possess both of two properties in order to actually be a confounder: (1) it must show a statistically significant association with the outcome (dependent) variable, and (2) must be associated with the predictor of interest—gun prevalence in the present case. If a supposed confounder lacks either of these attributes, it is not in fact a confounder, and controlling for it does not help isolate the effect of the predictor of interest. . . .

[T]he vast majority of studies of the effect on gun levels on crime rates did a poor job of controlling for likely confounding variables, in that their own reported findings indicated that the authors controlled for few control variables that had a documented statistically significant association with crime rates. Of the 41 studies reviewed, fourteen did not control for a single confounder. Only six studies controlled for more than five statistically significant control variables. All six of these studies found no significant positive effect of gun levels on violence rates. The pattern, then, is highly consistent and simple to summarize. When researchers do a poor job of controlling for potential confounding variables, they often find apparent support for the hypothesis that more guns lead to more crime. When authors do even a minimally adequate job of controlling confounders, they find no support for the hypothesis.

CAUSAL ORDER—DID THE RESEARCHERS DISTINGUISH THE EFFECT OF GUN LEVELS ON CRIME RATES FROM THE EFFECT OF CRIME RATES ON GUN LEVELS?

Gun prevalence might affect crime rates, but it is also possible that higher crime rates cause higher gun prevalence, as more people acquire guns, particularly handguns, for self-protection. A large and varied body of research strongly supports the hypothesis that crime rates—especially homicide rates—have a positive effect on rates of gun ownership, especially handgun ownership. The implication for macro-level studies of the impact of gun levels on crime rates is that researchers who fail to adopt appropriate methods for addressing causal order are likely to mistake a positive effect of crime rates on gun levels for a positive effect of gun levels on crime rates.

At least eleven published macro-level studies have found evidence indicating a positive effect of crime rates on gun levels. . . . Further, most of these studies adopted arguably appropriate ways to address the causal order issue, and still consistently found that crime rates have significant positive effects on gun rates. . . .

Few scholars even made an attempt to address the causal order problem. Researchers have typically adopted one of four unhelpful responses to this problem: (1) ignoring the issue altogether, (2) mentioning the issue but arguing that it is not really a problem, (3) acknowledging it as a possible problem in a pro forma way, as a mere logical possibility, but without conveying its seriousness or doing anything about it, or (4) forthrightly acknowledging the problem but applying inadequate solutions.

The 41 studies generated 90 distinct findings, 40 of which pertained to homicide. There is no point to providing separate tabulations for any other crime type, since no other crime type yielded more than ten findings, and there was virtually no variation in the non-homicide findings—nearly all indicated that gun levels did not have a significant positive effect.

The overall quality of this body of research is poor, with many primitive studies and a handful of more sophisticated ones. Of the 90 total findings, only 28 (31%) were based on valid measures of gun prevalence, only six (7%) were based on appropriate methods to address causal order (instrumental variables methods, using instruments demonstrated to be relevant and valid), and only eleven (12%) controlled for more than five statistically significant control variables. Only four findings (8%) were produced by research that met all three conditions for establish[ing] a causal effect and only ten were produced by research that met two or more of the conditions.

Of 40 findings regarding homicide, 21 (52%) were positive and significant at the .05 level. Thus, most findings appear to support the hypothesis that higher gun rates cause higher homicide rates. Once one takes account of differences in fundamental methodological flaws in the research, a very different pattern emerges. The findings of lower quality studies are diametrically opposed to those of higher quality studies. When researchers used an invalid measure of gun prevalence, 62% of the homicide findings were positive and significant, but when a valid gun measure was used, only 36% of the homicide findings were positive and significant. Of the 37 homicide findings generated by studies failing to use appropriate methods for addressing causal order, 57% were positive and significant, but none of the homicide findings generated by studies using proper causal order methods supported it. When researchers controlled five or fewer significant control variables, 59% of the homicide findings were positive and significant, but when more than five significant control variables

were controlled, only 17% of the findings were positive and significant. Finally, there were only three studies that used a valid gun measure, and controlled for more than five significant control variables, and addressed the causal order issue with appropriate methods. None of these methodologically stronger studies supported the hypothesis. Conversely, among studies that failed to properly deal with any of these three fundamental problems, 65% of the homicide findings supported the hypothesis. The overall pattern is very clear—the more methodologically adequate research is, the less likely it is to support the more guns–more crime hypothesis.

These patterns are not likely to [be] coincidental, since each of the flaws can bias findings in favor of a misleading positive guns/violence association. Failing to properly model causal order leads researchers to misinterpret the well-documented positive effects of crime rates on gun rates as a positive effect of gun rates on crime rates. . . . Failing to control for confounders that have a positive effect on crime rates but are also positively associated with gun rates (such as a pro-violence culture) leads to an upward omitted variables bias in estimates of the effect of gun levels on crime rates. And using invalid measures of gun prevalence that actually measure pro-violence culture or some other factor with a positive effect on crime rates leads to researchers misinterpreting effects of these other factors as effects of gun prevalence.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, the only prior research that supports the hypothesis that higher gun ownership rates cause higher crime rates is research that makes at least one, and usually all of, the three fundamental methodological errors identified here. Conversely, research that avoids or minimizes these flaws consistently finds no support for the hypothesis. . . .

Why does gun prevalence not have a significant positive effect on homicide? The most likely explanation is that (a) most guns are possessed by noncriminals whose only involvement in crime is as victims, and (b) defensive gun use by crime victims is both common and effective in preventing the offender from injuring the victim. . . . These violence reducing-effects of guns in the hands of victims may roughly cancel out the violence-increasing effects of guns in the hands of offenders, resulting in a near-zero net effect on homicide rates. . . .

3. *Multivariate Studies*

Many comparative international studies on gun control are deficient in research design. The next article is one of the most sophisticated international comparative gun control studies ever published. It examines 26 developed nations, using data from the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS). The survey is necessarily dependent on respondents truthfully reporting about crime victimization and about their gun ownership.

As you read the article, consider how it addresses the methodological problems that Kleck has identified: (1) accurately measuring gun ownership; (2) reverse causality (the possibility that higher gun ownership levels might be a consequence of, and not a cause of, higher crime rates); and (3) confounding variables (controlling for other factors that affect crime rates).

John N. van Kesteren

Revisiting the Gun Ownership and Violence Link: A Multilevel Analysis of Victimization Survey Data

54 *Brit. J. Criminology* 53 (2014)

BACKGROUND

One of the ongoing debates in evidence-based crime prevention concerns the possible causal relationship between gun ownership and violent crime. On one side of the debate stand those claiming that the availability of a firearm acts as a facilitator of the commission of serious crimes of violence by providing potential assaulters with the opportunity to attack others with an especially dangerous instrument. This position in the debate is theoretically grounded in situational crime prevention theory. . . . The notion of guns facilitating violence is the key assumption behind the strict regulation of gun ownership in most European countries and behind government programmes seeking to decrease gun availability in a variety of countries including Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Mexico, South Africa and parts of the United States. It also lies behind the global campaigns against illicit production and trafficking in small firearms. . . . On the other side of the debate stand those who deny the facilitating impact of gun availability. Some authors claim that the gun ownership of potential victims acts as a preventive or protective measure by deterring would-be attackers. . . .

Over the years, many empirical studies have been conducted on the gun ownership-violence link. Research on this relationship is methodologically difficult, for several reasons. First, a dearth of reliable data exists on both gun ownership and on violence between civilians. Especially in countries where gun ownership is illegal, as in most countries in Western Europe and Asia, official ownership statistics possess ample “dark numbers.” Official statistics on gun ownership cannot therefore be reliably used for cross-country comparisons. The same can be said of official statistics on the numbers of crimes of violence committed. Numbers of violent crimes recorded by the police are known to be heavily influenced by different reporting patterns and recording practices. This explains why countries with efficient police forces such as Sweden and Denmark invariably come at the top of the list of recorded crimes of violence per capita and many developing countries at the bottom. . . .

A second constraint of studies on the gun-violence link—partly related to the dearth of reliable data on violent crime—is that data used in analyses often come from relatively small and possibly unrepresentative populations. Many studies have been conducted on data from the United States only. Other studies look at the relationships between firearm ownership and homicide rates (which are supposed to be more comparable than those on other violent crime). Statistics on homicide are mainly from developed countries. The use of such restricted datasets obviously limits the generalizability of the results. The dynamics of guns and violence in the United States might not be representative for the rest of the world. Findings on relationships between guns and homicide in small samples of mainly developed countries might not apply to other types of violent crime or to other regions.

A third factor complicating this line of research is the need to distinguish between relationships at the level of countries with those at the level of individuals.

Official statistics on gun ownership and violent crime are typically available at the aggregate level only. However, from statistical relationships at the level of countries, no inferences can be made about relationships at the micro level of individuals.

The conduct of victimization surveys among the general public has yielded data sets which can be used to examine the gun-violence link. This is true for major national victimization surveys such as the NCVS [U.S. National Crime Victimization Survey] and the BCS [British Crime Survey] and it is especially true for the first internationally conducted standardized victimization survey, the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS). The ICVS has been carried out once or more in over 80 countries in six global sweeps between 1989 and 2010. . . . The ICVS data set has three characteristics facilitating the examination of the possible links between gun ownership and violence. It, first, contains data on victimization by a range of different types of violence, including on gun-related crimes. It, second, contains data on self-reported ownership of firearms and handguns. And, third, its data allow an analysis of links between gun ownership and victimization by violence at both individual and aggregate (country or city) levels. Over the years, the ICVS data sets have been used to examine the gun-violence link from an international perspective. . . .

SUBJECT MATTER AND OUTLINE

This article revisits the gun ownership-violence link, mainly using data from the fifth sweep of the ICVS, conducted in 2004 and 2005. In this sweep, the survey was carried out in 31 nations, among randomly selected samples of the public of 2,000 persons per country. . . . Data are available from 26 industrialized countries in the world, including Japan, as well as from a number of Eastern European countries (four) and Mexico. The ICVS provides information on victimization by ten common crimes including various types of contact crimes involving or not involving guns. Also available is self-reported information on ownership of different types of firearms in the household. This information is, as said, available at the level both of individual respondents and of countries. In order to broaden the variation in key variables, some analyses of relationships between gun ownership and homicides were carried out using data sets from older ICVS sweeps covering a larger number of countries.

We will first present some descriptive data on the levels and nature of gun ownership per country based on the ICVS 2005. Next, we will explore the gun ownership-violence link presenting basic bivariate statistics at the country level. This is followed by an analysis of the gun-violence link at the level of individuals. The key question is whether ownership of a gun acts as a risk-enhancing factor for victimization by contact crimes or not, controlling for known risk factors such as age, and the number of outdoor leisure activities. . . . In a final section, we will discuss the results of a multilevel analysis integrating the previous analyses at the macro and micro levels. The results will show whether and to what extent the effects of firearm ownership on the risk of individuals to be victimized are determined by contextual variables. In a concluding paragraph, we will discuss how the findings compare with results of previous studies and which general conclusions can be drawn. The article finishes with some suggestions for further research.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA ON FIREARMS AND VICTIMIZATION

Firearms, Guns and Reasons for Ownership

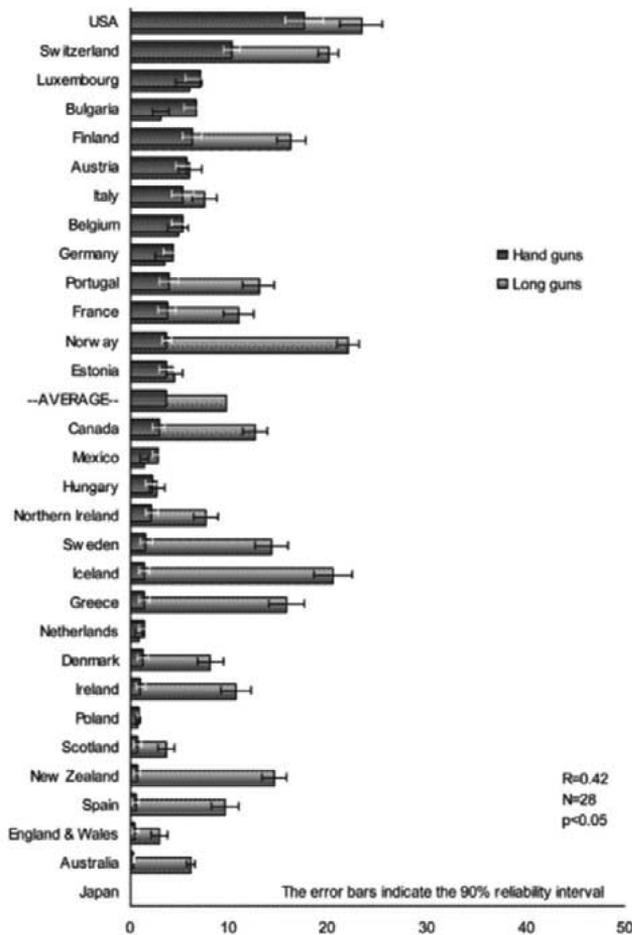
The ICVS asks respondents whether a firearm is present in the house and, if so, what type of firearm. The questionnaire distinguishes between long guns (rifles and shotguns) and handguns. Those who own any firearms are asked the reasons for ownership. The results are given in Figure 1. As can be seen in the figure, the United States, Switzerland, Finland, Norway and Iceland have the largest number of rifles and shotguns, directly followed by Sweden, Greece and New Zealand. Of this set of countries, only the United States and Switzerland also belong to the group of countries with the highest number of handguns. Japan, Australia, England and Wales, Spain, New Zealand, Scotland, Poland and Ireland know ownership rates for handguns below 1 per cent. Reliability intervals have been indicated in the graph. The reliability intervals are relatively large for countries with low ownership levels. . . .

Those owning firearms were asked for the reasons for their ownership. . . . Hunting is the main reason for owning a firearm in all countries. This typically applies to the ownership of long guns. For handguns, hunting is the second most frequently mentioned reason after sports. Quite a number of households possess a gun for no particular reason (the weapon has always been in the family or is part of a collection). Handguns are also owned for reasons of protection or prevention; this is the case for 23 per cent of the handgun owners. The fifth most common reason is that the guns are owned because someone in the household carries out police or security work or because it is an army gun. No data are available for Switzerland, but previous research indicates that the most important reasons for ownership in this country are hunting and mandatory ownership of a handgun among army reservists. . . . There are some noticeable cross-country differences in the reasons for ownership. A pronounced difference was found between the reasons of owners in the United States and those elsewhere. Overall, prevention and protection are a more prominent reason for owning a firearm in the United States than anywhere else. This difference is fully explained by the relatively large number of handguns.

The correlation between ownership rates of the two types of firearms is modest ($r = 0.42$, $n = 28$) but statistically significant. The 28 countries can be grouped according to whether they have above or below-average ownership levels for the two types of guns. . . .

Victimization by Contact Crimes

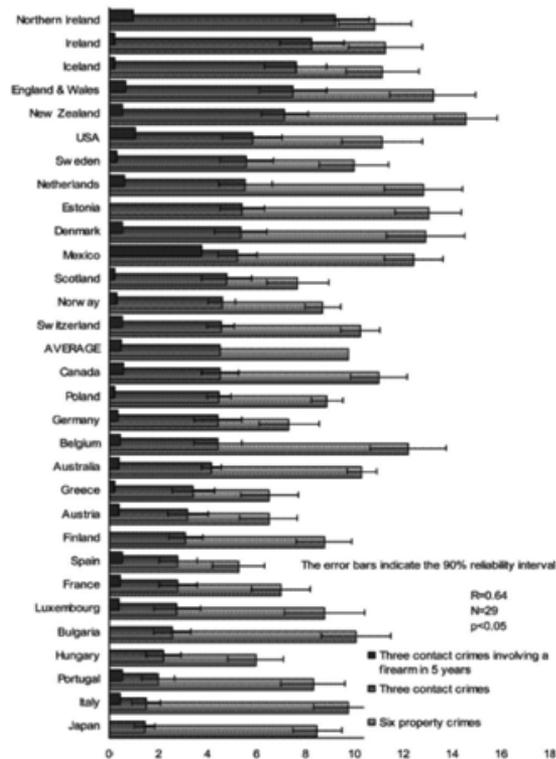
Contact crimes are defined as crimes whereby victim and offender are in direct contact with each other during the commission of the offence. As said, the ICVS distinguishes three main types of contact crimes: robbery, sexual offences and assaults and threats. Figure 2 shows the one-year prevalence rates for these three types of contact crimes from the 2005 ICVS (data available from 29 countries). Also shown are one-year victimization rates for six types of non-contact property crimes (burglary, three types of vehicle theft, theft from a car and other personal theft). Also included in the graph are five-years victimization rates for contact crimes in which a firearm was involved.¹



Countries with the highest victimization rates for contact crimes include New Zealand, England and Wales, Iceland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. Above-average victimization rates are found in Denmark, Estonia, Netherlands, Sweden and the United States. Bulgaria, Luxembourg, France, Spain, Finland, Austria and Greece have figures below average. Lowest victimization rates are found in Japan, Italy, Portugal and Hungary. . . .

Of the countries with high victimization rates for contact crimes, New Zealand and England and Wales are also in the group of countries with the highest rates of property crimes. Japan, Italy and Portugal have relatively more property crimes than contact crimes; they have victimization rates for property crimes slightly below average, but very low rates for contact crimes. Also included in the graph are the five-year victimization levels for contact crimes whereby a firearm was involved. The

1. Five-year prevalence rates are shown because of the very low one-year victimization rates for these types of crimes.



differences between the countries are in most cases not statistically significant due to the low percentages, but Mexico, Northern Ireland and the United States stand out with the highest rates.

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN FIREARM OWNERSHIP AND VICTIMIZATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL

As a first step in the analysis of the guns-violence link, we have looked at the correlations between firearm ownership (handguns and long guns separately) and victimization rates for contact crimes with the use of firearms, other contact crimes and property crimes. In order to maximize the numbers of countries included, we have combined data from the 1996, 2000 and 2005 rounds, always using the latest data available per country ($n = 50$). Since gun-related crimes are rare in most countries, five-year victimization rates are used for these types of crime. . . .

The results show that ownership rates for handguns are positively related to victimization rates for contact crimes involving firearms, including assaults and threats involving a gun. A positive but statistically insignificant relation is found between handgun ownership and victimization by contact crimes generally. . . . There is no correlation at a national level between handgun ownership and victimization by property crime. Neither is there a relationship between long-gun ownership and any type of victimization. These results show that analyses of the gun-violence link at the macro level should focus on handgun ownership.

The ICVS produces no data on victimization by homicide. To replicate previous studies of the gun ownership-homicide link, data have been used from a newly developed dataset of the United Nations distinguishing between firearm-related and non-firearm-related homicides (UNODC 2009) [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime] as well as from similar older UNODC data sets. The homicide data relate to 2005 or 2006 or, when these were missing, from older years. In the analyses, we have looked at overall homicide rates, rates of homicides involving firearms and the proportion of all homicides involving firearms. Firearms ownership data are from the ICVS 2005 or from older sweeps if no recent data were available. . . .

The results show significant positive relationships between handgun ownership and the three measures of homicide. The correlations are dependent on the inclusion of the United States and some non-Western countries (notably Brazil, Colombia and South Africa). As was the case with victimization by contact crimes, ownership of long guns shows no significant correlations with any type of homicide. The weak relationship between long guns and the proportion of homicides committed by firearms is likely to be caused by the impact of handgun ownership, since national rates of handgun ownership are, as discussed, correlated with ownership of long guns.

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL ANALYSIS

The next question to be addressed is whether for individuals ownership of a firearm increases or decreases the risk of becoming a victim of a crime. As explained, information is available on the question of whether or not a firearm was in possession of the respondent's household. An important category of contextual information used in this analysis is whether the respondent lives in a country with low, average or high ownership rates of long guns or handguns, respectively. The analysis is, of necessity, restricted to victimization by non-lethal contact crimes, since homicide is not covered in the ICVS questionnaire. In the first analysis, the dependent variable is one-year victimization by contact crimes (robbery, sexual offences, threats and assaults). In a second analysis, the dependent variable is victimization by these crimes with or without involvement of a firearm. In this analysis, five-year victimization rates are used because the one-year victimization figures are too low. Both analyses are carried out using the data of the ICVS 2004/05 encompassing results from 31, mainly Western, countries. . . .

[O]wners of a handgun are more often a victim of contact crimes than non-owners, especially in countries with low availability of such firearms. For countries with high and average ownership rates, the relationship between ownership of a handgun and victimization by contact crime goes in the expected direction but is not statistically significant. This result suggests that, in countries where gun ownership is rare, those owning a gun may also possess other risk-enhancing characteristics. This hypothesis will be explored in more detail in a multivariate analysis. Ownership of a long gun is apparently not related to victimization by contact crime at the individual level either.

In a second analysis, we have looked at the relationship between gun ownership and victimization by contact crimes with or without firearms, respectively. . . . The results are similar to those regarding victimization by total contact crimes. Individuals owning a handgun tend to be more at risk of being threatened or attacked (with or without a firearm) in countries where gun ownership is not common:

- For contact crimes not involving a firearm, the differences are the largest in countries with low ownership levels. There is no significant difference for countries with high ownership levels.
- For gun-related contact crimes, countries with average ownership levels, 2.5 per cent of the owners are victimized by contact crimes involving firearms and only 0.3 per cent of the non-owners. The differences in countries with low and high ownership are not statistically significant but go in the same, expected direction.

Correlates of Victimization at the Individual Level

Various theoretical models have been developed to explain how the differential vulnerability of individuals to criminal victimization is determined by their lifestyle or “routine activities”. . . . The ICVS includes information on demographics such as age, gender, town size, marital status, income and education of respondents. Previous multivariate victimological risk analysis using the ICVS data sets has shown that many of these factors have independent effects on victimization by contact crimes. . . . Besides these known risk factors, the ICVS includes a question on the frequency of outdoor activities in the evening. This factor has also been found to be an independent risk factor of victimization by contact crimes. . . . Finally, previous analyses have shown that victimization by property crime is an independent predictor of victimization by contact crime. A possible explanation for the latter finding is that those victimized by property crime are more exposed to victimization because of their proximity to potential offenders. To test whether gun ownership as such is an independent risk factor, multivariate analyses have been conducted including these other known risk factors besides gun ownership. To this end, log-linear analyses were carried out whereby the independent variables were coded in categories against a base. . . . The key independent is the variable distinguishing between gun ownership at individual and country levels. For technical reasons, only 26 Western countries were included (22 European countries plus the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand). The dependent variable was the five-year victimization rate. . . .

The multivariate analysis confirms the known independent risk factors for victimization by contact crime such as young age, being single, living in a big city and an outgoing lifestyle. Being female enhances exposure because of higher victimization by sexual violence. Low education and/or income are risk-reducing factors, probably because they limit leisure time activities. As expected, victimization by property crime acts as a powerful predictor of victimization by contact crime. Controlling for the effects of these external independents, handgun ownership comes out as an independent predictor of victimization by contact crimes in countries with medium and high levels of gun availability.

MULTILEVEL RESULTS ON INDIVIDUAL AND COUNTRY LEVELS

A multilevel analysis using the same ICVS 2004/05 data is the final step in our analysis. The data have been subjected to the same list-wise procedure as was done for the log-linear analysis and therefore represent the same population. The difference, however, is that most of the variables were not categorized but interpreted as data at the interval level. With the exception of gender, firearm ownership and living with

a partner remained dichotomies. All variables have been transformed into z-scores. This means that the average of the variables is set at 0 and the standard deviation at 1. In this final stage of the analysis, the same independents as in the log-linear analysis at the level of individuals were included and some characteristics of countries. The added variables at country level are wealth (GDP per capita), income differences (GINI index) and educational level from the 2005 Human Development Report (UNDP 2005) [United Nations Development Programme]. Also included is the rate of urbanization taken from the UN World Urbanisation Prospects (United Nations 2006). From the ICVS database, we took the handgun and long-gun firearm-ownership levels (percentage of households owning at least one). . . .

Interaction Effects

In the fifth and final model, two interaction effects with ownership levels of handguns showed a significant effect:

- People living without a partner are more at risk than people living with a partner, but even more so in countries with higher ownership levels for handguns.
- Owning a long gun is in itself no risk factor, but it diminishes the risk in countries with high ownership levels of handguns.

In the final model, having controlled for any effects of independents at the individual or country level (including firearm-ownership levels), people owning handguns are more at risk of becoming a victim of a contact crime. In those countries where many people own handguns, being single is an extra risk factor (on top of the already high risk anywhere else). But, in these countries, owners of a long gun (but not a handgun) are somewhat less at risk.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Using a data set including 50 countries, we have found a statistically significant correlation at the country level between ownership levels of handguns and rates of victimization by gun-related contact crimes, gun-related threats and assaults and homicides, gun-related or otherwise. No correlation was found between handgun ownership levels and levels of contact crimes overall.

At the individual level, owners of handguns are significantly more often victims of contact crimes. When controls are introduced for known risk factors such as age, gender, income, educational level, frequency of going out, living with a partner and size of the town of residence, owning a handgun remains a risk factor for victimization by contact crimes. The result was not altered by entering victimization by property crime, a proxy for a risk-taking lifestyle, as an extra control. A multilevel analysis that involved both individual factors related to victimization and country-level factors confirms the conclusion that owning a handgun brings a higher risk for victimization by contact crime. But, at the same time, high availability of handguns is related to slightly lower risks of victimization by contact crimes in general.

The finding that high availability of guns in a country increases the risk to be victimized by gun-related violence or homicide but slightly less to victimization by violent crime (for the non-owners) generally lends support to the hypothesis that

gun availability offers potential offenders the opportunity to be more intimidating in their threats or attacks. Through this effect, high availability raises the stakes of violent crime and exacerbates its medical and mental impact on victims. Our results show that high availability results in slightly lower levels of violence across the board, presumably by de-motivating people to commit such crimes. We found some support for the hypothesis that high availability prevents crime by deterring would-be offenders of less serious contact crimes. The analysis, however, shows that owners themselves are more at risk than non-owners.

Of special interest are our results of the role of gun ownership at the individual level in developed countries, since this issue has rarely been examined empirically before. Gun ownership has been found to be a powerful, independent risk-enhancing factor. This result could be spurious in the sense that gun ownership is closely related to other risk-enhancing characteristics. Ownership of a gun could be a flag or symptom of other risk-enhancing characteristics. After entering various proxies for a risk-taking lifestyle as controls, the link did not weaken. It cannot be excluded that the inclusion in future studies of other controls such as, for example, minority group status, gang membership or employment in law enforcement might partly explain the established relation between ownership of a gun and victimization. Another consideration is that, in the present study, respondents were asked whether a gun was present in the household, not whether the respondent himself owns a gun and carries it around on a regular basis. In our opinion, such more detailed information on ownership is likely to show stronger relationships with victimization by serious violence.

The relation between ownership and victimization also showed up in the analysis . . . of an ICVS-based data set from respondents in developing countries only and in the results of a dedicated survey on gun ownership and violence in Venezuela. . . . One explanation is that a gun in the house is risk-enhancing because it can be used against other household members (including partners). This argument has been mentioned in the literature. . . .

The second explanation is that ownership and especially the habit of carrying a concealed gun around may generate the “illusion of invincibility.” This mental state could result in risk-taking or provocative behaviour which enhances victimization risks. Similar counterproductive effects have been observed among users of safety belts in motorcars, the “security illusion” or “risk homeostasis theory”. . . . In some countries, those in possession of a gun may share values of a macho or honour culture which further stimulates them to act dangerously. Our results offer, at any rate, no support for the notion that gun ownership performs a protective function for the owner.

To conclude, at the community level, high levels of gun ownership seem to have conflicting effects on levels of violence. When conflicts arise in high-gun environments, the stakes of a fight are relatively high. This may deter some would-be attackers and prevent acts of simple violence. In other words, would-be attackers may feel less restrained in low-gun countries such as Great Britain and the Netherlands. At the same time, in high-gun countries, the risks of escalation to more serious and lethal violence are higher. On balance, considerably more serious crimes of violence are committed in such countries. For this reason, the strict gun-reduction policies of many governments seem to be a sensible means to advance the common good.

At the individual level, the statistical facts are unambiguous. Contrary to what has been claimed by proponents of widespread gun ownership in the United States, those households that own guns run higher risks of seeing their members being criminally victimized, either by other household members or by outsiders who are not deterred from attacking. This correlational finding provides no proof that the higher risks are caused by ownership of a gun; ownership might also be a proxy for a high-risk lifestyle. But this result certainly sheds serious doubt on the notion of gun ownership as a protective factor.

Where previous studies used data sources from a limited number of countries or even from one single country only, this article is based on victimization data from almost all major industrialized countries. Future studies using international data should, in our view, focus on three different issues:

- First, these studies ought to include larger samples of developing countries. Although much information on the gun-violence link is available from the Small Arms Surveys on individual countries, there is a lack of quantitative cross-sectional and time-series studies from Africa and Latin America. The repeat of the ICVS in more developing countries would greatly increase the opportunities for such policy-relevant analyses. Fortunately, more victimization surveys are now being conducted in South America, including in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela.
- Second, future studies should seek to make more detailed distinctions between the various types of violence and the circumstances under which they are committed. For this purpose, data from victimization surveys could be supplemented with more detailed police-recorded information on serious crimes of violence.
- Third, our analyses have consistently shown that availability of long guns bears no relationship with levels of victimization by any type of crime at either collective or individual levels, since most of these guns are used for hunting. Future studies on the gun-violence link should, in our view, be restricted to data on handgun ownership and perhaps assault rifles at the individual level. The use of data on firearm ownership including long guns could result into false negatives regarding the gun-violence link.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. Does the study adequately consider the reverse-causality problem? Did the study consider whether persons might choose to own handguns because they are already at higher risk of being victimized? In other words, is it proper to say that “[g]un ownership has been found to be a powerful, independent risk-enhancing factor”?

The study notes that it controlled for some risk-taking lifestyles, which did not change the result, and it calls for further study, presumably including whether an owned gun is regularly carried. It then adds that, “[i]n our opinion, such more detailed information on ownership is likely to show stronger *relationships* with victimization by serious violence” (emphasis added).

Does the study inaccurately imply that gun ownership causes victimization? Does the statement that “[t]his correlational finding provides no proof that the

higher risks are caused by ownership of a gun” fit with what the study examined, the rest of the authors’ conclusions, and with the article’s tone?

2. The study noted that, because the survey examined whether there was a gun in the household (rather than whether the gun is regularly carried), it may be capturing victimizations that result in the victim’s partner using the victim’s gun against the victim. It is generally agreed that a gun in a domestic-violence situation increases the chance that the victim will be harmed by the gun. *See* Ch. 1.L.3. Does the van Kesteren study look at victimization by firearm, or all victimization? Does it matter?

3. The van Kesteren article finds that in countries where handgun ownership rates are low, handgun owners are significantly more likely to be victimized by violent crime. Van Kesteren suggests that one reason might be security illusion; that is, people with handguns might engage in riskier behaviors (e.g., walking down a dark alley at night) because they wrongly feel that the handgun makes them invincible. Is it proper for a study that asks “whether a gun is present in the household” to suggest that such ownership *causes* victimization because “the habit of carrying a concealed gun around may generate the ‘illusion of invincibility’”?

Would one expect a firearm that is carried concealed to reduce the likelihood that one is victimized, that one is better able to defend oneself after an attack occurs, or both?

Van Kesteren found that increased risk of contact crimes was significant for handgun owners only in nations with low levels of handgun ownership. In such nations, few people other than law enforcement officers are allowed to own handguns, and so law enforcement officers may comprise a large percentage of handgun owners. Compared to the general population, are law enforcement officers at greater risk of being violently attacked?

4. Did the article examine whether or how often firearms are used for protection?

5. What might explain van Kesteren’s finding that the availability and ownership of long guns have no effect on the risk of criminal victimization at the collective or individual level? Does this suggest that ownership of long guns for lawful activities like hunting is a proxy for a more low-risk (i.e., law-abiding) lifestyle?

6. The article uses data from the International Crime Victims Survey (ICVS), and necessarily depends on gun owners voluntarily disclosing their gun ownership to a stranger on the phone. In the U.S. context, this problem is discussed in Chapter 1.A. A recent study of American refusal to answer survey questions about gun ownership finds that the refusal rate has increased in the United States, particularly among Republicans and conservatives. R. Urbatsch, *Gun-Shy: Refusal to Answer Questions About Firearm Ownership*, 56 Soc. Sci. J. 189 (2019).

In the United Kingdom, where gun ownership regulation is especially stringent, telephone surveys report a household gun ownership rate well below what other data suggest. David B. Kopel, *The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy: Should America Adopt the Gun Controls of Other Democracies?* 60, 89-90, 109 n.14 (1992). How would these issues affect the reliability of van Kesteren’s estimates of national gun ownership? Are there reasons to believe that respondents in some countries might be less willing to self-disclose than respondents in other countries?

7. Presuming that the van Kesteren article is accurate, what are the implications for what gun policies should be adopted in general?

8. The article addresses four confounding variables: GDP, income inequality, education, and urbanization. Can you think of other confounders that might have been useful to consider?

9. **CQ:** Professor Johnson's article on the "remainder problem," Section B.5, discusses some special difficulties in the United States for any policy intended to greatly reduce the possession of firearms.

10. *University of Liege study.* Another recent, sophisticated comparative study examined the relationship between the severity of firearms laws and homicide rates in 52 nations, not including the United States. Written in French, the study is a 150-page monograph. A 24-page English-language summary of the study is available as Michaël Dantinne & Sophie Andre, *Factors Influencing the Rate of Homicides by Firearms* (2015). The study finds that severity of national gun control laws has no effect on a nation's firearms homicide rate. Using multivariate regressions, the study finds that the only independent variable with a clear correlation with the firearms homicide rate is the child mortality rate. How could child mortality (or whatever causes increased child mortality) have any effect on firearms homicides? Can the findings of the Liege study be reconciled with van Kesteren's results?

11. The van Kesteren study follows prior research in saying that the use of seat belts (indeed, safety devices generally) leads to more injuries. This is not because seat belts are dangerous; to the contrary, they provide lifesaving protection. However, some studies have shown that risky drivers (the kind most likely to cause crashes) take into account the extra safety provided by seat belts and adjust their driving behavior to be *more* risky; such drivers thus maintain a constant level of risk that they prefer.

Troublingly, and . . . in accord with moral hazard theory, improved vehicle safety for occupants . . . causes drivers to be more reckless, and the saving of auto occupants' lives results in more pedestrian and other non-occupant deaths. This type of trade-off would be especially problematic in the gun-use context.

George A. Mocsary, *Insuring Against Guns?*, 46 Conn. L. Rev. 1209, 1253 (2014) (comparing mandatory firearm-owner liability insurance with mandatory automobile liability insurance). In other words, having insurance for gun use might incline some gun owners to engage in riskier behaviors with guns. Do you agree with van Kesteren's speculation that firearm carriage might makes carriers more aggressive or risky? If yes, which ones? Would you expect this behavior to increase the likelihood of injury to the carrier, to others, or both?

4. *Statistical Data in Cultural Context*

How does culture influence the positive and negative effects of gun ownership and gun use? The two articles in this section address the question in different ways. The first article examines the effects of increased gun density in Latin America and Eastern Europe, and finds that the effects are quite different in the two regions. The second article examines the relationship, if any, between gun density and levels of civil liberty, economic liberty, and good government.

Irshad Altheimer & Matthew Boswell

Reassessing the Association Between Gun Availability and Homicide at the Cross-National Level

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between gun availability and homicide continues to be a source of debate among criminologists. Competing perspectives have emerged that view guns as a cause of violent crime, a mechanism to reduce violent crime, and totally unrelated to violent crime. Macro-level research on this issue has yet to establish a consensus. For example, some studies have found a significant association between gun availability and homicide while others have not. As a result, the debate about the relationship between guns and violent crime at the macro-level continues. . . .

Recent research has documented the importance of considering socio-historical and cultural contexts when examining crime at the cross-national level. For example, research on Eastern European nations has found that age structure and economic inequality operate to influence homicide differently in Eastern European nations than in Western Developed nations. The authors of this research attributed these differences to the unique changes that have occurred in Eastern European nations in recent decades. Additionally, Ortega, Corzine, Burnett and Poyer found that the effects of modernity on homicide may vary by region, a proxy for culture. Further, Neopolitan found that cultural factors explained high rates of homicide in Latin American nations. There is also a body of research that suggests that the symbolism associated with guns in some cultures influences levels of homicide. Despite these findings, no research to date has examined if the manner that gun availability influences violence across nations is contingent upon socio-historical and cultural contexts.

These issues have important implications for international gun control policy. If gun availability levels positively influence homicide rates across nations, without regard to socio-historical or cultural factors, then measures to reduce the availability of guns within nations, as well as the transfer of weapons between nations, should lead to subsequent reductions in lethal violence. This would occur if the lower levels of gun availability decrease the likelihood that crime prone individuals use a gun during the commission of a crime. If, on the other hand, the effect of gun availability on homicide is found to be contingent upon socio-historical and cultural factors, the policy approaches will have to be more nuanced. For example, if gun availability is found to decrease rates of homicide in certain nations, then it would be prudent for policy makers to develop a policy that reduces gun availability among criminal aggressors, but still allows citizen[s] to utilize guns for self-defense.

The aim of this paper is to further clarify the nature of the relationship between gun availability and homicide at the cross-national level. Towards that end, this paper has two objectives. First, to examine the association between gun availability and homicide in a manner that better accounts for simultaneity than previous research. Second, to examine the manner that the relationship between gun availability and homicide is shaped by socio-historical and cultural context.

THEORY

No dominant theoretical perspective exists that explains the relationship between gun ownership and homicide. The basis for such a perspective, however, has been proposed by Kleck and McElrath, who suggest that weapons are a source of power used instrumentally to achieve goals by inducing compliance with the user's demands. The goals of a potential gun user are numerous and could include money, sexual gratification, respect, attention, or domination. Importantly, this perspective suggests that guns can confer power to both a potential aggressor and a potential victim seeking to resist aggression. When viewed in this manner, several hypotheses can be derived concerning the relationship between gun availability and homicide at the macro-level. Importantly, applying these hypotheses to the macro-level leads to analyses that are more concerned with aggregate social factors and statistical associations than direct causality. Macro-level analysis of the relationship between gun availability and violence is often misconstrued as supporting the contention that guns "cause" crime. In reality, this research is primarily driven by questions about the role that gun availability plays in facilitating choices and other behavior that may influence levels of criminal violence.

The facilitation, triggering, and weapon instrumentality hypotheses have been put forth to explain why gun availability and homicide should be positively associated. The facilitation hypothesis suggests that gun availability is positively associated with homicide because the availability of guns provides encouragement to potential attackers or to persons who normally would not commit an attack. This encouragement is derived from the fact that the possession of a gun can enhance the power of a potential aggressor; thereby increasing the chances that a violent crime will be successfully completed. Guns can also facilitate crime by emboldening an aggressor who would normally avoid coming into close contact with a victim or using a knife or blunt object to stab or bludgeon someone to death. This is particularly important in situations when the aggressor is smaller or weaker than the victim. In such cases, the aggressor's possession of a gun can neutralize the size and strength advantage of an opponent. The triggering hypothesis suggests that gun availability triggers aggression among potential offenders. This "weapons effect" is said to occur because angry people are likely to associate guns with aggressive behavior. Similarly, it has been suggested that the presence of a gun is likely to intensify negative emotions such as anger.

The weapon instrumentality hypothesis suggests that gun availability increases the lethality of violent crime. This occurs when increasing gun availability increases the likelihood that an aggressor substitutes a gun for another weapon or no weapon at all during the commission of a crime. The end result is often homicide. The basic premise of the weapon instrumentality perspective is that the use of a gun during the commission of an assault or robbery (1) increases the likelihood of death or serious injury; (2) provides aggressors with the opportunity to inflict injury at long distances; and (3) makes it easier to assault multiple victims than the use of other weapons that are commonly used to commit violent crime (i.e. knife or bat).

Another perspective on this issue suggests that the availability of guns is negatively associated with homicide. From this perspective, increased levels of gun availability empower the general public to disrupt or deter criminal aggression[, which] suggests that gun availability can disrupt criminal aggression in two ways. First, an

armed victim can prevent the completion of a crime by neutralizing the power of an armed aggressor or by shifting the balance of power in favor of the victim when confronted by an unarmed aggressor. Second, an armed victim can use a weapon to resist offender aggression and avoid injury. Increased levels of gun availability may also reduce crime by deterring potential aggressors. Aggressors may refrain from committing crime due to fear of violent retaliation from victims. This deterrence can be both specific and general. For instance, a criminal aggressor may refrain from committing future attacks because they were confronted with an armed victim during a previous experience. Alternatively, an aggressor may refrain from committing a criminal act if they believe that a large proportion of the pool of potential victims is armed. When applied to the macro-level, this perspective suggests that gun availability should be negatively associated with homicide. This is because in nations where citizens have greater access to guns, potential victims will be better able to deter or disrupt the acts of criminal aggressors.

The third perspective discussed here suggests that gun availability and homicide are unrelated. The absence of an effect can be the result of two things. First, gun availability simply may not influence homicide. From this perspective, the use of a gun simply may reflect an aggressor's greater motivation to seriously harm a victim. This suggests that factors other than gun availability motivate gun use and that a lack of access to a gun will simply cause an aggressor to substitute another weapon to achieve a desired outcome. Second, an effect between gun availability and crime may not be detected because defensive gun use may offset the effects of guns being used for criminal aggression.

CROSS-NATIONAL RESEARCH ON GUNS AND HOMICIDE

Cross-national research examining the relationship between gun availability and homicide has been small in number. . . .

Criticisms of this research can be placed in two categories. The first category involves criticism of the overreliance of correlation coefficients in the examination of this relationship. The overreliance of correlation coefficients precludes the establishment of causality. For example, Kleck notes that a significant association between gun availability and homicide can be interpreted to represent the effect of violent crime on gun availability. The overreliance on correlation coefficients also makes it impossible to control for other important predictors of homicide at the cross-national level. Due to this some researchers have concluded that "Cross national research holds little promise for assessing the impact of gun levels on violence levels." But the failure to establish causality and control for other variables does not mean that research performing bivariate analysis is worthless. Rather, this research serves an important exploratory step in examining the relationship between gun availability and homicide. The analyses performed in previous research may be viewed as one step in the career of a causal relationship. When viewed in this way, the finding of a significant association would suggest the need to explore the relationship with more rigorous statistical approaches in the future. Hoskin attempted to control for potential simultaneity between gun availability and homicide by using two-stage least squares regression to examine the gun/homicide relationship. His results suggest that gun availability levels influenced rates of homicide, but his failure to include proper instruments for gun availability [led] to serious questions about the veracity of his results. . . .

Critics of this research also point out that it has primarily focused on Western Developed nations. Importantly, in the one situation when non-Western or lower income nations were included in the analysis the relationship between gun availability and gun homicide dropped from significance. In the same study, gun availability was found to have no association with homicide when all nations were included. Hepburn and Hemenway argued that inconsistent results emerge when high income and non-high income nations are included in the same analysis because differences in socioeconomic status may affect levels of lethal violence in these nations. Although this assertion seems plausible, an alternative proposition is that gun availability and homicide only exhibit a significant association in certain cultural and socio-historical settings.

EXPANDING EXISTING THEORY AND LITERATURE TO ACCOUNT FOR SOCIO-HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS

Macro-level criminological research can be divided into three categories. The first involves social-structural approaches to the study of homicide. This research views homicide rates as social facts that are distributed in patterned ways. Patterns of homicide are influenced by the social structure, which describes the positions or statuses that people occupy and the behavioral expectations attached to these statuses. From a social-structural perspective, gun availability can be viewed as a material social fact that operates somewhat independent of socio-historical and cultural factors to influence gun homicide and homicide rates. A positive association between gun availability and homicide would be hypothesized to exist cross-nationally, in spite of socio-historical and cultural differences between nations.

The second approach involves research that examines how cultural processes influence rates of homicide. Proponents of this perspective argue that variation in homicide rates can be explained by values, norms, and beliefs held by members of a society. Although there are numerous cultural theories that attempt to explain crime, virtually all of these approaches to crime suggest that, at least in certain situations, some societies—or subgroups within society—are more accepting than others of the use of the violence in upholding certain values. In essence, it is culture that establishes how people within society interpret and respond to certain events and provocations. Thus, cultural processes may influence knowledge of weapons—including how to identify and use them—as well as situational definitions of when it is appropriate to use a weapon to injure or kill someone.

The third approach involves consideration of how socio-historical factors influence homicide. Socio-historical research is primarily concerned with how space and time shape structures of order and disorder across nations, and the implications that this has for cross-national variation in violence. Both political boundaries and geographic characteristics shape the social organization of societies. Consideration of time is important because social forces are temporally linked; and the occurrence and sequence of important historical events within specific political and geographic boundaries may influence the levels of violence within societies. From the socio-historical perspective, the manner that gun availability is associated with crime is influenced by the history and geography of a nation, as well as the occurrence of important temporal events. In nations where the gun historically has been viewed as a civilizing force against indigenous populations (i.e. cowboys and Native Americans); or in nations with vast and diverse geographic boundaries that

make the development of gun sports possible; or in nations where the occurrence of certain temporal events lead[s] to the breakdown of collective security; citizens may come to view [] the use of guns as a viable option when responding to inter-personal disputes.

Although most cross-national research has been social-structural in nature, there is evidence in the criminological literature that both cultural and socio-historical processes influence cross-national variation in homicide. Results of this research suggest that important structural predictors of crime do not necessarily operate uniformly across nations. This notion is further supported by historical and ethnographic firearm research that documents the greater glorification and toleration of gun use and gun violence in some societies than in others. Taken together, this research suggests that an examination of the manner that socio-historical and cultural processes shape the nature [of the] gun/homicide relationship is warranted.

THE CURRENT STUDY

The current study has two objectives. First, to examine the association between gun availability and homicide in a manner that better accounts for simultaneity than previous research. Second, to examine the manner that the relationship between gun availability and homicide is shaped by socio-historical and cultural context. To address these objectives, the analysis proceeds in the following manner. First, the relationship between gun availability, gun homicide, and homicide is examined for the entire sample of nations. Examining the effect of gun availability on gun homicide is necessary to determine if the greater availability of guns increases the likelihood that societal members will make a gun their weapon of choice when committing a violent assault. Importantly, a significant relationship between these two variables doesn't suggest weapon instrumentality. It is possible that citizens in these nations choose guns as their weapon of choice when they intend to seriously harm or kill their victim. A significant relationship between gun availability and homicide, however, would suggest greater weapon lethality.

The second objective will be met by examining the association between gun availability, gun homicide, and homicide across three groups of nations that are culturally and socio-historically distinct: Western nations, Latin American nations, and Eastern European nations. Examining Latin American nations is important because previous research has argued that these nations are characterized by a machismo culture that increases the use of weapons and the likelihood of violence. Examining Eastern European nations is important because previous research has found that the transition to market capitalism has led to the breakdown of collective security in many of these nations. Under these circumstances it is plausible that gun violence has become more likely in these nations.

Although it is recognized that the nations in each respective category are not entirely homogenous, it is assumed that nations are more similar to neighboring nations than nations in different cultural regions. Placing nations in categories, rather than looking at the effects of each nation separately, is necessary because data on the socio-historical and cultural processes of interest here are not available for a cross-national sample. This approach has been taken in previous cross-national research attempting to assess the effects of socio-historical and cultural processes on crime.

DATA AND METHODS

This study provides a methodological improvement to existing cross-national work on guns and homicide. Specifically, we are able to model the effects of gun prevalence on homicide with special attention being paid to variation over both time and space.

Data

To test these arguments we collected annual national-level data for the years 2000 to 2005 on gun homicide, characteristics of nations, and meaningful controls. The use of yearly data is a methodological improvement to cross-sectional studies of guns and homicide for several reasons. First, by using time-varying data effects can be estimated more efficiently. Second, variation from year-to-year can be captured. Finally, the time-series design allows for claims of causality, which are stronger than analyses which cannot account for temporal ordering.

This full sample used in this study contains data on 43 nations measured over 6 years. An investigation of the data showed no systematic patterns to missing data. Regional subsamples varied in the number of nations. Table 5 in the Appendix shows the composition of both the baseline set of nations as well as the specific regional groupings. Our choices of nations to include were determined by data availability. We note that the total number of nations included in the analysis is similar in size to other work in cross-national criminology.

Variables

Independent Variable

Gun availability was measured by the rate of gun suicides in each nation per 100,000 inhabitants for the years 2000 to 2005. These data were collected from the WHO ICD-10 [World Health Organization, International Classification of Diseases, 10th edition] raw data files. Suicide data were aggregated for each nation for the years 2000 through 2005. Each year of the suicide rate was operationalized by taking the number [of] gun suicides for that particular year, dividing it by the national population for the same period of time, and multiplying that number by 100,000. The gun suicide rate is considered the proxy of choice for examining gun availability levels across macro-level units. Confidence in the validity of this measure is further bolstered by the fact that it is highly correlated with Krug et al.'s cross-national indicator of the gun suicide rate. For the 21 nations that are included in both our dataset and Krug et al.'s dataset, the Pearson correlation is .93 and the Spearman's rho is .96.

Dependent Variables

Data for gun homicide were collected from the WHO ICD-10 raw data files. The gun homicide measure represents the proportion of homicides in each respective nation that involved the use of a firearm. It was operationalized as the number of gun homicides per 100,000 inhabitants for the years 2000 to 2005. Due to data limitations, no distinction could be made between hand guns and long guns. The homicide measure was operationalized as the rate of homicides per 100,000 population for the years 2000 to 2005, [respectively].

Control Variables

The control variables included in the analyses of this study were selected to isolate the effects of gun availability on homicide and gun homicide. The following control variables were included in these analyses: economic inequality, GDP/capita, male population between the ages of 15 to 34 (young males), social support, urbanization, sex ratio. For all of the control variables, data were taken for the years 2000-2005. Data for GDP/capita, social support, and urbanization were taken from the World Development Indicators website. Economic inequality was operationalized using the Gini index. There are numerous sources for this variable. Because of the yearly observations used in this analysis, we chose the net Gini indicator¹⁴ from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (SWIID). This dataset standardizes the United Nations World Income Inequality Database while drawing from other sources and also providing yearly data. The net Gini indicator is a measure of inequality after all transfer payments are taken into consideration.

Controlling for this indicator is important because previous research has found economic inequality to be one of the most robust predictors of crime across nations. Gross Domestic Product was included as an indicator of the level of development within a nation. Previous research has found that Developed nations have lower levels of violence than developing and underdeveloped nations. Development was operationalized as GDP per capita[] in 1000s of U.S. dollars. This figure was then log transformed to correct for skewness. Social support was operationalized as the percentage of the nation's GDP spent on healthcare.

Urbanization was operationalized as the proportion of national citizens who live in urban areas. This indicator measures the population density within a nation. . . . Young males is an indicator of the proportion of male citizens between the ages of 15 to 34. Previous research has found that nations with larger young populations have higher rates of homicide. Sex ratio was operationalized as the ratio of men per 100 women in society. Sex ratio has been found to be an important predictor of violence both within and between nations (Pratt & Cullen, 2005). Table 6 in the Appendix presents descriptive statistics for the nations in the sample. Correlations are based on the pooled sample.¹⁵ Means and standard deviations for all variables are presented. . . .

RESULTS

Results for this study are reported in Tables 1 through 4. Table 1 reports the analysis of the effects of gun availability on gun homicide and homicide for all of the nations sampled. Model 1 in Table 1 presents a baseline model that examines the effects of the statistical controls on gun homicide. The model reveals that economic inequality, proportion young males, and urbanization all influence rates of gun homicide. Interestingly, the effects of economic inequality, proportion young

14. [A measure of the distribution of income within a nation. A higher number corresponds to higher income inequality.—Eds.]

15. [A pooled sample is the combination, or pooling, of two or more smaller samples.—Eds.]

males and urbanization are opposite of what might be expected. Model 2 shows the effects when lagged levels of gun availability are introduced in the model. Gun availability significantly influences levels of gun homicide. For every unit increase in gun availability, gun homicide decreases .145 units. Model 3 reports the baseline model that examines the effects of the statistical controls on homicide. The results reveal that economic inequality, proportion young males, sex ratio, urbanization, and social support significantly influence rates of homicide. As in the previous models, and contrary to what has been found in previous research, economic inequality, young males, and urbanization exhibit effects opposite of what was expected. Gun availability is introduced in Model 4 and is found to have no effect on homicide.

Table 1 Baseline Models

	Gun Homicide		Homicide	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Log GDP	-0.010 (0.025)	-0.010 (0.025)	-0.010 (0.009)	-0.011 (0.009)
Inequality	-0.059** (0.014)	-0.053** (0.014)	-0.025** (0.005)	-0.023** (0.005)
Young Males	-9.626** (2.804)	-10.986** (2.791)	-4.352** (0.982)	-4.710** (1.063)
Sex Ratio	0.060* (0.028)	0.062** (0.022)	0.047* (0.020)	0.047* (0.022)
Urbanization	-0.007** (0.002)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.008** (0.003)	-0.008** (0.003)
Social Support	-0.014 (0.019)	-0.042 (0.024)	-0.087** (0.011)	-0.086** (0.012)
Year	-0.028** (0.007)	-0.030** (0.007)	-0.021** (0.003)	-0.021** (0.004)
Log Gun Homicide _{t-1}	0.033 (0.064)	0.040 (0.069)		
Log Gun Availability _{t-1}		-0.145** (0.028)		0.016 (0.037)
Log Homicide _{t-1}			-0.114 (0.060)	-0.055 (0.071)
Observations	188	188	195	191

*p < .05, **p < .01

Table 2 reports the effects of gun availability on gun homicide and homicide in Western nations only. The baseline model reports that economic inequality, sex ratio, and urbanization significantly influence gun homicide levels. Importantly, the effect of economic inequality is in the expected direction. In Model 2 lagged gun

availability is introduced. The results suggest that higher levels of gun availability increase levels of gun homicide in Western developed nations. Model 3 examines the effects of the statistical controls on homicide. The model reveals that GDP/capita, economic inequality, and urbanization influence homicide. As reported in Table 1, the effect of economic inequality is opposite of what is expected. Lagged gun availability is introduced into Model 4. The results reveal that gun availability significantly influences rates of homicide in this sample of nations. Increases in gun availability are associated with subsequent decreases in homicide.

Table 2 Western Nations

	Gun Homicide		Homicide	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Log GDP	0.002 (0.033)	0.001 (0.030)	-0.010** (0.005)	-0.007 (0.007)
Inequality	0.232*** (0.070)	0.241*** (0.069)	-0.085** (0.033)	-0.090** (0.039)
Young Males	4.566 (7.604)	8.964 (7.120)	-0.329 (3.724)	-1.221 (4.367)
Sex Ratio	0.357** (0.149)	0.258* (0.148)	-0.040 (0.057)	0.064 (0.079)
Urbanization	-0.038* (0.023)	-0.038 (0.027)	0.029*** (0.010)	0.029** (0.013)
Social Support	-0.070 (0.069)	-0.072 (0.073)	-0.025 (0.023)	-0.034 (0.030)
Year	-0.009 (0.026)	0.022 (0.032)	-0.025* (0.014)	-0.040** (0.018)
Log Gun Homicide _{<i>t-1</i>}	-0.036 (0.116)	-0.023 (0.115)		
Log Gun Availability _{<i>t-1</i>}		0.906*** (0.270)		-0.225* (0.116)
Log Homicide _{<i>t-1</i>}			-0.294*** (0.077)	-0.260** (0.107)
Observations	59	59	65	61

*p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01

Table 3 reports the effects of gun availability on gun homicide and homicide for Eastern European nations. The baseline model of the effects of the statistical controls on gun homicide reveals that economic inequality, proportion young males, urbanization, and social support influence gun homicide levels. Importantly, all of these variables influence gun homicide in a manner opposite of what might be expected. Lagged gun availability is introduced in Model 2. Gun availability has a negative effect on gun homicide. This suggests that, in Eastern European nations, increased levels of gun availability reduce rates of gun violence. Model 3

examines the effects of the statistical controls on homicide. GDP/capita, economic inequality, urbanization, and social support all significantly influence rates of homicide. Gun availability is introduced in Model 4. The results reveal that gun availability negatively influences rates of homicide in Eastern European nations ($p < .10$). Additionally, gun availability seems to mediate the effect of economic inequality on homicide.

Table 3 Eastern European Nations

	Gun Homicide		Homicide	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Log GDP	-0.103 (0.201)	-0.341 (0.256)	-0.357*** (0.062)	-0.338*** (0.062)
Inequality	-0.068** (0.032)	-0.091*** (0.032)	-0.862 (1.266)	0.007 (0.006)
Young Males	-29.045*** (6.039)	-24.790*** (6.027)	-0.329 (3.724)	-1.164 (1.224)
Sex Ratio	-0.224 (0.222)	-0.269 (0.209)	0.015 (0.025)	-0.026 (0.031)
Urbanization	-0.018* (0.010)	-0.016 (0.012)	-0.024*** (0.003)	-0.030*** (0.004)
Social Support	0.157** (0.076)	0.113 (0.079)	-0.099*** (0.018)	-0.094*** (0.016)
Year	-0.043 (0.027)	-0.015 (0.031)	0.002 (0.001)	0.004** (0.002)
Log Gun Homicide _{<i>t-1</i>}	-0.056 (0.132)	0.016 (0.130)		
Log Gun Availability _{<i>t-1</i>}		-0.527*** (0.178)		-0.048** (0.022)
Log Homicide _{<i>t-1</i>}			0.201** (0.096)	0.162* (0.094)
Observations	60	60	60	60

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .10$

Table 4 reports the effects of gun availability on gun homicide and homicide for Latin American nations. Model 1 reports the baseline model that regresses gun homicide on the important statistical controls. The findings reveal that GDP/capita, young males, sex ratio, and social support influence gun homicide levels. Lagged levels of gun availability were added in Model 2. Gun availability exhibits a significant positive effect on gun homicide. Additionally, when gun availability is added to the model economic inequality emerges as significant, thereby suggesting a suppression effect. Model 3 examines the effects of the statistical controls on homicide. Only social support is found to significantly influence homicide in these models. Gun availability is added in Model [4] and is found to significantly

influence rates of homicide. This suggests that higher levels of gun availability lead to higher rates of homicide in Latin American nations. Interestingly, urbanization exhibits a significant negative effect once gun availability is introduced in the model. This suggests a suppression effect. The implications of these findings are discussed below.

Table 4 Latin American Nations

	Gun Homicide		Homicide	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Log GDP	-0.032** (0.013)	-0.035*** (0.014)	-0.004 (0.051)	-0.027 (0.060)
Inequality	-0.010 (0.008)	-0.016* (0.009)	0.032 (0.021)	0.023 (0.023)
Young Males	-8.213** (3.754)	-7.308* (3.785)	-7.203 (5.424)	-8.509 (6.479)
Sex Ratio	0.076** (0.036)	0.075** (0.036)	0.079 (0.053)	0.101 (0.063)
Urbanization	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.006* (0.004)
Social Support	-0.077*** (0.017)	-0.075*** (0.019)	-0.085*** (0.021)	-0.103*** (0.027)
Year	0.014** (0.006)	0.016*** (0.006)	0.014 (0.012)	0.018 (0.013)
Log Gun Homicide _{<i>t-1</i>}	0.069 (0.125)	0.016 (0.127)		
Log Gun Availability _{<i>t-1</i>}		0.046* (0.026)		.237*** (0.071)
Log Homicide _{<i>t-1</i>}			0.093 (0.135)	-0.085 (0.144)
Observations	53	53	53	53

*p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01,

DISCUSSION . . .

Several of the results warrant discussion here. The first concerns the dynamic between gun availability, gun homicide, and homicide. As discussed above, gun availability exhibited a positive effect on gun homicide in Western Developed nations and Latin American nations, and a negative effect in Eastern European nations and in the baseline model. Similar patterns were found with the dynamic between gun availability and homicide. No effect was found in the baseline model, but positive significant effects were found in Latin American nations and negative significant effects were found in Western nations and Eastern European nations.

These results suggest that the extent that guns are considered the weapon of choice for the commission of violence is largely shaped by cultural and socio-historical factors. In Western nations citizens appear to be more likely to view guns as the weapon of choice when committing violence, but apparently this preference for guns does not increase overall levels of lethality. Rather, this preference for use of guns seems to decrease overall rates of homicide. Perhaps Western citizens view guns as a defense mechanism against the aggression of others, rather than a tool to be used with the intent of causing great bodily harm or death. In Latin American nations it appears that gun availability increases both the preference for guns and the lethality of violence. This suggests that citizens of Latin American nations have a preference for gun use, and the sheer availability of guns in these nations increases the likelihood that violent altercations result in death. It may also suggest that a greater use of guns in Latin American violence represents [the] greater likelihood that Latin American aggressors intend to greatly harm or kill their victims. An entirely different dynamic seems to be occurring in Eastern European nations. It seems that guns are primarily being used in these nations as a deterrent against potential aggression in an era characterized by weakened collective security.

In addition to the direct effects of gun availability exhibited here, gun availability was found to suppress the effects of urbanization on gun homicide in Latin American nations and to mediate the effects of economic inequality on homicide in Western Developed nations and Eastern European nations. The suppression effect suggests that the effects of gun availability on homicide may not be as pronounced in Latin American nations with high levels [of] urbanization. This finding is somewhat counter intuitive but may suggest that citizens are more likely to benefit from the guardianship of others in densely populated areas of Latin American nations. The mediation effects suggest that the extent that economic inequality influences homicide across Eastern European nations is contingent upon gun availability levels.

These findings also reveal that the causes of gun homicide and homicide diverge considerably. This was especially the case in the regional models. In some instances, a particular variable that influenced gun homicide was not found to influence homicide. In other instances, the effect was significant for both variables but the effect signs were in opposite directions. This suggests that criminologists must look to develop distinct explanations for the occurrence of weapon violence across nations.

Gun availability was not the only indicator to exhibit variable effects on violence across regions. Several of the control variables operated to influence violence in a similar manner. For example, economic inequality—one of the most robust predictors of homicide at the cross-national level—exhibited strong positive effects on homicide in the models that included Eastern European nations, negative effects in Western nations, and no effects in Latin American nations. This suggests that even the effects of robust predictors of violence, such as economic inequality, are influenced by socio-historical and cultural factors.

One question that emerges from these results concerns the anomalous findings related to our statistical controls and homicide. That is, in some models economic inequality, urbanization, and young males all exhibited effects contrary to what might be expected. It is not entirely clear why this occurred, but the following

explanations are given here. First, one potential explanation for the negative effect of economic inequality on homicide is that the relationship is non-linear. A recent article by Jacobs and Richardson found that the relationship between economic inequality and homicide changes from positive to negative at extreme levels of inequality. The inclusion of Latin American and Eastern European nations in this analysis led to a higher proportion of nations with extreme levels of economic inequality being examined than what is normally the case in cross-national criminological research. Second, the negative relationship between urbanization and homicide that was found in the Eastern European models may suggest that urban areas provide greater protection for potential victims in these societies. This seems especially plausible if a considerable proportion of the homicides committed in these nations occur in rural areas. Third, the negative relationship between young males and violence in Latin American and Eastern European nations may suggest that older adults commit a higher proportion of homicides in these nations than the proportion committed by older adults in Western nations. Indeed, previous research has found evidence of higher rates of violence among older adults in Eastern Europe.

Taken together, these results point to the need for greater consideration of the role that cultural and socio-historical factors play in influencing the manner that structural predictors influence homicide. Indeed, one assumption implicit in much of the existing cross-national research is that the effects of important structural predictors such as gun availability and economic inequality are invariant across nations. These finding[s] suggest that this may not be the case. Instead, the unique cultural and socio-historical processes occurring across nations may be more important than many assume.

The results of this study have implications for theory and research on guns and violence. These results suggest that theoretical advancement of this relationship is contingent upon the ability of criminologists to address two issues. First, researchers must identify the macro-social processes that link gun availability to homicide at the cross-national level. Most of the macro-level research on guns and violence is reductionist in nature. Assuming that micro-social dynamics account for macro-level processes, however, limits our ability to address important questions that have emerged from cross-national research. For example, applying the weapon instrumentality hypothesis to the cross-national level leads one to assume that, under all circumstances, increasing gun availability will increase homicide. Such a straight-forward application does not allow for consideration of the macro-level factors that may mediate or moderate the effects of gun availability on homicide. . . .

The utility of the approach proposed by Corzine et al. (1999) is further illustrated when it is applied to an explanation of why gun availability is more likely to lead to homicide in Latin American nations than Western Developed and Eastern European nations. Existing cultural explanations of violence in Latin America conceptualize these nations as having higher levels of machismo. This machismo is said to be characterized by aggressive masculinity, domination of women, and the use of violence. The problem with such values based approaches is that they are difficult to empirically test because behavioral manifestations of values are often constrained by how culture organizes and patterns behavior. In other words, people in a certain nation may aspire to solve altercations peacefully, but the “strategies of action” outlined by the culture may encourage, or even require, the use of physical

violence. A more fruitful approach may be to examine if the cultural toolkits in Latin American nations are more likely to legitimate the use of a firearm and sanction the commission of interpersonal violence than the toolkits of other nations. Applying this approach to Eastern European nations would lead one to ask if the unique socio-historical changes that have occurred in Eastern European nations in recent decades have led to the development of a cultural toolkit that legitimates the use of weapons for personal defense and to reduce the likelihood of interpersonal violence. . . .

Future research should also explore potential non-linear relationships between gun availability, gun homicide, and homicide. These examinations should consider non-linear relationships in cross-national samples and samples of specific cultural regions. Examinations of such relationships may be important because it is plausible that gun availability will only be associated with homicide after certain levels of gun availability are reached. It is equally plausible that once gun availability levels reach a saturation phase the strength of the association between gun availability and homicide may become attenuated.

APPENDIX

Table 5 Nations Included in Analyses

Baseline Models		Western Models	East European Models	Latin American Models
Argentina	Latvia	Australia	Croatia	Argentina
Australia	Lithuania	Austria	Czech Rep	Brazil
Austria	Luxembourg	Canada	Estonia	Chile
Brazil	Malta	Finland	Hungary	Costa Rica
Canada	Mexico	France	Kyrgyzstan	Dominican Republic
Chile	Moldova	Germany	Latvia	Ecuador
Costa Rica	Netherlands	Luxembourg	Lithuania	El Salvador
Croatia	New Zealand	Netherlands	Moldova	Mexico
Czech Republic	Nicaragua	New Zealand	Poland	Nicaragua
Dominican Republic	Norway	Norway	Romania	Panama
Ecuador	Panama	Spain	Slovakia	Paraguay
El Salvador	Paraguay	Sweden	Slovenia	Venezuela
Estonia	Poland	UK		
Finland	Romania	USA		
France	Slovakia			
Germany	Slovenia			
Hungary	Spain			
Israel	Sweden			
Japan	UK			
Korea	USA			
Kyrgyzstan	Venezuela			

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. After reading the preceding studies, what effects on crime and suicide rates would you expect to see if the rate of private gun ownership in a given nation increases substantially? What effects if gun ownership decreases?

2. How do the findings by Altheimer and Boswell affect the conclusions of the articles presented earlier in this Part? Do the conclusions reached in those articles need to be revised or qualified in light of this one? How could you harmonize them all?

3. The previous articles considered the variable of the per-capita number of guns or handguns in a nation. An additional variable, which was not explored, is how the firearms were acquired. Consider Altheimer and Boswell's finding that more guns are correlated with decreased homicide in Eastern Europe, and with increased homicide in Latin America. During the period from the late 1940s through 1989, when Eastern Europe was under the neo-colonial hegemony of the Soviet Union, gun laws there were extremely repressive. See David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *Firearms Possession by "Non-State Actors": The Question of Sovereignty*, 8 Tex. Rev. L. & Pol. 373, 435 (2004). After the fall of the Berlin Wall, firearm laws in Eastern Europe were greatly liberalized, allowing many people to acquire firearms legally. In much of Latin America, government corruption and distrust of the public may make it nearly impossible for a citizen to acquire a firearm lawfully. For example, in 2012, the Hugo Chávez regime in Venezuela banned all firearms purchases. (Venezuela is discussed further Section C.5.) Accordingly, gun acquisition in some parts of Latin America may operate primarily through the black market. Could the differences in firearms acquisition patterns be one cause of the contrasting results that Altheimer and Boswell found between Latin America and Eastern Europe? Nearly a quarter-century after scholars first began serious research on comparative gun control law, a great deal remains unknown.

4. A review of even the most basic statistics test will reveal that all statistical models are laden with assumptions. These assumptions can be very basic and mathematically oriented (for example, that the relationship between guns and crime or suicide can be explained using a linear model), or more complex and involve important value judgments (for example, not differentiating between justified and unjustified homicides). What are some assumptions that underlie the studies discussed in this section so far? What are some factors that were not mentioned by the studies' authors that may explain their conclusions? What is the role of what some scholars call "ordinary reasoning" in both setting up and interpreting statistical studies? For example, how much credence would you lend to a study that "showed with data taken literally from a telephone book that telephone numbers are 'significantly associated' with psychometric variables"? Stephen T. Ziliak & Deidre N. McCloskey, *The Cult of Statistical Significance: How the Standard Error Costs Us Jobs, Justice, and Lives* 47 (2007). When is it acceptable to infer causation from correlation?

5. Evaluate and compare the following statements in the Altheimer and Boswell article:

- a. "The model reveals that economic inequality, proportion young males, and urbanization all influence rates of gun homicide."

- b. “[T]he effects of economic inequality, proportion young males and urbanization are opposite of what might be expected.”
- c. “Increases in unavailability are associated with subsequent decreases in homicide.”
- d. “Gun availability has a negative effect on gun homicide.”
- e. “Gun availability was not the only indicator to exhibit variable effects on violence across regions. Several of the control variables operated to influence violence in a similar manner.”

David Kopel, Carlisle Moody & Howard Nemerov

Is There a Relationship Between Guns and Freedom? Comparative Results from 59 Nations

13 *Tex. Rev. L. & Pol.* 1 (2008)

. . . Using data on per capita firearm ownership from the Small Arms Survey, this Article examines the relationship between per capita firearm rates and several measures of freedom. These measures are:

- Freedom House’s ratings of political rights (such as free elections) and civil liberty (such as freedom of religion).
- Transparency International’s ratings of government corruption levels.
- Heritage Foundation’s ratings of economic freedom. . . .

III. RESULTS

The data for each country are presented in Table 7, found in the Appendix. The fifty-nine nations with per capita firearms estimates are listed in order, from those with the lowest to those with the highest. The list begins with low-firearms countries of Romania, Japan, Moldova, and Poland. It ends with high-firearms countries such as Switzerland, Finland, Yemen, and the United States. The ratings from *Freedom in the World*, *Corruption Perceptions Index*, *Index of Economic Freedom*, and the World Bank PPP¹⁶ are also listed for each country.

Next, we divided the nations into quartiles based on their gun ownership rates. For each quartile, we averaged the nations’ ratings for political and civil liberty from *Freedom in the World*, for corruption from *Corruption Perceptions Index*, and for economic freedom from the *Index of Economic Freedom*. Results are presented in Table 1.

16. [Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) rates the relative strength of the currencies of different countries. Currency exchange strength is not a perfect measure of a nation’s economic success. Nevertheless, prosperous countries tend to have much stronger currencies than do poor countries, so PPP is usually valid as a rough measure of national economic success, at least for currencies that are allowed to rise and fall freely.—Eds.]

Table 1 Firearms Ownership Quartiles Compared with Liberty Indices

Quartile	Firearms Per 1,000 Population	Freedom in the World (1-7, lower is better)	Corruption Perceptions Index (0-10, higher is better)	Index of Economic Freedom (0-100, higher is better)
1	388	1.93	7.09	69.79
2	145	2.80	4.35	63.59
3	81	2.53	4.75	62.57
4	24	2.32	4.31	63.03
Average 2-4	84	2.56	4.47	63.06

The most notable difference between the quartiles involves corruption. The top quartile has an average of 7.09 in the Corruption Perceptions Index, which means this quartile could be called “mostly clean.” All the other quartiles score between 4.31 and 4.75, scores that indicate moderate corruption.

The differences in Freedom in the World rating are not as large. One reason is that Freedom in the World has a 1-7 scale with only 7 steps, whereas the Corruption Perceptions Index has a 0-10 scale with 11 steps. But even taking into account the relative compression of the scale used by Freedom in the World, the differences between the top quartile and the rest are relatively smaller. Still, the average of the countries in the first quartile is “free,” according to the Freedom House definition, while the average for all other quartiles is “partly free.”

On the Index of Economic Freedom, all quartiles averaged a “moderately free” rating. Nevertheless, the first quartile had the highest average, but not quite 70, which is the threshold for “mostly free.”

For all three indices of liberty, the top firearms quartile rates higher than every other quartile.

This is not to say that every country in a certain quartile is better than countries in lower quartiles. For example, the top firearms quartile has the highest average rating in Freedom in the World, but it includes Angola, rated “not free,” Saudi Arabia, also rated “not free,” and Yemen, rated “partly free.” On the Index of Economic Freedom, Angola is “repressed,” while Saudi Arabia and Yemen are rated “mostly unfree.” Conversely, the bottom firearms quartile includes Japan and the Netherlands, who both have low levels of government corruption, and high levels of political, civil, and economic liberty.

The similarity in ratings among the three lower quartiles is interesting. For example, their Corruption Perceptions Index ratings averaged between 4.31 and 4.75 and their Index of Economic Freedom ratings are nearly identical, falling between 62.57 and 63.59.

While the top firearms quartile rates highest in all categories, the relationship between firearms and liberty is inconsistent among the lower three quartiles. For example, among the lower three quartiles, the second quartile rates slightly higher on the Index of Economic Freedom, while the third quartile has the best rating on the Corruption Perceptions Index, and the fourth quartile has the best Freedom in the World rating.

Next, we looked at the data by quintiles based on firearms per capita. The results are in Table 2.

When sorted by quintiles, the top firearms quintile averaged “mostly free” on the Index of Economic Freedom, while the lower quintiles averaged “moderately free.” The first and second quintiles rate notably better in the Corruption Perceptions Index than do the first and second quartiles. There is a large gap between the first and second quintiles, although not quite [as] large as between the first and second quartiles. The top quintile’s success in Freedom in the World is even more pronounced than the top quartile’s success.

As with the quartile analysis, the lower quintiles do not rank on the other indices in accordance with their firearms per capita. The second quintile’s average ratings on the Corruption Perceptions Index and the Index of Economic Freedom are better than all lower quintiles, but the lowest quintile’s average Freedom in the World rating is better than that of quintiles 2-4.

When we looked at the countries with the most guns, we saw that they had the most freedom as measured by the liberty indices, but the relationship was only pronounced for high-gun countries. There was no difference between medium-gun and low-gun countries. Suppose we look at the relationship the other way and ask, “Do countries with the most freedom have the most guns?” Table 3 provides the results.

When sorted by the Freedom in the World rating, the freest countries (scores of 1 for both political rights and civil liberties) had the highest density of civilian firearms, and . . . the best Corruption Perceptions Index and Index of Economic Freedom of any group. Countries rated “free” but having imperfect scores (above 1 on either political or civil freedom) had a lower firearms ownership rate than any other group. They also had a worse Corruption Perceptions Index and a lower Index of Economic Freedom than the freest countries. “Partly free” countries had much lower ratings in all indices than all “free” countries. “Not free” countries had the poorest scores.

We also looked at differences within the freest countries. Of the 59 countries, 26 scored a Freedom in the World 1 on political freedom and in civil liberty. These countries included some countries with very low levels of firearms ownership (e.g., Poland, Hungary, Estonia) as well as countries with much higher levels (e.g., Norway, Uruguay). Since there were only 26 countries in this data subset, we sorted these freest countries into thirds, by per-capita firearms ownership. The results are in Table 4.

Table 4 Firearms Ownership Versus Indices Among the Freest Countries in the World

Third	Firearms Per 1,000 Population	Corruption Perceptions Index	PPP (lower is better)	Index of Economic Freedom
1	463	7.84	23.38	72.39
2	197	8.16	26.44	75.40
3	42	6.23	48.56	71.31
Average 2-3	119	7.19	37.50	73.36

In the Index of Economic Freedom, the thirds have very close scores. For PPP (economic success) the bottom third of gun ownership is significantly less wealthy. In corruption, the top two thirds are separated by only a third of a point, but they are both notably better than the bottom third. The data suggest that among the freest countries, higher levels of corruption and lower levels of wealth may have a significant inhibiting effect on gun ownership.

The results are similar if we divide the 26 freest nations into quartiles, and rank them by firearms ownership. The lowest ownership group has the worst scores on everything. The best scores for non-corruption are in the second highest quartile. In other respects, the top three quartiles are similar, except that the third quartile is weaker on PPP.

Table 5 Firearms Ownership Versus Indices Among the Freest Countries in the World, by Quartiles

Quartile	Firearms per 1,000 Population	Corruption Perceptions Index	PPP	Index of Economic Freedom
1	484	7.64	24.14	72.36
2	255	8.9	20.83	75.88
3	120	7.52	37.50	75.97
4	31	5.74	49.00	68.84

Finally, we tested the data for statistical significance. We found three statistically significant¹⁷ relationships:

- more guns, less corruption;
- more guns, more economic freedom; and
- more guns, more economic success.

These statistically significant associations do not indicate the cause-and-effect relationships—such as whether guns are a cause or a consequence of prosperity, or whether the relationship runs both ways. That topic is discussed in the next Part of this Article. . . .

IV. CAUSE AND EFFECT

In Part IV, we sketch out some causal mechanisms and suggest some ways in which guns and freedom can have positive or negative relationships. We define “freedom” broadly to include each of the following measures: political and civil freedom (Freedom in the World), freedom from corrupt government (Corruption Perceptions Index), economic freedom (Index of Economic Freedom), and economic success (PPP). We argue that high levels of prosperity can provide a person with the means to exercise lifestyle and other personal choices. The various causal

17. [This term is here used in the technical sense, as described in Section B.2.—Eds.]

mechanisms are by no means mutually exclusive. Some of them may reinforce each other. Although only some of the relationships between guns and freedom are statistically significant, we discuss all possible relationships, both positive and negative. Even though a particular relationship might not be statistically significant in general, the relationship might be important in a particular country.

A. Freedom Causes Guns

One set of relationships to examine is whether increased levels of freedom tend to lead to increased levels of gun ownership. For example, greater economic freedom and economic success lead to greater prosperity, which in turn gives people more money to buy all sorts of consumer goods, including firearms. This explanation is supported by evidence from the last half-century in the United States. Although business regulation has grown over the last half-century, economic freedom has also increased in the United States. Federal tax rates are far lower: the top rate was 92% in 1952, and 35% in 2007. Free trade agreements have greatly reduced international trade barriers. The abolition of Jim Crow laws has allowed much greater participation by Black people in the economy. Thus, it is not surprising that per capita gun ownership in the U.S. has risen by 158% over the last half-century. America formerly had about one gun for every three people. Now, there is nearly one gun for every American.

Non-corruption could also increase gun ownership. If two nations have very similar statutory gun laws, but the first nation is much less corrupt than the second, then citizens in the first nation will have an easier time getting permits or licenses, completing purchases that need government approval, and so on. As noted above, there is a statistically significant relationship between higher per capita gun ownership and freedom from corruption, economic freedom, and economic success. Even within the countries with perfect scores for political and civil freedom, the third with the lowest gun ownership rates had a notably worse Corruption Perceptions Index than the other two.

Germany has a very extensive set of gun regulations (as it does for many other activities). Yet despite high regulation, Germany is eleventh out of the fifty-nine nations in per-capita ownership rates. The explanation may be that Germany is non-corrupt and prosperous: the German gun licensing system is generally administered according to objective criteria, and there is no expectation that a prospective gun owner might have to bribe a police officer to get a license. Further, Germany's PPP is better than 41 of the 48 countries it outranks in per capita ownership. As shown in Table 4, even within the countries with excellent economic and political-civil freedom, the lowest third for firearms per capita were much lower in PPP than the other two thirds.

Another possibility is that political liberty and/or civil liberty help cause gun ownership. Political systems that are more open may allow people who own guns, who want to own guns, or who want other people to have the choice, to participate more effectively in the political system, and to have their concerns addressed. In Canada, for example, firearms rights advocates played an important role in the 2006 election of Stephen Harper's Conservative party. The Harper government created an amnesty period for people who disobeyed the previous Liberal government's gun registration deadline, waived fees for certain gun licenses, and also

deferred a regulation that would have raised the price of all new guns imported into or manufactured in Canada by about 200 Canadian Dollars. [Later, the Harper government abolished long gun registration, as detailed *infra* Section C.3.]

Civil liberty, such as freedom of religion and speech, could also be a factor in higher gun ownership. Civil liberty can foster a culture of individual self-actualization, in which a person feels that he can control the course of his life by choosing his religion (or choosing not to be religious), freely saying what he thinks and reading whatever he wants. Such a culture may also encourage people to exercise personal responsibility in other ways, such as by choosing to own a tool to protect themselves and their families rather than entirely relying on the state, or by providing some food for the family by hunting rather than having to buy all of one's food from supermarkets.

B. Guns Cause Freedom

One way that guns cause freedom is by facilitating revolutions or wars of independence that replace one regime, often a colonial one, with a freer government. Examples of successful revolutions or wars of independence in which privately-owned arms played an important role are the American revolution against Britain, the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire, the Israeli revolution against Britain, the Irish revolution against Britain, and the Swiss revolution against the Austrian Empire. Long after the new nation has secured its freedom, high levels of gun ownership may persist or grow even higher, partly as a result of the collective positive memory of the freedom enhancing benefits of arms.

Guns in citizen hands may also help protect an already free nation by contributing to the defeat of a foreign invader, or by helping to deter a foreign invasion. An example of the former is the American victory at the Battle of New Orleans (Ch. 6.A.6) in 1815. An example of the latter is Swiss deterrence of Nazi invasion during World War II (Section C.2).

Firearms can also promote freedom in more localized ways. During the 1950s and 1960s, American civil rights workers were able to protect themselves from the Ku Klux Klan because so many civil rights workers had guns. The father of U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice carried a shotgun as part of a neighborhood civil rights safety patrol, which is why Secretary Rice opposes the government having a registration list of guns and their owners, Condoleezza Rice, Extraordinary Ordinary People: A Memoir of Family 93 (2012). Similarly, former First Lady [Eleanor Roosevelt](#) carried a handgun for protection against Klansmen during her civil rights travels in the South in the 1950s.

More broadly, the exercise of one right may, for some persons, foster more positive attitudes about rights in general. This is one reason why American gun organizations such as the National Rifle Association and Gun Owners of America are strong supporters of First Amendment free speech rights, Fourth Amendment freedom from unreasonable or warrantless search, Fifth Amendment due process and property rights. . . .

C. Freedom Reduces Guns

Under certain conditions, increased freedom can lead to decreases in gun ownership. Under U.N. auspices, governments in nations such as Mali have

attempted to entice formerly oppressed tribal groups to surrender their guns. The promise is that the government will treat the tribal groups better, be less corrupt, be more respectful of due process, and so on, once the guns are surrendered.

For several years, the Mali disarmament program was successful. More recently, the government has not been keeping its promises, and the Tuareg tribes in northern Mali have been re-arming.¹⁸ Even so, Mali shows that there can be circumstances in which greater freedom leads to fewer guns. In other nations, such as the Netherlands, a long history of democracy, respect for the rule of law, and clean government may result in people believing that they have no need for guns as a safeguard against tyranny.

D. GUNS REDUCE FREEDOM

There are many modern nations where it is easy to see how the widespread presence of guns in the wrong hands reduces freedom. Guns in the hands of warlords in the Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and in Sudan/Uganda (the Lord's Resistance Army) wreak havoc on civilian populations, making it nearly impossible for civil society and its attendant freedoms to exist.¹⁹ Guns in the hands of terrorists and extremists in places such as Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank, and other places in the Middle East or South Asia are used to assassinate moderates for exercising their right of free speech, to murder women for not submitting to rigid gender restrictions, and to kill people for exercising their freedom to choose their own religion.

E. GUN CULTURES AND FREEDOM

One thing we know from the data is that the relationship between guns and freedom is often indirect. For example, Norway has high levels of guns and of religious freedom, but that is not because gun owners constantly protect churches from government attacks.

Accordingly, it may be helpful to consider the effect of gun culture, rather than direct uses of guns, as a partial explanation for this Article's findings. We should first explain what we mean by gun culture. To a firearms prohibition advocate in Great Britain, gun culture is an epithet, and it conjures images of dangerous gangs in downtrodden cities such as Manchester, dubbed "Gunchester" by some police, carrying illegal handguns for criminal purposes.

18. [For more on Mali, see David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *Microdisarmament: The Consequences for Public Safety and Human Rights*, 73 UMKC L. Rev. 969 (2005) (examining UN-sponsored programs to disarm people in Cambodia, Bougainville, Albania, Panama, Guatemala, and Mali). —Eds.]

19. [For more on Uganda, see David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *Human Rights and Gun Confiscation*, 26 Quinnipiac L. Rev. 383 (2008) (examining gun confiscation programs in Kenya and Uganda, and South Africa's quasi-confiscatory licensing law). —Eds.]

It is easy to see how a destructive gun culture, such as that of the British gangs, can harm a country's freedom ratings. For example, higher crime rates will reduce a nation's prosperity, and may lead to repressive government actions that reduce civil freedom. Great Britain, for example, has drastically weakened its centuries-old rule against double jeopardy, eliminated jury trials in many civil cases, and given the police the power to issue on-the-spot fines without due process.²⁰

"Gun culture" in America, however, has a benign connotation. People who use the term tend to be thinking about images such as father taking his son on a hunting trip, or of young people practicing target shooting with .22 smallbore rifles, under the supervision of expert marksmen at a gun club. Rather tellingly, in America, even elected officials who are the strongest proponents of much stricter anti-gun laws almost never criticize "the gun culture," but instead insist on their devotion to the Second Amendment. It seems reasonable to assume that countries that have relatively more guns per capita (e.g., the United States, France, Switzerland) will have a much stronger gun culture of the benign type, than will countries such as the Netherlands, Japan, or Bolivia, where lawful gun ownership is rare. A full explanation for why citizens in some nations are more rights-conscious than in other nations is beyond the scope of this Article. However, we suggest that one important factor in rights-consciousness may be the presence of a thriving benign gun culture.

Almost every legitimate purpose for which a person might own a gun can strengthen the person's feelings of competence and self-control. The hunter thinks, "I am a capable outdoorsman. I can put food on my family's table, and don't have to rely entirely on the supermarket." The defensive gun owner thinks, "I am ready to protect my family, because I know that the police may not come in time." The target shooter thinks, "I am skilled at a precise, challenging sport." Many gun owners may think, "If, God forbid, my country ever succumbed to tyranny, I could help my community resist." Almost all gun owners have made the decision, "Even though some people claim that guns are too dangerous, I am capable of handling a powerful tool safely."

For the countries in the top quintile for gun ownership (at least one gun per three persons), it is reasonable to assume that . . . many people in those countries have personal experience with a benign, individual-affirming gun culture. Participation in a benign gun culture is hardly the only way in which a person can have personal experiences that affirm and strengthen the individual's beliefs in his or her own competence. But when a country has a benign, thriving gun culture, it is certain that there are [a] great many persons who do have such experiences, and who do so in a context (successful, safe handling of potentially deadly tools) that is especially likely to induce and strengthen feelings of personal competence. The effect of a gun culture in promoting greater levels of individual competence and personal responsibility may be one reason

20. [See David B. Kopel, *Gun Control in Great Britain: Saving Lives or Constricting Liberty?* (1992).—Eds.]

for the statistically significant association between higher rates of gun ownership and higher rates of freedom from corruption, of economic freedom, and of economic success.

CONCLUSION

There are many causal mechanisms by which guns and freedom can advance or inhibit each other. The mechanisms that are most influential at a given point in time can vary widely from nation to nation. Historically and today, we can find ways in which freedom has increased guns, guns have increased freedom, freedom has reduced guns, and guns have reduced freedom. International firearms scholars, except those based in North America, have tended to focus their research only on the latter two relationships, while ignoring the first two. Some of the more enthusiastic proponents of gun prohibition have asserted that the relationship between freedom and guns is always negative.

The data in this Article reveal a more complex picture. As [a] general (but not invariable rule), countries with more guns have more economic freedom, less corruption, and more economic success. The broad international data, for any of the measures of freedom, do not support theories that more guns [mean] less freedom. The data provide reason for caution about embracing a global agenda of reducing civilian gun ownership. There may be particular countries where reductions might enhance freedom, but the data raise serious doubts about whether the gun-reducing agenda makes sense as a categorical imperative, at least if freedom ranks highly in one's hierarchy of values.

When we acknowledge that guns can have a positive and a negative relationship with freedom, then we can begin to look for more sophisticated, carefully tailored approaches to gun policy, that attempt to address the negative effects, and that are careful not to reduce the apparently significant positive effects. Such an approach offers a better possibility of enhancing freedom than does a simplistic program that only considers negative effects.

APPENDIX

In the following tables, the column headings and ratings have the following meanings:

- PR—Political Rights (lower is better)
- CL—Civil Liberties (lower is better)
- AVE—Average of PR and CL (lower is better)
- CI—Corruption Index (higher is better)
- PPP—Purchasing Power Parity (lower is better)
- EI—Economic Freedom (higher is better)
- F—Free (political or economic)
- PF—Partly Free (political)
- NF—Not Free (political)
- MF, ModF—Moderately Free (economic)
- MU, ModU—Moderately Unfree (economic)
- R—Repressed (economic)—EDs.

Table 6 All UN Member-States, Ratings in All Available Categories

Country	PR	CL	AVE	Political Rating	CI	PPP	EI	Economic Rating	Firearms per Capita
Afghanistan	5	5	5	PF					
Albania	3	3	3	PF	2.6	127	61.4	ModF	0.160
Algeria	6	5	6	NF		112	52.2	MU	
Andorra	1	1	1	F					
Angola	6	5	6	NF	2.2	166	43.5	R	0.205
Antigua and Barbuda	2	2	2	F		72			
Argentina	2	2	2	F	2.9	64	57.5	MU	0.127
Armenia	5	4	5	PF	2.9	126	69.4	ModF	
Australia	1	1	1	F	8.7	24	82.7	F	0.155
Austria	1	1	1	F	8.6	15	71.3	MF	0.170
Azerbaijan	6	5	6	NF	2.4	124	55.4	MU	
Bahamas	1	1	1	F			71.4	MF	
Bahrain	5	5	5	PF	5.7	50	68.4	ModF	
Bangladesh	4	4	4	PF	2.0	167	47.8	R	
Barbados	1	1	1	F	6.7		70.5	MF	
Belarus	7	6	7	NF	2.1	90	47.4	R	
Belgium	1	1	1	F	7.3	20	74.5	MF	0.160
Belize	1	2	2	F	3.5	113	63.7	ModF	
Benin	2	2	2	F	2.5	191	54.8	MU	
Bhutan	6	5	6	NF	6.0				
Bolivia	3	3	3	PF	2.7	153	55.0	MU	0.022
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3	3	3	PF	2.9		54.7	MU	
Botswana	2	2	2	F	5.6	75	68.4	ModF	
Brazil	2	2	2	F	3.3	91	60.9	ModF	0.088
Brunei Darussalam	6	5	6	NF					
Bulgaria	1	2	2	F	4.0	85	62.2	ModF	
Burkina Faso	5	3	4	PF	3.2	184	55.0	MU	
Burundi	5	5	5	PF	2.4	209	46.8	R	
Cambodia	6	5	6	NF	2.1	152	56.5	MU	
Cameroon	6	6	6	NF	2.3	165	54.4	MU	
Canada	1	1	1	F	8.5	19	78.7	MF	0.315
Cape Verde	1	1	1	F		122	58.4	MU	

Country	PR	CL	AVE	Political Rating	CI	PPP	EI	Economic Rating	Firearms per Capita
Central Afr. Rep.	5	4	5	PF	2.4	186	50.3	MU	
Chad	6	5	6	NF	2.0	188	46.4	R	
Chile	1	1	1	F	7.3	81	78.3	MF	0.108
China	7	6	7	NF	3.3	102	54.0	MU	0.031
Colombia	3	3	3	PF	3.9	105	60.5	ModF	0.073
Comoros	3	4	4	PF		173			
Congo (D.R.)	5	6	6	NF	2.0	207			
Congo (Rep.)	6	5	6	NF	2.2	197	43.0	R	
Costa Rica	1	1	1	F	4.1	83	65.1	ModF	
Cote d'Ivoire	6	6	6	NF	2.1	179	55.5	MU	
Croatia	2	2	2	F	3.4	70	55.3	MU	0.115
Cuba	7	7	7	NF	3.5		29.7	R	
Cyprus	1	1	1	F	5.6	45	73.1	MF	
Czech Republic	1	1	1	F	4.8	48	69.7	ModF	0.050
Denmark	1	1	1	F	9.5	9	77.6	MF	0.180
Djibouti	5	5	5	PF		160	52.6	MU	
Dominica	1	1	1	F	4.5	114			
Dominican Republic	2	2	2	F	2.8	95	56.7	MU	
Ecuador	3	3	3	PF	2.3	138	55.3	MU	0.027
Egypt	7	6	7	NF	3.3	136	53.2	MU	
El Salvador	2	3	3	F	4.0	129	70.3	MF	
Equatorial Guinea	7	6	7	NF	2.1	84	53.2	MU	
Eritrea	7	6	7	NF	2.9	194			
Estonia	1	1	1	F	6.7	57	78.1	MF	0.030
Ethiopia	5	5	5	PF	2.4	190	54.4	MU	
Fiji	6	4	5	PF		119	59.8	MU	
Finland	1	1	1	F	9.6	17	76.5	MF	0.550
France	1	1	1	F	7.4	23	66.1	ModF	0.320
Gabon	6	4	5	PF	3.0	130	53.0	MU	
Gambia (The)	4	4	4	PF	2.5	176	57.6	MU	
Georgia	3	3	3	PF	2.8	147	68.7	ModF	
Germany	1	1	1	F	8.0	28	73.5	MF	0.300

Country	PR	CL	AVE	Political Rating	CI	PPP	EI	Economic Rating	Firearms per Capita
Ghana	1	2	2	F	3.3	157	58.1	MU	
Greece	1	2	2	F	4.4	42	57.6	MU	0.110
Grenada	1	2	2	F	3.5	99			
Guatemala	3	4	4	PF	2.6	135	61.2	ModF	
Guinea	6	5	6	NF	1.9	163	55.1	MU	
Guinea-Bissau	4	4	4	PF		203	45.7	R	
Guyana	2	3	3	F	2.5	136	58.2	MU	
Haiti	4	5	5	PF	1.8	180	52.2	MU	
Honduras	3	3	3	PF	2.5	148	60.3	ModF	
Hungary	1	1	1	F	5.2	56	66.2	ModF	0.020
Iceland	1	1	1	F	9.6	10	77.1	MF	
India	2	3	3	F	3.3	145	55.6	MU	0.043
Indonesia	2	3	3	F	2.4	143	55.1	MU	
Iran	6	6	6	NF	2.7	94	43.1	R	0.053
Iraq	6	6	6	NF	1.9				0.390
Ireland	1	1	1	F	7.4	14	81.3	F	
Israel	1	2	2	F	5.9	37	68.4	ModF	0.081
Italy	1	1	1	F	4.9	31	63.4	ModF	0.432
Jamaica	2	3	3	F	3.7	141	66.1	ModF	
Japan	1	2	2	F	7.6	21	73.6	MF	0.003
Jordan	5	4	5	PF	5.3	120	64.0	ModF	0.087
Kazakhstan	6	5	6	NF	2.6	101	60.4	ModF	
Kenya	3	3	3	PF	2.2	185	59.4	MU	
Kiribati	1	1	1	F		89			
Korea (North)	7	7	7	NF			3.0	R	
Korea (South)	1	2	2	F	5.1	44	68.6	ModF	
Kuwait	4	5	5	PF	4.8	30	63.7	ModF	
Kyrgyzstan	5	4	5	PF	2.2	175	59.9	MU	
Lao P. D.R.	7	6	7	NF	2.6	172	49.1	R	
Latvia	1	1	1	F	4.7	65	68.2	ModF	
Lebanon	4	4	4	PF	3.6	128	60.3	ModF	0.139
Lesotho	2	3	3	F	3.2	139	54.1	MU	
Liberia	3	4	4	PF					
Libya	7	7	7	NF	2.7		34.5	R	
Liechtenstein	1	1	1	F		3			
Lithuania	1	1	1	F	4.8	67	72.0	MF	

Country	PR	CL	AVE	Political Rating	CI	PPP	EI	Economic Rating	Firearms per Capita
Luxembourg	1	1	1	F	8.6	1	79.3	MF	
Macedonia	3	3	3	PF	2.7	106	60.8	ModF	0.160
Madagascar	3	3	3	PF	3.1	198	61.4	ModF	
Malawi	4	3	4	PF	2.7	207	55.5	MU	
Malaysia	4	4	4	PF	5.0	80	65.8	ModF	
Maldives	6	5	6	NF					
Mali	2	2	2	F	2.8	193	53.7	MU	
Malta	1	1	1	F	6.4	54	67.8	ModF	0.130
Marshall Islands	1	1	1	F					
Mauritania	5	4	5	PF	3.1	158	53.2	MU	
Mauritius	1	2	2	F	5.1	71	69.0	ModF	
Mexico	2	2	2	F	3.3	79	65.8	ModF	0.150
Micronesia	1	1	1	F		98			
Moldova	3	4	4	PF	3.2	154	59.5	MU	0.010
Monaco	2	1	2	F					
Mongolia	2	2	2	F	2.8	168	60.1	ModF	
Montenegro	3	3	3	PF					
Morocco	5	4	5	PF	3.2	132	57.4	MU	0.050
Mozambique	3	4	4	PF	2.8	189	56.6	MU	
Myanmar (Burma)	7	7	7	NF	1.9		40.1	R	
Namibia	2	2	2	F	4.1	97	63.8	ModF	
Nauru	1	1	1	F					
Nepal	5	4	5	PF	2.5	178	54.0	MU	
Netherlands	1	1	1	F	8.7	12	77.1	MF	0.020
New Zealand	1	1	1	F	9.6	36	81.6	F	0.250
Nicaragua	3	3	3	PF	2.6	142	62.7	ModF	
Niger	3	3	3	PF	2.3	203	53.5	MU	
Nigeria	4	4	4	PF	2.2	195	52.6	MU	
Norway	1	1	1	F	8.8	5	70.1	MF	0.360
Oman	6	5	6	NF	5.4	63	63.9	ModF	
Pakistan	6	5	6	NF	2.2	161	58.2	MU	0.120
Palau	1	1	1	F				R	
Panama	1	2	2	F	3.1	103	65.9	ModF	
Papua New Guinea	3	3	3	PF	2.4	164			

Country	PR	CL	AVE	Political Rating	CI	PPP	EI	Economic Rating	Firearms per Capita
Paraguay	3	3	3	PF	2.6	132	56.8	MU	0.144
Peru	2	3	3	F	3.3	121	62.1	ModF	0.028
Philippines	3	3	3	PF	2.5	122	57.4	MU	0.048
Poland	1	1	1	F	3.7	68	58.8	MU	0.015
Portugal	1	1	1	F	6.6	49	66.7	ModF	
Qatar	6	5	6	NF	6.0	16	60.7	ModF	
Romania	2	2	2	F	3.1	86	61.3	ModF	0.003
Russian Federation	6	5	6	NF	2.5	78	54.0	MU	0.090
Rwanda	6	5	6	NF	2.5	187	52.1	MU	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	1	1	1	F		74			
Saint Lucia	1	1	1	F		111			
Saint Vincent & Grenadines	2	1	2	F		110			
Samoa	2	2	2	F		116			
San Marino	1	1	1	F		11			
Sao Tome & Principe	2	2	2	F					
Saudi Arabia	7	6	7	NF	3.3	58	59.1	MU	0.263
Senegal	2	3	3	F	3.3	177	58.8	MU	
Serbia	3	2	3	F	3.0				0.375
Seychelles	3	3	3	PF	3.6	60			
Sierra Leone	4	3	4	PF	2.2	200	48.4	R	
Singapore	5	4	5	PF	9.4	26	85.7	F	
Slovakia	1	1	1	F	4.7	59	68.4	ModF	0.030
Slovenia	1	1	1	F	6.4	43	63.6	ModF	0.050
Solomon Islands	4	3	4	PF		170			
Somalia	7	7	7	NF					
South Africa	2	2	2	F	4.6	77	64.1	ModF	0.132
Spain	1	1	1	F	6.8	33	70.9	MF	0.110
Sri Lanka	4	4	4	PF	3.1	134	59.3	MU	
Sudan	7	6	7	NF	2.0	171			
Suriname	2	2	2	F	3.0	96	52.6	MU	
Swaziland	7	5	6	NF	2.5	131	61.6	ModF	

Country	PR	CL	AVE	Political Rating	CI	PPP	EI	Economic Rating	Firearms per Capita
Sweden	1	1	1	F	9.2	18	72.6	MF	0.315
Switzerland	1	1	1	F	9.1	7	79.1	MF	0.460
Syria	7	7	7	NF	2.9	144	48.2	R	
Tajikistan	6	5	6	NF	2.2	183	56.9	MU	
Tanzania	4	3	4	PF	2.9	205	56.4	MU	
Thailand	7	4	6	NF	3.6	87	65.6	ModF	0.161
Timor-Leste (East Timor)	3	4	4	PF	2.6				
Togo	6	5	6	NF	2.4	181	49.8	R	
Tonga	5	2	4	PF		92			
Trinidad and Tobago	2	2	2	F	3.2	62	71.4	MF	
Tunisia	6	5	6	NF	4.6	93	61.0	ModF	
Turkey	3	3	3	PF	3.8	88	59.3	MU	0.130
Turkmenistan	7	7	7	NF	2.2		42.5	R	
Tuvalu	1	1	1	F					
Uganda	5	4	5	PF	2.7	181	63.4	ModF	
Ukraine	3	2	3	F	2.8	107	53.3	MU	0.090
United Arab Emirates	6	5	6	NF	6.2	35	60.4	ModF	
United Kingdom	1	1	1	F	8.6	13	81.6	F	0.056
United States	1	1	1	F	7.3	4	82.0	F	0.900
Uruguay	1	1	1	F	6.4	82	69.3	ModF	0.368
Uzbekistan	7	7	7	NF	2.1	169	52.6	MU	
Vanuatu	2	2	2	F		151			
Venezuela	4	4	4	PF	2.3	108	47.7	R	0.140
Vietnam	7	5	6	NF	2.6	150	50.0	MU	
Yemen	5	5	5	PF	2.6	199	53.8	MU	0.610
Zambia	4	4	4	PF	2.6	196	57.9	MU	
Zimbabwe	7	6	7	NF	2.4	173	35.8	R	

Table 7 All Ratings for Countries for Which There Are Per Capita Firearms Data

Ranking by Firearms per Capita	PR	CL	AVE	Political Rating	CI	PPP	EI	Economic Rating	Firearms per Capita
Romania	2	2	2	F	3.1	86	61.3	ModF	0.003
Japan	1	2	1.5	F	7.6	21	73.6	MF	0.003
Moldova	3	4	3.5	PF	3.2	154	59.5	MU	0.010
Poland	1	1	1	F	3.7	68	58.8	MU	0.015
Hungary	1	1	1	F	5.2	56	66.2	ModF	0.020
Netherlands	1	1	1	F	8.7	12	77.1	MF	0.020
Bolivia	3	3	3	PF	2.7	153	55.0	MU	0.022
Ecuador	3	3	3	PF	2.3	138	55.3	MU	0.027
Peru	2	3	2.5	F	3.3	121	62.1	ModF	0.028
Estonia	1	1	1	F	6.7	57	78.1	MF	0.030
Slovakia	1	1	1	F	4.7	59	68.4	ModF	0.030
China	7	6	6.5	NF	3.3	102	54.0	MU	0.031
India	2	3	2.5	F	3.3	145	55.6	MU	0.043
Philippines	3	3	3	PF	2.5	122	57.4	MU	0.048
Czech Republic	1	1	1	F	4.8	48	69.7	ModF	0.050
Morocco	5	4	4.5	PF	3.2	132	57.4	MU	0.050
Slovenia	1	1	1	F	6.4	43	63.6	ModF	0.050
Iran	6	6	6	NF	2.7	94	43.1	R	0.053
United Kingdom	1	1	1	F	8.6	13	81.6	F	0.056
Colombia	3	3	3	PF	3.9	105	60.5	ModF	0.073
Israel	1	2	1.5	F	5.9	37	68.4	ModF	0.081
Jordan	5	4	4.5	PF	5.3	120	64.0	ModF	0.087
Brazil	2	2	2	F	3.3	91	60.9	ModF	0.088
Russian Fed.	6	5	5.5	NF	2.5	78	54.0	MU	0.090
Ukraine	3	2	2.5	F	2.8	107	53.3	MU	0.090
Chile	1	1	1	F	7.3	81	78.3	MF	0.108
Greece	1	2	1.5	F	4.4	42	57.6	MU	0.110
Spain	1	1	1	F	6.8	33	70.9	MF	0.110
Croatia	2	2	2	F	3.4	70	55.3	MU	0.115
Pakistan	6	5	5.5	NF	2.2	161	58.2	MU	0.120
Argentina	2	2	2	F	2.9	64	57.5	MU	0.127
Malta	1	1	1	F	6.4	54	67.8	ModF	0.130
Turkey	3	3	3	PF	3.8	88	59.3	MU	0.130
South Africa	2	2	2	F	4.6	77	64.1	ModF	0.132

Ranking by Firearms per Capita	PR	CL	AVE	Political Rating	CI	PPP	EI	Economic Rating	Firearms per Capita
Lebanon	4	4	4	PF	3.6	128	60.3	ModF	0.139
Venezuela	4	4	4	PF	2.3	108	47.7	R	0.140
Paraguay	3	3	3	PF	2.6	132	56.8	MU	0.144
Mexico	2	3	2.5	F	3.3	79	65.8	ModF	0.150
Australia	1	1	1	F	8.7	24	82.7	F	0.155
Albania	3	3	3	PF	2.6	127	61.4	ModF	0.160
Belgium	1	1	1	F	7.3	20	74.5	MF	0.160
Macedonia	3	3	3	PF	2.7	106	60.8	ModF	0.160
Thailand	7	4	5.5	NF	3.6	87	65.6	ModF	0.161
Austria	1	1	1	F	8.6	15	71.3	MF	0.170
Denmark	1	1	1	F	9.5	9	77.6	MF	0.180
Angola	6	5	5.5	NF	2.2	166	43.5	R	0.205
New Zealand	1	1	1	F	9.6	36	81.6	F	0.250
Saudi Arabia	7	6	6.5	NF	3.3	58	59.1	MU	0.263
Germany	1	1	1	F	8.0	28	73.5	MF	0.300
Canada	1	1	1	F	8.5	19	78.7	MF	0.315
Sweden	1	1	1	F	9.2	18	72.6	MF	0.315
France	1	1	1	F	7.4	23	66.1	ModF	0.320
Norway	1	1	1	F	8.8	5	70.1	MF	0.360
Uruguay	1	1	1	F	6.4	82	69.3	ModF	0.368
Italy	1	1	1	F	4.9	31	63.4	ModF	0.432
Switzerland	1	1	1	F	9.1	7	79.1	MF	0.460
Finland	1	1	1	F	9.6	17	76.5	MF	0.550
Yemen	5	5	5	PF	2.6	199	53.8	MU	0.610
United States	1	1	1	F	7.3	4	82.0	F	0.900

[Firearms per capita were taken based on the following annual editions of the Small Arms Survey:

2007 Table 2.3, page 47 & Table 2.9, page 59: China, India, Philippines, Morocco, Iran, U.K., Colombia, Brazil, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Spain, Pakistan, Argentina, Turkey, South Africa, Australia, Thailand, Angola, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Canada, Sweden, France, Italy, Switzerland, Finland, Yemen, United States

2005 Table 3.3, page 78: Japan

2005 Table 3.9, page 91: Israel, Jordan, Lebanon

2004 Table 2.3, page 51: Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Venezuela, Paraguay, Mexico, Uruguay

2004 Table 2.3, page 45: New Zealand

2003 Tables 2.2 & 2.3, pp. 64-65: Romania, Moldova, Poland, Hungary, Netherlands, Estonia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, Malta, Albania, Belgium, Macedonia, Austria, Denmark, Norway.]

Table 8 Relationship Between Firearms, Corruption, Purchasing Power, and Economic Freedom

Dependent Variable	Firearms Coefficient	T-Ratio
Corruption	4.362**	2.42
PPP	81.662**	2.18
Economic Freedom	18.421**	2.63
<i>Dropping the US:</i>		
Corruption	4.950**	2.26
PPP	74.986	1.62
Economic Freedom	15.903*	1.76

Notes: The number of observations is 59. PPP is rescaled so that higher purchasing power is reflected by higher values of PPP. ** indicates significant at the .05 level, two-tailed. * indicates significant at the .10 level, two-tailed.²¹

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. *Correlation or causation.* Kopel et al. identify significant correlations between gun ownership and economic freedom, purchasing power, and lower levels of government corruption. They also propose causal arguments that might explain the correlations; that is, ways in which gun ownership might directly or indirectly generate the three social goods with which they find it correlated. Another possibility is that gun ownership is *correlated* with these social goods but does not *cause* them; rather, the same things that tend to create economic freedom, clean government, etc., also tend to facilitate higher rates of gun ownership. Which kind of explanation do you think is more likely? Are you persuaded by Kopel et al.'s causal hypotheses? If so, which ones? In the end, what causes the different levels of freedom enjoyed by different nations?

2. Cross-cultural comparisons like Kopel et al.'s are illuminating, but on close examination also raise new questions. Comparing overall rates of gun ownership

21. [A two-tailed test looks at statistical significance in both directions. Were changes in one variable (e.g., guns per capita) correlated with positive or negative changes in another variable (e.g., the homicide rate)? So the two-tailed test would examine whether more guns led to a statistically significant increase *or* a statistically significant decrease in the homicide rate. A one-tailed test looks for an effect in only one direction. For example, a one-tailed test might examine whether more guns were correlated with a statistically significant increase in the homicide rate, but would not consider whether more guns were correlated with less homicide.—Eds.]

between high- and low-freedom countries relies on a monolithic view of gun ownership in each country. On the other hand, we know from Chapter 1.B that, in the United States, rates of gun ownership vary substantially by region. Reported rates of gun ownership are notably higher in the South and the West than in the Northeast. If the rate of gun ownership in other countries also varies by region, should that be incorporated into the cross-cultural comparisons? How?

3. Carrying forward Kopel et al.'s assessment, would you say that the regions of the United States with lower rates of gun ownership rank lower on the freedom scale? Do large population centers naturally require a different balance between liberty and order? If so, is it accurate to say that New York City (with a high population density and low gun density) has fewer guns because it is less free than, say, Cody, Wyoming?

5. *The Remainder Problem*

Kates and Mauser argue that social factors, not gun laws, drive violent crime and gun crime. Altheimer and Boswell argue that the effects of increased guns vary by society: more guns lead to less homicide in Eastern Europe, but to more homicide in Latin America. In the excerpt below, Professor Johnson considers a separate question. Even if one concludes that private gun ownership invariably leads to social harm, could government ever effectively impose a program of legal prohibitions on gun ownership in a society like the United States? Assume, *arguendo*, that the United States would be much better off with very low rates of gun ownership in the range of countries like the Netherlands, or even the moderate (but still high by global standards) rates of France, Germany, or Italy. Johnson suggests that conditions in the United States render the more stringent gun control policies of other countries nontransferable to the United States.

Nicholas J. Johnson

Imagining Gun Control in America: Understanding the Remainder Problem

43 Wake Forest L. Rev. 837, 840-56, 867, 891 (2008)

...

I. THE SUPPLY-SIDE IDEAL

The conclusion that some horrible gun crime would not have happened if we had prevented the scoundrel from getting a firearm is straightforward and quite natural. This calculation is the foundation for views that advance supply-side gun regulation as a recipe for crime control. It conforms to simple tests of logic. Consider two scenarios. In the first, we are sitting in a room with a gun in the middle. In the second, our room is gun free and sealed—the supply-side ideal. The risk of gun violence is obviously higher in the first scenario. Indeed, absent creative cheating, it is zero in the second. Projecting this dynamic to society generally allows the claim that laws limiting the supply of guns in private hands will dramatically reduce gun crime. . . .

The supply-side ideal remains the philosophical foundation of the modern quest for restrictions on access to firearms sufficient to thwart gun crime. But there is a problem. In our political skirmishes over new, more aggressive supply regulation, the supply-side ideal has receded into the background. We have not talked candidly about what is necessary for the supply-side formula to work. We have not confronted the reality that the existing inventory of guns is vast.

As a consequence, supply-side controls, often implemented prospectively, without explicit commitment to disarming ordinary Americans, have affected only a tiny fraction of the inventory. It is as if we are in the sealed room, but now everybody has a gun or two tucked away, there are piles of them in the corners, and we are debating reducing gun violence with laws that allow only one more gun a month or no more guns with high capacity magazines. Our results have been disappointing because supply-side rules depend, ultimately, on cutting the inventory close to zero. And that, in America, is a problem.

II. CHALLENGES TO THE SUPPLY-SIDE IDEAL

Erring on the high side, there are around 13,000 gun homicides in the United States each year. Suicides with a firearm add another 17,000 deaths. If there were only 30,000 private guns in America, and we knew where they were, it would be easy to imagine mustering the political will to confiscate those guns and ban new ones. If our borders were reasonably secure against illegal imports and contraband guns could not be manufactured domestically, we would expect dramatic reductions in gun crimes, accidents, and suicides.

But our problem is different. The guns used in our roughly 30,000 annual gun deaths are drawn from an inventory approaching 300 million. This is far more guns than the countries in any of the cross-cultural comparisons—far more private guns than any other country ever. Americans own close to half the private firearms on the planet. Plus, our borders are permeable, and guns and ammunition are relatively easy to manufacture. So achieving the supply-side ideal is not just a matter of channeling enough outrage to finally get the right words enacted into law.

1. Porous Borders

We modeled the supply-side ideal on the gun-free sealed room. The single qualification was the assumption that no one in the room was cheating. And cheat they might, if the incentives were sufficient and the boundaries of the room permeable. Effective supply-side restrictions at the societal level have to account for this.

So what about this cheating? If we managed to enact supply-side restrictions with real bite, would cheating be pervasive? Could it be controlled? Perhaps the level of cheating would be small. A black market fueled just by this cheating might make guns prohibitively expensive for many people with bad intentions. With fewer bad people able to afford the higher prices caused by restricted supply, there should be a reduction in gun crime.

One worry, however, is the argument that the most dangerous among us have an inelastic demand for guns. Criminal penalties for gun possession or use will not matter much to people whose primary activities are already illegal. Daniel Polsby contends that their static demand will be supplied through the same channels that distribute other contraband. . . .

[S]ome contraband imported guns will be more lethal than the ones they replaced. In Britain, after further tightening of already stringent gun laws, the black market began supplying previously unseen and more lethal guns. Ireland banned handguns in the early 1970s and a large group of rifles and repeating shotguns in 1976.²² “Despite these measures, in the early 2000s the Irish police . . . were reporting steep increases in gun crime.”²⁹ The most serious concern being “an invasion of handguns and automatics smuggled in from Europe,” many of them “semi-automatic pistols and sub-machine guns, previously unknown in public hands.”³⁰ Swedish police report a similar phenomenon: “Before, there were a lot of shotguns — now it’s all automatic weapons.”³¹ Even without sweeping supply restrictions, the United States has encountered this phenomenon. In 1996, authorities intercepted a shipment of two thousand AK-47s from China. Unlike the semi-automatic rifles that were prohibited under the expired 1994 Assault Weapons Ban, these black-market imports really were fully automatic machine guns. In 2005, federal authorities broke up a network of arms suppliers who illegally imported fully automatic rifles from Russia and had arranged to sell anti-tank guns to an undercover officer. . . .

2. Defiance in Practice

Data tracking defiance of registration and prohibition internationally, and similar domestic experiments, provide a basis for projecting how people will react to aggressive supply-side rules. The most notable domestic experiment with prohibition was in Washington, D.C. Until the challenge culminating in *Heller* [Ch. 11.A], the District of Columbia banned handguns and required long guns to be kept disassembled and locked away from their ammunition. Overall, this was the most aggressive set of supply restrictions in the country. There is no dispute that handgun prohibition failed to stop gun crime in D.C. The District has been perennially at or close to the top of the list for gun crime in American jurisdictions.

The efforts of other restrictive U.S. jurisdictions tell more about the defiance impulse and the character of the remainder problem. New York City imposes stringent requirements on purchase and ownership of handguns. Still, handgun crime persists. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s straw purchase “stings” confirm that tough municipal laws alone are not enough. The source of some of the contraband guns in Bloomberg’s sights come from scofflaw dealers from other states. But this is literally only a basketful of guns. The number of illegal guns in

22. [In 1973, the police collected all registered handguns, ostensibly for ballistics testing, and then refused to return the handguns to their owners. In 2004, Irish courts ruled the de facto ban illegal, and ordered the police to resume issuing handgun permits. See David B. Kopel, *Ireland on the Brink*, *America’s 1st Freedom* (Apr. 2011). — Eds.]

29. Small Arms Survey, Graduate Inst. of Int’l Studies, *Small Arms Survey 2007: Guns and the City 44* (2007).

30. *Id.* (citation omitted).

31. *Id.* at 56 (internal quotation marks omitted) (citation omitted).

New York City is in the range of two million.⁶⁷ This is in a region where the overall rate of gun ownership is lower than average and gun culture is less robust. The roughly two million guns [illegally] owned by the residents of New York City are from sources much more disparate than rogue dealers. Some of these guns are new, but an inventory this large suggests that many New Yorkers have had guns, have been acquiring guns, and deciding to keep guns illegally for a long time. This type of defiance should be stronger in most other parts of the country, where gun culture runs deeper.

The city of Chicago also has very restrictive gun laws. Still, between 1999 and 2003, Chicago averaged about 10,000 illegal gun confiscations per year. In one particular high-crime neighborhood studied by Cook et al., there was approximately one illegal gun sale per thirty people each year.⁷³ Stripping out children from the count, this rate seems sufficient to achieve saturation in less than a generation.

The rates of non-compliance with state assault weapons bans tell a similar story. James Jacobs and Kimberly Potter report:

In recent years, several states and municipalities passed laws mandating the registration [and subsequent prohibition] of assault rifles. These laws failed miserably, primarily due to owner resistance. In Boston and Cleveland, the rate of compliance with the ban on assault rifles is estimated at 1%. In California, nearly 90% of the approximately 300,000 assault weapons owners did not register their weapons. Out of the 100,000-300,000 assault rifles estimated to be in private hands in New Jersey, 947 were registered, an additional 888 were rendered inoperable, and four were turned over to the authorities.⁷⁶

Data from international experiments with gun prohibition and registration illustrates a powerful and nearly universal individual impulse to defy gun bans. With data from seventy-seven countries, the International Small Arms Survey reports massive illegal parallel holdings with an average defiance ratio of 2.6 illegal guns for every legal one. This average is pulled down by rare cases like Japan. But even the Japanese, whose society David Kopel casts as the polar opposite of our gun culture, experience “unregistered [gun] holdings . . . one-quarter to one-half as large as registered holdings.”²³ . . .

67. It is estimated that as many as two million illegal guns were in circulation in New York City in 1993. Ninety percent of the guns seized in New York City that year were originally purchased in other states. There are no precise measurements of what proportion of New York's total contraband inventory are recent imports versus classic remainders. See U.S. Dep't of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Programs, *Getting Guns Off the Streets* (1994-2008), http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/gun_violence/profile19.html. . . .

73. Philip J. Cook et al., *Underground Gun Markets* 6 (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Research, Working Paper No. 11737, 2005).

76. James Jacobs & Kimberly Potter, *Comprehensive Handgun Licensing & Registration: An Analysis and Critique of Brady II, Gun Control's Next (and Last?) Step*, 89 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 81, 106 (1998).

23. [The estimates of legal and illegal guns starting in this and the next three paragraphs are from the Small Arms Survey, *supra* note 29, at 46-55.—EDS.]

This level of defiance cannot be explained by the observation that criminals have an inelastic demand curve. A large slice of the ordinary citizenry seems to be operating under the same curve. Across the board, for countries large and small, developed and emerging, a strong defiance impulse is evident.

In England and Wales there were 1.7 million legally registered firearms in 2005; illegal, unregistered guns were estimated as high as 4 million. The Chinese reported 680,000 legal guns in 2005, with estimates of nearly 40 million illegal guns. The German police union estimates that Germany has “about 45 million civilian guns: about 10 million registered firearms; 20 million that should be registered, but apparently are not; and 15 million firearms such as antiques . . . and black-powder weapons . . . that do not have to be registered.”

The German experience also tells us something about the staying power of defiance. Registration was introduced in Germany in 1972 “when the nation’s civilian holdings reportedly totaled 7-20 million firearms.” Only 3.2 million of these guns were registered. “In the thirty-five years since then, roughly 8 million additional firearms were legally acquired, accounting for the rest of the registered guns thought to exist today.”

With close to 7 million registered guns, Canada is estimated to have about 10 million unregistered guns.²⁴ Brazil reports nearly 7 million registered guns and estimates 15 million unregistered. India reports fewer than 6 million registered guns against an estimated 45 million illegal ones. France has less than 3 million guns registered and estimates nearly 20 million unregistered. Mexico reports fewer than 5 million registered with about 15 million unregistered guns. Jordan has 126,000 registered guns and an estimated 500,000 illegal ones. Sudan reports about 7,000 registered and 2.2 to 3.6 million illegal ones.

While there are exceptions like Japan, where illegal guns are a fraction of those legally registered, nearly every country surveyed produced estimates of illegal guns that are a multiple of legal guns. Extrapolation from these rates of defiance to projections about the United States also must account for our unparalleled gun culture. Extrapolating ninety to ninety-nine percent defiance from state or municipal assault weapons bans seems too aggressive. But, conservatively, the international data show that we should expect three or more people to defy confiscation for every one who complies.

Nothing else in our experience contradicts these signals. Many people evidently believe guns protect against things they fear more than criminal sanctions. The risk-reward calculation that pushes ordinary people to obey a wide array of criminal laws seems different here.

The American attachment to the gun is exceptional. We own close to half the world’s private firearms and buy half the world’s output of new civilian guns each year. This demand and cultural attachment highlight an obstacle to the supply-side ideal that may be unique to the United States. Whatever courts say about the Second Amendment, a majority of Americans believe they have a right to own a gun. This belief, as much as any court pronouncement, will drive defiance of confiscation. Even if *Heller* [Ch. 10.A] is ultimately nullified, the opinion itself, along with

24. [Canadian gun registration is detailed later in Section C.3.—Eds.]

[other] powerfully reasoned circuit court opinions, are more than sufficient to rationalize civil disobedience by people who ultimately would have defied confiscation anyway. If the Supreme Court [simply reversed *McDonald v. City of Chicago* (Ch. 11.B), eliminating the Second and Fourteenth Amendments]²⁵ as a limitation on state lawmaking, the capacity of individual states to implement confiscation laws still seems near zero, with the defiance impulse of gun-owning citizens validated by recognition of a federal right, and few people bothering with the federalist details.

The risk of noncompliance in this context is different from the run-of-the-mill cheating that might afflict any prohibition legislation. This means we must expand our thinking about noncompliance beyond the idea that criminals will resist confiscation. What does it mean that otherwise law-abiding people will hold back some portion of the gun inventory in defiance of sweeping supply-side restrictions? What consequences should we anticipate? . . .

. . . Pure supply-side rules are fatally compromised by the remainder problem. . . . Some proposals are hybrids, however, and thus are affected by the remainder problem in more limited and unique ways. Other proposals detach from supply-side theory almost entirely and are not snared by the remainder problem. . . .

. . . It is best to acknowledge the blocking power of the remainder problem and adjust our gun control regulations and goals to that reality.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. *Large-capacity magazine bans.* As of March 2020, eight states ban so-called large-capacity magazines that hold more than 10 rounds, while Colorado bans magazines over 15. According to one estimate, there are more than 250 million firearm magazines in circulation that have a capacity for more than 10 rounds, with about 100 million of those capable of holding at least 30 rounds. Griff Witte, *As Mass Shootings Rise, Experts Say High-Capacity Magazines Should Be the Focus*, Washington Post, Aug. 18, 2019. Does Professor Johnson’s “remainder problem” prevent large-capacity magazine bans from being effective?

2. *Ammunition control?* Do Professor Johnson’s arguments that “supply-side” control of guns is impracticable in America apply equally well to controls on ammunition? Guns are easily hidden and can be used for generations with minimal maintenance. Quality ammunition will also last for decades, but unlike firearms, ammunition is depleted by usage. Could prohibitory ammunition controls eventually render guns useless and undermine the strong shooting culture in a society like America? Or is supply of ammunition held by citizens sufficient to supply a black market for the foreseeable future? Note that some components of ammunition, such as brass cases and lead bullets, are fairly easy to replicate at home, but chemical primers and smokeless gunpowder are not (though the older, “blackpowder” gunpowder can be made at home). Further reading: Mark A. Tallman, *Ghost Guns: Hobbyists, Hackers, and the Homemade Weapons Revolution* (2020).

25. [The original text, written before *McDonald v. City of Chicago* (Ch. 11.B) was handed down, read “. . . fails to incorporate an individual right. . . .”—Eds.]

3. *Temporary shortages of ammunition and primers.* During the run-up to the 2008 election, and for quite a while afterward, many gun owners were concerned that the new President would be as aggressively anti-gun as President William Jefferson Clinton, or even more so. As a U.S. Senator and Illinois State Senator, Barack Obama had a long record of voting for prohibitory and confiscatory legislation. See David B. Kopel, *FactCheck Flubs Obama Gun Fact Check*, Volokh Conspiracy, Sept. 23, 2008. Having won reelection in November 2012, President Obama began a major campaign for firearm restrictions in December, after the Newtown, Connecticut, murders. There was a massive increase in gun sales, and an even larger increase in ammunition sales, which resulted in many stores running out of popular calibers of ammunition.

During these periods the worst shortage of all, from the ordinary buyer's viewpoint, was the acute shortage of *primers*, which were apparently being bought up in tremendous quantities for keeping as long-term reserves. As discussed in online Chapter 20, home manufacture of ammunition ("reloading" or "handloading") is very common, and not particularly difficult. But the primer caps used in modern metallic cartridges cannot easily be made at home.

4. Would prohibition of firearms be easier or harder to accomplish than drug or alcohol prohibition? If we accept the many secondary harms of drug prohibition, why not gun prohibition?

5. *Defiance.* Noncompliance with restrictive gun laws by both law enforcement officials and citizens exists in many jurisdictions in the United States. See, e.g., J.D. Tuccille, *Popular Defiance Will Kneecap Gun Laws in New Mexico, As It Has in Other States*, Reason, Mar. 4, 2019; Jon Caldara, *To Boulder's Anti-Gun Bigots, I Will Not Comply with Your Hate Law*, Denver Post, Apr. 13, 2018. There is a growing movement to establish "Second Amendment" sanctuaries where such laws are not enforced, similar to sanctuary cities or states where federal immigration laws are not enforced, including Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, New Mexico, New Jersey, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington state. See, e.g., Kerry Pickett, *Sheriffs May Go to Jail to Protect Second Amendment Sanctuaries, Kentucky Congressman Says*, Washington Examiner, Jan. 2, 2020; Daniel Trotta, *Defiant U.S. Sheriffs Push Gun Sanctuaries, Imitating Liberals on Immigration*, Reuters, Mar. 4, 2019; Andrea Diaz & Marlena Baldacci, *Sanctuary Counties to Protect Gun Owners from New Laws*, CNN, May 8, 2018. In Colorado, more than half the state's counties have declared themselves "Second Amendment sanctuaries." Erin Powell, *These Colorado Counties Have Declared Themselves "2nd Amendment Sanctuaries" as Red Flag Bill Progresses*, 9News.com, Apr. 10, 2019. More than 100 counties and municipalities in Virginia became Second Amendment sanctuaries after lawmakers proposed strict gun control laws. Associated Press, *In Virginia and Elsewhere 2nd Amendment "Sanctuary" Movement Aims to Defy New Gun Laws*, Los Angeles Times, Dec. 21, 2019. See Ch. 9.B.c.3. Defiance of gun laws exists internationally, with two recent examples being Australia and New Zealand. See J.D. Tuccille, *Noncompliance Kneecaps New Zealand's Gun Control Scheme*, Reason, July 8, 2019; Calla Wahlquist, *Australian Gun Control Audit Finds States Failed to Fully Comply with 1996 Agreement*, The Guardian, Oct. 4, 2017. See Section C.6.

6. Consider the following moral questions: What would you do if new, severe gun control laws were enacted in your jurisdiction, and you then learned that a friend or family member was keeping a secret cache of prohibited weapons and

ammunition? What actions would you be willing to take to help him or her? Or would you take actions to ensure that he or she were apprehended and punished? Or would you just keep quiet about the whole thing? Would your answer vary depending on *why* your friend or family member had chosen to keep the illegal weapons? If *you* owned the banned weapons, would you comply with the law?

7. If there were a magical way to get rid of all guns, would the world be better off? Would all the world then be more like low-crime Japan? *See* Section C.7. Or would we then live in a world where, as in the Dark Ages, the physically strong could always have their way with the weak? *See* David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *A World Without Guns*, Nat'l Rev. Online, Dec. 5, 2001.

8. Does the statistic in the U.S. Department of Justice's report in note 67 of Professor Johnson's article that there are 2 million illegal guns in New York City seem reasonable given that New York City has a population of about 8.25 million?

EXERCISE: DEVELOPING FIREARMS POLICY

In cooperation with your classmates, and drawing on the studies above, predict the likely effects (on crime, gun deaths, civic freedom, and other important variables) of some or all of the following proposals for new laws or regulations in the United States:

- A national ban of semi-automatic handguns.
- A ban of semi-automatic rifles that look like military guns.
- A ban of magazines holding more than ten rounds of ammunition.
- A policy that limits firearms purchasers to one gun per month.
- Limiting ammunitions purchasers to 500 rounds of ammunition per month.
- A ban of *all* semi-automatic firearms.
- Universal registration of firearms.

After you have developed and debated these specific issues, try to develop a comprehensive federal firearms policy agenda, based on the lessons from other countries and the limitations that you believe constrain policy in the United States.

C. *GUN CONTROL AND GUN RIGHTS IN SELECTED NATIONS*

This Part examines firearms law and policy issues in several nations. It is not a comprehensive analysis; a thorough examination of any particular country would require its own chapter. Some of the country studies are broad, while others focus on a single topic. The purpose is to show the variety of materials that are available, and the some of the topics that are currently of interest to scholars. For students or professors writing research papers, country studies of arms laws and history are wide-open topics. To that end, for readers interested in particular countries, the Notes at the end of some Sections list leading books and articles for further reading.

This Part begins with the United Kingdom, the source of much American law, and then Switzerland, whose vibrant militia system was admired by the Founders and feared by the Nazis. Next come Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela, followed by Australia, Japan, China, and Thailand, and finally, the African nations of Kenya and South Africa. The Notes & Questions following the above nations sometimes discuss other nations in the region.

Part D closes the chapter with an in-depth look at Europe and the world over the long historical term. The Part includes an analysis of homicide trends in Europe over the last eight centuries, an essay contrasting U.S. and European homicide rates when murder by government is considered, and a detailed study of the most murderous regime in global history, that of China's Mao Zedong 1949-76. Part D includes case studies of armed resistance to genocide by Armenians and other Christians in the Ottoman Empire during World War I, by Jews in Europe during World War II, and by Tibetan Buddhists and Muslims against Chinese invaders in the 1950s and 1960s.

1. *United Kingdom*

The earlier firearms law history of the United Kingdom is the subject of Chapters 2 and online 22 (in more detail). In modern British law, a “firearm” means a handgun or a rifle, but not a shotgun. Throughout this chapter, we use “firearm” in the American sense, to encompass shotguns, rifles, and handguns.

David B. Kopel

United Kingdom — History of Gun Laws Since 1900

in 3 Guns in American Society: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, Culture, and the Law 842 (Gregg Lee Carter ed., 2d ed. 2012) (revised for this work)

Gun laws in the United Kingdom are among the most severe in the democratic world. From having essentially no gun controls at the start of the twentieth century, the United Kingdom moved to near prohibition by the end of the century.

In 1900, the official attitude about guns was summed up by Prime Minister Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, the Marquess of Salisbury, who said he would “laud the day when there is a rifle in every cottage in England.” Led by the Duke of Norfolk and the mayors of London and of Liverpool, a number of gentlemen formed a cooperative association that year to promote the creation of rifle clubs for working men. The Prime Minister and the rest of the aristocracy viewed the widespread ownership of rifles by the working classes as an asset to national security.

Although Great Britain entered the twentieth century with essentially no gun laws, pressure began to build for change. As revolvers were becoming less expensive and better, concern arose regarding the increase in firepower available to the public. Low-cost guns were, in some eyes, associated with hated minority groups, particularly Irish supporters of independence.

The Pistols Act of 1903 forbade pistol sales to minors and felons and dictated that sales be made only to buyers with a gun license. The gun license could be obtained at the post office, the only requirement being payment of a fee. Firearms suicides fell, but the decline was more than matched by an increase in suicide by poisons and knives. The bill defined pistols as guns having a barrel of nine inches or less, and thus pistols manufactured by Webley or Hammerli with ten inch barrels were soon popular.

The early years of the twentieth century saw an increasingly bitter series of confrontations between capital and labor throughout the English-speaking world. Tensions were especially high around the 1910 coronation of George V. After the 1911 “Siege of Sidney Street” — the culmination of a confrontation with three anarchists — Parliament voted against proposed gun controls.

After “The Great War” broke out in August 1914, the British government began assuming “emergency” powers for itself. “Defense of the Realm Regulations” required a license to buy pistols, rifles, or ammunition at retail.

When the war ended in November 1918, the government worried about what would happen when gun controls expired. A secret government committee on arms traffic warned of danger from two sources: the “savage or semi-civilized tribesmen in outlying parts of the British Empire” who might obtain surplus war arms, and “the anarchist or ‘intellectual’ malcontent of the great cities, whose weapon is the bomb and the automatic pistol.”

At a Cabinet meeting on January 17, 1919, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff raised the threat of “Red Revolution and blood and war at home and abroad.” The Minister of Transport, Sir Eric Geddes, predicted “a revolutionary outbreak in Glasgow, Liverpool or London in the early spring, when a definite attempt may be made to seize the reins of government.” “It is not inconceivable,” Geddes warned, “that a dramatic and successful coup d’etat in some large center of population might win the support of the unthinking mass of labour.” Using the Irish gun licensing system as a model,²⁶ the Cabinet made plans to disarm enemies of the state and to prepare arms for distribution “to friends of the Government.”

However, the Home Secretary presented the government’s 1920 Firearms Act to Parliament as strictly a measure “to prevent criminals and persons of that description from being able to have revolvers and to use them.” In fact, the problem of criminal, non-political misuse of firearms remained minuscule.

The Firearms Act banned CS²⁷ self-defense spray canisters and allowed Britons to possess pistols and rifles only if they could show a “good reason” for obtaining a police permit. Shotguns and airguns, which were perceived as “sporting” weapons, remained exempt from control.

Britons who had formerly enjoyed a *right* to have arms, [see Chs. 2.H.4, 22.H.4] were now allowed to possess pistols and rifles only if they proved they had “good

26. [English rule in Ireland had always been concerned with disarming the majority Catholic population. During the nineteenth century, the “Penal Laws,” which explicitly disarmed Catholics, were replaced with a facially neutral licensing system aimed at allowing only politically correct persons to possess arms. See Chs. 2.J.2, 22.J.2. — Eds.]

27. [The most common form of “tear gas” used for riot control. — Eds.]

reason.” In the early years of the Firearms Act, the law was enforced moderately in England, Wales, and Scotland. A Firearms Certificate for possession of rifles or handguns was readily obtainable. Wanting to possess a firearm for self-defense was considered a “good reason.” Not so in Ireland, where revolutionary agitators were demanding independence from British rule. As for ordinary firearms crime—the pretext for the Firearms Act—it remained minimal.

In 1934, short-barreled shotguns and fully automatic firearms were outlawed. Although there had been no instance of a machine gun being misused in Britain, the government pointed to misuse of such guns in the United States, where organized crime gangs with machine guns were notorious. The government also argued that there was no need for anyone (other than the government) to have such guns.

The situation changed during World War II (1939-45). As discussed in Chapter 8.F.2., there was much concern about a Nazi invasion. At first, the Home Guard was pathetically under-armed. But during the war, British figured out how to make low-cost, yet sturdy, machine guns from stamped metal. The Sten Guns were carbines (short rifles) and they were distributed by the hundreds of thousands to the Home Guard, and to British soldiers.

Before the war, the Thompson machine gun couldn't be manufactured in the United Kingdom. But during the war, large numbers of American-made Thompsons were shipped to Britain, where they were dubbed “tommie guns,” since “Tommy” is the nickname for a British soldier.

As World War II ended, everything was rounded up. The Sten guns were taken from the Home Guard, as were the Home Guard arms that had been donated by American civilians. Troop ships returning to England were searched for souvenir or captured rifles, and men caught attempting to bring firearms home were punished. Even so, large quantities of firearms slipped into Britain, where many of them remain to this day in attics and under floorboards.

In 1946 the Home Secretary²⁸ announced that self-defense would no longer be considered a good reason for being granted a Firearms Certificate.

In 1965, Parliament suspended the death penalty. The large majority of public opinion was on the other side, and their opposition came to a head after illegal handguns were used to murder three policemen at Shepherd's Bush (a district in west London). In 1966, Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, an ardent opponent of capital punishment, successfully diverted public enthusiasm for the death penalty by initiating shotgun control legislation. Heretofore, the gun control laws had only applied to rifles and handguns (which had a military connotation) but not to shotguns (which were seen as bird-hunting tools). A few weeks before Shepherd's Bush, Jenkins had told Parliament that after consulting with the Chief Constables and the Home Office, he had concluded that shotgun controls were not worth the trouble.

Jenkins' new proposals, embodied in the 1967 Criminal Justice Act, established a permissive licensing system for shotguns. To possess a shotgun, an individual needed a Shotgun Certificate. A person could only be denied a Certificate if there were evidence that his “possession of a shotgun would endanger public

28. [A Cabinet Minister with responsibility for a wide range of domestic issues.—Eds.]

safety.” In contrast, a Firearms Certificate (for rifles and pistols) had always operated on the presumption that the owner had to prove need.

A Shotgun Certificate allowed unlimited acquisition of shotguns, with no registration. Firearms Certificates had to be amended every time a new rifle or pistol was acquired—if the police decided to grant permission for the new acquisition. An applicant for a Shotgun Certificate was required to supply a countersignatory, a person who would attest to the accuracy of the information in the application. During an investigation period, which might last several weeks, the police might visit the applicant’s home. In the first decades of the system, about 98 percent of all applications were granted.

The Criminal Justice Act also abolished the requirement of unanimous jury verdicts in criminal trials and imposed various restrictions on the press and on trial procedures.

Prime Minister Edward Heath’s government considered sweeping new controls in a 1973 Green Paper,²⁹ but the proposal was rejected due to a strong political response against it. Over the next several decades, however, almost all of the Green Paper agenda became law.

On the morning of August 19, 1987, a licensed gun owner named Michael Ryan dressed up like Rambo and shot 16 people and himself in the market town of Hungerford. Among his weapons was a Chinese semi-automatic rifle.

Parliament moved to restrict all types of firearms. Semi-automatic centerfire rifles and shotguns were confiscated. Pump-action rifles are banned as well, since it was argued that these guns could be substituted for semi-automatics.

The 1988 Firearms Act made Shotgun Certificates much more difficult to obtain. The statutory change merely said that Certificate could be denied if the applicant did not have “a good reason.” Police practice immediately enforced this standard by requiring applicants to prove that they did have a good reason. It was up to the police to decide if a reason was good enough. For example, wanting to retain a family heirloom was not considered a good reason. In practice, only active participation in the shooting sports, or pest control for farming would satisfy the police. The number of Shotgun Certificate holders plunged.

In addition, shotguns that can hold more than two shells at once now require a Firearms Certificate, the same as rifles and handguns. All shotguns must now be registered. Shotgun sales between private parties must be reported to the police. (Still, police permission is not required for additional acquisitions.) Buyers of shot shells must produce a Shotgun Certificate.

Home Secretary Douglas Hurd later admitted that the government prepared the provisions of the 1988 Firearms Act long before Hungerford and had been waiting for the right moment to introduce them.

In March 1996, Thomas Hamilton, a licensed handgun owner who retained his license even though the police had investigated him seven times as a pederast and knew him to be mentally unstable, used handguns to murder 17 teachers and children at a preschool in Dunblane, Scotland.

29. [A preliminary research report on government policy. A White Paper is a more formal and final statement of policy.—Eds.]

The Tory government, headed by John Major, convened a Dunblane Enquiry Commission. The Commission advised various forms of tightening the gun laws but did not recommend banning all handguns. Prime Minister John Major, though, insisted on a handgun ban. He allowed an exception for single-shot .22 handguns that were stored at licensed shooting ranges. The new gun laws went into effect in February 1997.

A few months later, Labour Party leader Tony Blair was swept into office in a landslide. One of his first acts was to complete the handgun ban, by removing the exemption for single-shot .22s. Since 1920, all lawful acquisitions of handguns in Great Britain have been registered with the government, so handgun owners had little choice but to surrender their guns, in exchange for payment according to a government schedule.

Subsequent legislation has increasingly regulated air guns. Some air guns now require a Firearms Certificate. Firearms Act 1968 section 1(3)(b) (as amended). In Scotland, most airguns require an Air Weapons License. [Air Weapons and Licensing \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#).

The most important gun controls in the U.K., however, are not the statutes enacted by Parliament. Rather, the gun controls which have helped reduce the nation's rate of lawful gun ownership to extremely low levels are the controls which are invented and enforced by the British police. The fact that gun owners need to obtain a license from the police has given the police enormous opportunities to make their own gun controls.

For example, starting in 1936, the British police began adding a requirement to Firearms Certificates requiring that the guns be stored securely. As shotguns were not licensed, there was no such requirement for them. Today, British statutory law merely mandates that guns be stored in "a secure place."

But when a person seeks to obtain or renew a gun license, in most jurisdictions the British police send a pair of officers to the person's home, to inspect the form of storage. Often, a pair of expensive safes (one for the guns, one for the ammunition) is considered the only acceptable form of storage. Police standards change from time to time, regarding what kinds of safes and supplementary electronic security systems are mandated. In many districts, an acceptable safe is one that can withstand a half-hour attack by a burglar who arrives with a full set of safe-opening tools, and who even has time to take a short rest if his first efforts to pry open the safe do not succeed. The police have no legal authority to require such home inspections, nor does the law specify that a hardened safe is the only acceptable form of storage. But if a homeowner refuses the police entry or refuses to buy the types of safe demanded by the police, the certificate application or renewal will be denied.

One effect of the heavy security costs is to reduce the ability of middle-income or poor people to legally own guns. Of course, the requirement that guns be locked in safes makes it nearly impossible for the gun to be used for home protection.

The police have invented many other conditions that they impose on gun license applicants. A certificate for rifle possession often includes "territorial conditions" specifying exactly where the person may hunt. While it is not legally necessary for shooters to have written permission to hunt on a particular piece of land, police have been stopping shooters, demanding written proof, and threatening to

confiscate guns from persons who cannot produce the proof. The police also have, without legal authority, required applicants for shotguns capable of holding more than two shells to prove a special need for the gun. Without legal authority, some police have begun to phase out firearms collections by refusing new applications.

If a policeman has a personal interest in the shooting sports, that interest will generally disqualify him from being assigned to any role in the police gun licensing program. Applicants may appeal police denials of permit applications, but the courts are generally deferential to police decisions. Hearsay evidence is admissible against the applicant. An appellant does not have a right to present evidence on his own behalf.

By police estimates, the stockpile of illegal guns in the U.K. is over three million. Gun crime rates have risen steadily, and some police now call lower-class Manchester “Gunchester.” A black market supplies young criminals with Beretta sub-machine guns, Luger pistols, and many other weapons.

One of the most important differences between American and British law is in regards to self-defense. Britain’s 1967 Criminal Justice Act made it illegal to use a firearm against a violent home intruder—whereas firearms are used (usually with only a threat) against American burglars and other home invaders many thousands of times a year. In a highly-publicized case in 2000, an older man named Tony Martin, who had been repeatedly burglarized, and had received no meaningful assistance from the police, shot a pair of career burglars who had broken into his home. The man was sentenced to life in prison, although paroled after serving part of the sentence.

Less-than-lethal defensive weapons have been outlawed. These include chemical defense sprays, electric stun devices, and martial arts gear. Knife carrying was made presumptively illegal in 1996. Before that, carrying even a pen-knife had been illegal if it were intended for use in self-defense, which legally made the knife into an “offensive weapon.”

According to a [British police website](#), it is illegal to carry any “product which is made or adapted to cause a person injury.” Britons are allowed, for example, to carry colored dye spray to mark an attacker, but if they spray the dye in the attacker’s eyes, it “would become an offensive weapon because it would be used in a way that was intended to cause injury.”

“Hot” burglaries (against an occupied home) comprise only about a quarter of American burglaries, but over half of British burglaries. David B. Kopel, *Lawyers, Guns, and Burglars*, 43 *Ariz. L. Rev.* 345 (2001). The *Daily Telegraph* (June 29, 2000) argues that “the main reason for a much lower burglary rate in America is householders’ propensity to shoot intruders. They do so without fear of being dragged before courts and jailed for life.”

Gun crime rates, however, remain substantially lower in the U.K. than in the United States, even though they are much higher than they were in the nineteenth century or most of the twentieth.

Following years of public pressure, the government of the U.K. in July 2008 amended the self-defense law to clarify and protect some self-defense rights for the victims of home invasions. Criminal Justice and Immigration Act, 2008, c. 4, § 76(7) (U.K.). Reasonable use of the force is to be judged according to the circumstances as the defender perceived them; and must consider:

- (a) that a person acting for a legitimate purpose may not be able to weigh to a nicety the exact measure of any necessary action; and

- (b) that evidence of a person's having only done what the person honestly and instinctively thought was necessary for a legitimate purpose constitutes strong evidence that only reasonable action was taken by that person for that purpose.

Notwithstanding the easing of self-defense laws, the general trend on arms laws continues towards ever-greater severity. One reason is terrorist attacks perpetrated by exploding bombs, by throwing caustic liquids, or other means. A second problem is the very high levels of knife crime that have arisen in the twenty-first century, much of it related to gangs. See David B. Kopel & Vincent Harinam, *Britain's Failed Weapons-Control Laws Show Why the Second Amendment Matters*, Nat'l Rev. Online, Aug. 28, 2018. In 2016, the government banned the sale of so-called zombie knives—horror-film-inspired blades that are marketed as collectors' items.

In 2019, a new **Offensive Weapons Act** became law. Since semiautomatic rifles had already been prohibited, the new statute outlawed attachments to other rifles that increase the rifle's rate of fire. A "buyback" system will compensate owners for the property that they must surrender. The sale of corrosive substances to persons under 18 was prohibited, and possession of such a substance by anyone in a public place is unlawful.

Mail-order vendors who ship bladed products to residential addresses must now verify the age of the buyer. A new system of "**knife crime prevention orders**" has been introduced. The government may seek an *ex parte* order to prohibit an individual from possessing knives. If the order is issued, the individual will later have an opportunity to contest the order.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. **CQ:** Several former British colonies are covered in this Chapter: Australia (Section C.6), Burma (Section C.9 Note 3), Canada (Section C.3), Ghana (Section A.5), Kenya (Section C.10), and South Africa (Section C.11). All of them once had arms laws imposed by the British Empire. In many British colonies, laws were modeled on the Firearms Act 1920, with some changes to increase stringency. Even in post-colonial times, the British colonial law is often the foundation of some nations' arms laws. As you read the stories of other countries, consider how they have followed or not followed the British model.

2. "*Carrying an offensive weapon.*" Britain's 1953 Prevention of Crime Act criminalizes the carrying of an "offensive weapon" in any public place unless the defendant can show that he had "lawful authority or excuse." "Offensive weapon" is broadly defined to include not only "any article made or adapted for use in causing injury to the person," but also "any article . . . intended by the person having it with him for such use." Thus any item designed as a weapon is illegal to carry, as is any nonweapon if the person carrying it intends to use it as a weapon. Note, too, that despite the statute's title, the statute does not distinguish between weapons carried for defense and those carried for offense.

In contrast, many American jurisdictions criminalize carrying weapons with unlawful intent, but do not deem carrying for *self-defense* unlawful, even though defensive use often does "caus[e] injury" to another.

For example, Oklahoma prohibits “carr[ying] or wear[ing] any deadly weapons or dangerous instrument whatsoever with the intent or for the avowed purpose of *unlawfully* injuring another person. . . .” 21 Okla. Stat. 1278 (2012) (emphasis added). The Oklahoma statute adds that “[t]he mere possession of . . . a weapon or dangerous instrument, without more, . . . shall not be sufficient to establish intent as required by this section.” *Id.*

Is this approach better or worse than Great Britain’s? Should the legality of carrying weapons (or items usable as weapons) turn on the carrier’s intent? Is intent too subjective or difficult to discern? Do intent-based prohibitions on carrying open the door to invidious discrimination by the law enforcement officials that must apply them?

Can one even distinguish between “offensive” and “defensive” weapons? If so, should objective traits be used to distinguish them?

3. As the 2008 self-defense law states, “a person acting for a legitimate purpose may not be able to weigh to a nicety the exact measure of any necessary action.”

CQ: The same point has been made by the U.S. Supreme Court, in a famous line by Justice Holmes: “Detached reflection cannot be demanded in the presence of an uplifted knife.” *Brown v. United States*, 256 U.S. 335, 343 (1921); Ch. 7J.

4. *Knives*. Knife control is nothing new in England. **CQ:** In 1388, King Richard II banned servants and laborers from carrying knives in public, except when accompanied by their masters. To his frustration, the statute was often ignored. Chs. 2.F.2, 22.F.2.

5. *Home storage*. How much control should government impose on the ways people store lawfully owned guns at home? Under *Heller* (Ch. 11.A), government cannot require guns in the homes to be locked up at all times, but some safe storage requirements have been ruled constitutional. *See* Chs. 10.D.3, 16.A note 3. Which aspects, if any, of the British system of extensive government supervision of home storage do you think would make sense to adopt in your jurisdiction?

6. *Which is worse: rare lethal violence or frequent nonlethal violence?* By most measures, the United Kingdom today has a much higher rate of violent crime than the United States. *See, e.g.,* James Slack, *The Most Violent Country in Europe: Britain Is Also Worse than South Africa and U.S.*, Daily Mail, July 2, 2009 (U.K.) (British annual violent crime rate of over 2,000 per 100,000 inhabitants is more than four times greater than United States). On the other hand, the homicide rate in the United Kingdom is lower than that in the United States; the official U.S. rate is around 4-6 per 100,000 population per year, whereas the U.K. rate is around 1-2 per 100,000 population.

The gap is smaller, however, than the official numbers suggest. The U.S. rate is based on initial reports of homicides and includes lawful self-defense killings (about 7-13 percent of the total). Gary Kleck, *Point Blank: Guns and Violence in America* 114 (2005). The England and Wales rate is based only on final dispositions, so that an unsolved murder, or a murder that is pleaded down to a lesser offense, is not counted as a homicide. In addition, multiple murders by one murderer are counted as only a single homicide for Scottish statistics. *See* David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *The Gold Standard of Gun Control*, 2 J.L., Econ. & Pol’y 417 (2006).

Even so, it would be fair to say that the actual U.K. homicide rate is lower than in the United States. Many factors can contribute to such a difference. But it is at

least plausible that a higher rate of ownership of lethal weapons among citizens will tend to make violent encounters more costly (because more lethal), but therefore also rarer. If going from a low-gun to a high-gun-owning society does involve a trade-off of this kind, is it a worthwhile trade? To put it somewhat crudely, if increasing the number of lawfully owned guns means a few more murders a year, but many fewer “ordinary” assaults and muggings, is that a net social benefit? What variables (e.g., who gets shot, who doesn’t get mugged or raped) are important?

7. *The slippery slope in action?* For an extended account of the rise of British gun control in the twentieth century, see Joseph E. Olson & David B. Kopel, *All the Way Down the Slippery Slope: Gun Prohibition in England and Some Lessons for Civil Liberties in America*, 22 *Hamline L. Rev.* 399 (1999). Professors Olson and Kopel argue that the near-elimination of the right to arms in Britain is an instructive example that “slippery slopes”—claims that allowing small increases in regulation will tend to lead to greater and greater infringements until the right is abrogated—are sometimes a realistic fear.

8. Over half of firearms crimes in England and Wales are perpetrated with “unidentified, imitation, reactivated or other firearms.” At present, little is known about the “criminal armourers” who make these guns. Helen Williamson, *Criminal Armourers and Illegal Firearm Supply in England and Wales*, 15 *Papers from the British Criminology Conference* 93 (2015).

9. *Further reading:* Richard Law & Peter Brooksmith, *Does the Trigger Pull the Finger: The Uses, Abuses, and Rational Reform of Firearms Laws in the United Kingdom* (2011) (arguing for relaxation of U.K. laws); Joyce Malcolm, *Guns and Violence: The English Experience* (2004) (surveying U.K. gun law developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries); Peter Squires, *Gun Culture or Gun Control: Firearms, Violence and Society* (2001) (warning against the spread of an American-style gun culture in the U.K.); David B. Kopel, *Gun Control in Great Britain: Saving Lives or Constricting Liberty?* (1992) (according to the author, perhaps both); Colin Greenwood, *Firearms Control: A Study of Armed Crime and Firearms Control in England and Wales* (1971) (criticizing expansion of U.K. gun controls over the previous half-century).

10. The following websites are helpful for researching British arms laws.

- [British Shooting Sports Council](#).
- Home Office, United Kingdom, [Guide on Firearms Licensing Law](#) (Apr. 2016).
- [Her Majesty’s Stationery Office](#) (text of laws of recent decades).

2. *Switzerland*

As of 1400, the arms cultures in England and Switzerland had many similarities. The people of both small nations had very high rates of personal arms ownership and proficiency. In England, the most common arm was the long bow, and in Switzerland it was the crossbow. In each nation, the bow was iconic, representing how the people maintained their independence against the armies of larger, powerful neighbors.

By the time of the American Revolution, mass expertise with arms had long since disappeared in England, but continued to thrive in Switzerland. The

American Founders greatly admired the Swiss militia, which helped inspire the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—the preference for a “well regulated militia” as “necessary for the security of a free state,” and the guarantee of “the right of the people to keep and bear arms.” Late in the nineteenth century, the American military sent observers to Switzerland in hopes of emulating the Swiss shooting culture. This was part of the background of the energetic efforts by the U.S. federal government during most of the twentieth century to promote civilian marksmanship. Ch. 8.B.2, 8.F.1.c.

Under the Swiss militia system, every male, when he turns 20, is issued a fully automatic military rifle and required to keep it at home along with 50 rounds. Universal service in the Militia Army is required. When a Swiss is no longer required to serve (age 50 for officers, 45 for others), he may keep his rifle (converted from automatic to semi-automatic) or his pistol (if he served as an officer).

The American Founders also admired Switzerland’s decentralized system of government. Switzerland is a confederation in which the federal government has strictly defined and limited powers, and the cantons, even more so than American states, have the main powers to legislate. The citizens often exercise direct democracy, in the form of the initiative and the referendum.

For centuries, the Swiss cantons had no restrictions on keeping and bearing arms, though every male was required to provide himself with arms for militia service. By the latter part of the twentieth century, some cantons required licenses to carry pistols, imposed fees for the acquisition of certain firearms (which could be evaded by buying them in other cantons), and enacted other restrictions—albeit never interfering with the ever-present shooting matches.

In other cantons—usually those with the lowest crime rates—one did not need a police permit for carrying a pistol or for buying a semi-automatic Kalashnikov rifle. A permit was necessary only for a nonmilitia machine gun. Suppressors were unrestricted. Indeed, the Swiss federal government sold to civilian collectors all manner of military surplus, including anti-aircraft guns, cannons, and machine guns.

In 1996, the Swiss people voted to allow the federal government to legislate concerning firearms, and to prohibit the cantons from regulating firearms. Some who favored more restrictions (as in other European countries) saw this as a way to pass gun control laws at the federal level; those who objected to restrictions in some cantons saw it as a way to preempt cantonal regulation, such as the former requirement in Geneva of a permit for an air gun.

The result was a federal firearms law that imposed certain restrictions but left virtually untouched the ability of citizens to possess Swiss military firearms and to participate in competitions all over the country.

The Federal Weapons Law of 1998 regulated the import, export, manufacture, trade, and certain types of possession of firearms. The right of buying, possessing, and carrying arms was guaranteed, with certain restrictions. The law did not apply to the police or to the Militia Army—of which most adult males are members.

The law forbade fully automatic arms and certain semi-automatics “derived” therefrom; but Swiss military rifles were excluded from this prohibition. The exclusion made the prohibition nearly meaningless. Further, collectors could obtain special permits for the “banned” arms, such as submachine guns and machine guns.

In purchasing a firearm from a licensed dealer, a permit was required for handguns and some long guns, but not for single-shot rifles, multi-barrel rifles, Swiss bolt-action military rifles, target rifles, or hunting rifles. Permits were to be granted to all applicants at least 18 years old and with no disqualifying criminal record. Authorities could not keep any registry of firearms owners. Private persons could freely buy and sell firearms without restriction, provided that they retained a written record, and that the seller believed the purchaser is not criminally disqualified.

A permit was already required for manufacturing and dealing in firearms, but now there were more regulations. Storage regulations were introduced for both shops and individuals. During the Cold War, the government required every house to include a bomb shelter, which today often provide safe storage for large collections of firearms (and double as wine cellars).

Criminal penalties were dependent on intent. Willfully committing an offense could be punishable by incarceration for up to five years, but failure to comply through neglect, or without intent, might result in a fine or no punishment at all.

Before 1998, about half the cantons allowed all law-abiding citizens to carry handguns for protection in public; in some cases, an easily obtainable permit was needed. The new federal law made permits necessary everywhere, and permits are issued restrictively. Still, one can freely carry a handgun or rifle to shooting ranges, which are common.

Proposed restrictions on peaceable firearm possession and use are opposed by the Militia Army; by shooting organizations, such as the Swiss Shooting Federation; and by the arms-rights group ProTell, named after national hero William Tell. Their allies are the political parties that support free trade, federalism, limited government, noninterventionism, and remaining independent from international organizations such as the European Union or United Nations.

Supporters of firearm restrictions tend to be socialists and leftists—including those who wish to abolish the Militia Army, to strengthen the central government to be more like Germany, and to join the European Union. The Swiss Socialist Party had similar ideas at the beginning of Hitler's rise. But the Swiss socialists soon recognized the danger, and in 1942—when Switzerland was completely surrounded by Axis dictatorships—the Socialist Party resolved that “the Swiss should never disarm, even in peacetime.”

As described in online Chapter 18.B, Switzerland is part of the Schengen travel zone in Europe, so that people may travel to and from Switzerland without border checks (if they are coming from or going to other Schengen nations). In order to remain in the Schengen zone, Switzerland has been required to comply with the 2016 European Firearms Directive. The economic and convenience cost of being removed from Schengen would have been high. A secondary effect of being removed from Schengen would also have removed Switzerland from the Dublin Regulation, which provides asylum rules in the Schengen zone. Under the Dublin Regulation, asylum seekers can only apply to one Schengen nation for protection. Without the Dublin Regulation, Switzerland would be at risk of being flooded with asylum seekers who had already been rejected by a Schengen nation.

So in May 2019, 64 percent of Swiss voters approved new laws to bring Switzerland into compliance with the European Firearms Directive. The Directive includes certain exceptions for Switzerland, allowing for the continuation of current militia

practices.³⁰ Owners of semi-automatic rifles must now have regular training. Current owners may keep them,³¹ but must register them within three years. Swiss who want to purchase firearms with magazines over ten rounds for target shooting may continue to do so but will need an “exemption permit.” Swiss Federal Police, *Häufige Fragen betreffend die Anpassungen im Waffenrecht ab dem 15.8.19*.³² To obtain such a permit, owners of these guns will need to prove that they are members of a shooting club or that they have gone target shooting at least five times in the previous five years. *Id.*³³ See generally Urs Geiser, *Gun Lobby Misses Its Target as Swiss Voters Approve Tougher Gun Control*, SWI swissinfo.ch, May 19, 2019; George Mills, *What You Need to Know About Switzerland’s Crucial Gun Control Referendum*, TheLocal.ch, May 19, 2019.

30. Commonly known as the Swiss Militiamen exemption, Article 6 of the EU Firearms Directive provides: “As regards firearms classified in point 6 of category A, Member States applying a military system based on general conscription and having in place over the last 50 years a system of transfer of military firearms to persons leaving the army after fulfilling their military duties may grant to those persons, in their capacity as a target shooter, an authorisation to keep one firearm used during the mandatory military period. The relevant public authority shall transform those firearms into semi-automatic firearms and shall periodically check that the persons using such firearms do not represent a risk to public security. The provisions set out in points (a), (b) and (c) of the first subparagraph shall apply.”

31. Article 6, § 6 of the EU [Firearms Directive](#) provides an exemption for “target shooters to acquire and possess semi-automatic firearms classified in point 6 or 7 of category A.” These firearms include:

6. Automatic firearms which have been converted into semi-automatic firearms, without prejudice to Article 7(4a).

7. Any of the following centre-fire semi-automatic firearms:

(a) short firearms which allow the firing of more than 21 rounds without reloading, if:
(i) a loading device with a capacity exceeding 20 rounds is part of that firearm; or

(ii) a detachable loading device with a capacity exceeding 20 rounds is inserted into it;

(b) long firearms which allow the firing of more than 11 rounds without reloading, if:

(i) a loading device with a capacity exceeding 10 rounds is part of that firearm; or

(ii) a detachable loading device with a capacity exceeding 10 rounds is inserted into it.

32. “I have one of the weapons at home, which are new to acquire with an exception. What should I do?”

You can keep this weapon. If your weapon is listed in a cantonal arms register, you do not have to do anything. If this is not the case, you must notify the Cantonal Gun Bureau of possession of this weapon within three years. There are no costs for reporting to the cantonal arms office.” (originally in German, translated to English by Google).

33. “As a sports shooter, you can continue to purchase such weapons. You must meet the eligibility requirements for acquisition of arms under applicable law (see question 3) and, in addition, one of the following two conditions to obtain an exemption for the weapons:

Either you are a member of a shooting club or

They prove to the competent cantonal authority that they regularly use their firearm for sporting shooting. As a rule, five sporting shooting event are necessary within five years.”

According to Article 17 of the [European Firearms Directive](#), the Directive is supposed to be reassessed every five years. This has raised concerns among some Swiss about what additional controls may be imposed in the future.

The next essay summarizes the role of the Swiss Militia Army in World War II, when Switzerland successfully deterred invasion by the Third Reich.

Stephen P. Halbrook

Remarks at the Introduction of His Book, *Target Switzerland: Swiss Armed Neutrality in World War II*

University Club, New York, N.Y. (July 16, 1998), and Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C. (July 21, 1998)

Americans have been known to confuse the Swiss flag—white cross, red background—with the Red Cross banner, which is the opposite. In World War II, Swiss fighter planes, painted with the Swiss flag, attempted to intercept all foreign planes in Swiss air space and to order them to land. An American pilot, asked whether he thought about firing on the fighters which instructed him to land, responded: “I would never fire on a Red Cross plane!”

Almost 1700 American pilots found refuge in Switzerland after their planes were damaged in bombing raids over Germany. However, the Nazis were not amused by Switzerland’s armed neutrality. Hitler was livid that the Swiss used fighters bought from Germany to shoot down 11 German Luftwaffe planes; the saboteurs he sent to blow up Swiss airfields were captured (they aroused suspicion because they were all dressed in the same odd outfits!).

Over 200 years ago, America’s Founding Fathers like Patrick Henry and John Adams were inspired by the example of Switzerland—a democracy in a sea of monarchical despotism. Having devoted much of my career to American constitutional law, publishing books and arguing in the Supreme Court, I was intrigued to know how the Swiss institutions which influenced our Constitution proved their worthiness in the darkest years of European history: Hitler’s Third Reich, 1933-45.

In 1940, after the rest of central Europe collapsed before the German army, Swiss Commander in Chief Henri Guisan assembled his officers at the Rotli meadow near the Lake of Lucerne. He reminded them that, at this sacred spot, in the year 1291, the Swiss Confederation was born as an alliance against despotism. Guisan admonished that the Swiss would always stand up to any invader. One has only to recall the medieval battle of Morgarten, where 1,400 Swiss peasants ambushed and defeated 20,000 Austrian knights.

In World War II, the Swiss had defenses no other country had. Let’s begin with the rifle in every home combined with the Alpine terrain. When the German Kaiser asked in 1912 what the quarter of a million Swiss militiamen would do if invaded by a half million German soldiers, a Swiss replied: shoot twice and go home. Switzerland also had a decentralized, direct democracy which could not be surrendered to a foreign enemy by a political élite. Some governments surrendered to Hitler without resistance based on the decision of a king or dictator; this was institutionally impossible in Switzerland. If an ordinary Swiss citizen was told that the Federal President—a relatively powerless official—had surrendered the country, the

citizen might not even know the president's name, and would have held any "surrender" order in contempt.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, the Swiss feared an invasion and began military preparations like no other European nation. On Hitler's 1938 *Anschluss* or annexation of Austria, the Swiss Parliament declared that the Swiss were prepared to defend themselves "to the last drop of their blood."

When the Fuehrer attacked Poland in 1939, Swiss General Guisan ordered the citizen army to resist any attack to the last cartridge. After Denmark and Norway fell in 1940, Guisan and the Federal Council gave the order to the populace: Aggressively attack invaders; act on your own initiative; regard any surrender broadcast or announcement as enemy propaganda; resist to the end. This was published as a message to the Swiss and a warning to the Germans; surrender was impossible, even if ordered by the government, for the prior order mandated that it be treated as an enemy lie.

When the Germany army, the Wehrmacht, attacked Belgium and Holland, it feigned preparations for attack through Switzerland. Like a giant movie set, divisions moved toward the Swiss border by day, only to sneak back again by night and repeat the ruse the next day. Both the Swiss and the French were tricked into thinking that concentrations of troops were massing to attack through Switzerland and into France. Swiss border troops nervously awaited an assault each time the clock approached the hour, for the Germans were punctual in launching attacks on the hour.

When France collapsed, detailed Nazi invasion plans with names like "Case Switzerland" and "Operation Tannenbaum" were prepared for the German General Staff. They only awaited the Fuehrer's nod.

Threatened with attack from German and Italian forces from all sides, General Guisan devised the strategy of a delaying stand at the border, and a concentration of Swiss forces in the rugged and impassable Alps. This chosen place of engagement was called the *Réduit national*, meaning a national fort within a fort. German tanks and planes, Panzers and Luftwaffe, would be ineffective there.

A fifth of the Swiss people, 850,000 out of the 4.2 million population, was under arms and mobilized. Most men were in the citizens army, and boys and old men with rifles constituted the Home Guard. Many women served in the civil defense and the anti-aircraft defense.

Nazi invasion plans for 1941 were postponed to devote all forces to Operation Barbarossa, the attack on Russia. The Swiss would have their turn in due time, Hitler said. Hitler banned the play *William Tell*. He called the Swiss "the most despicable and wretched people, mortal enemies of the new Germany." In the same breath he fumed that all Jews must be expelled from Europe. His plan to annihilate the Jews would have faced a special obstacle in Switzerland, where every Swiss Jew (like every other citizen) had a rifle in his home. In the heroic Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943, Jews demonstrated how genocide could be resisted with only a few pistols and rifles.³⁴ Hitler boasted that he would liquidate "the rubbish of small nations" and would be "the Butcher of the Swiss." But the dictator was more comfortable with liquidating unarmed peoples and was dissuaded from invading Switzerland. There was no Holocaust on Swiss soil.

34. [For more on the Warsaw ghetto, see David B. Kopel, *Armed Resistance to the Holocaust*, 19 J. on Firearms & Pub. Pol'y 144 (2007).—Eds.]

As a neutral, the Swiss represented American interests before the Axis powers, such as by inspecting German prison camps holding American POWs. When Vichy France was occupied, German soldiers with submachineguns took over the American embassy.³⁵ The Swiss minister, brandishing his Swiss army knife, drove them out.

A Nazi SS invasion plan, recommended for execution in 1944, warned the German general staff that the Swiss fighting spirit was high and shooting instruction good; German losses would be heavy, and a conquered Switzerland would require a strong occupation force. D-Day put the Nazi plan on hold, but new dangers threatened Switzerland as the Allies pushed the Nazis back. In 1944, the Wehrmacht's counter-offensive in the Ardennes, leading to the Battle of the Bulge, proved that the Nazi beast was still strong and full of surprises. The Swiss prepared for an attack from Germans retreating from Italy. The Swiss resolve remained high, for, as the US State Department declared, "no people in Europe are more profoundly attached to democratic principles than the Swiss."

Switzerland saved a half million refugees who came there in the war. Restrictive policies by government officials, often secret, were ignored by Swiss who helped refugees. Let it be remembered that Switzerland took in more Jewish refugees than the United States took in refugees of all kinds.

America's great journalist Walter Lippmann wrote that the Swiss proved their honor by surviving the dark days of 1940-41; they proved that diverse peoples and language groups can live peacefully together; they repudiated Nazism.³⁶ "It must never be forgotten," he wrote, "how the Swiss served the cause of freedom."

In the American Revolution, a Swiss leader wrote to Benjamin Franklin calling America and Switzerland the "Sister Republics." After two centuries of mutual respect, today a media frenzy falsely depicts the Swiss as Nazi collaborators.³⁷ It was

35. [As part of France's surrender agreement with Nazi Germany in June 1940, two-thirds of France was put under direct German military occupation. One-third of France, in the southeast, was allowed to exist as a nominally independent and neutral state. With a capital in the town of Vichy, the new government was fascist. Its leaders were Marshall Pétain (an elderly hero of World War I) and Pierre Laval (formerly a prime minister of the former French Third Republic in the 1930s). The Vichy government retained control of the French fleet and the French colonies. In November 1942, U.S. forces, in Operation Torch, began an invasion of the neutral Vichy French colonies of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. The plan was to drive the Axis powers out of Libya, which was an Italian colony. From there, they would have a base to invade southern Italy. One result of the invasion was that Germany did away with the Vichy regime, and the German army occupied all of France. German forces quickly moved into French North Africa, where they gave the Americans stiff resistance in Tunisia.—EDS.]

36. [The official languages of the Swiss are German, French, Italian, and Romansch (a descendant of Latin, but with German influence).—EDS.]

37. [Until not long ago, the Swiss banking system was designed for opacity. People from anywhere could deposit money and keep it secret from their home governments. This worked to the benefit of tax evaders, people subject to political persecution (including European Jews, and other victims of fascism or communism), and various bad actors, including German officials who stashed money in Swiss banks during the war.—EDS.]

the opposite. Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels called Switzerland “this stinking little state” and ranted that the Swiss press was “either bought or Jewish.” The Swiss bashing seen in the *New York Times* today could use a reality check by reference to the *Times* issues of the war period—such as a 1939 issue with a map showing Switzerland as a possible invasion route, or a 1942 issue calling Switzerland an “Oasis of Democracy.” Our new “Ugly Americanism” will never have the credibility of Winston Churchill, who observed near the end of the war: “Of all the neutrals Switzerland has the greatest right to distinction. . . . She has been a democratic State, standing for freedom in self-defence among her mountains, and in thought, in spite of race, largely on our side.”

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. Compare Halbrook’s summary of the Swiss experience during World War II with the argument that individuals bearing their private arms could offer little resistance to tyranny against states wielding advanced military technology. Has military technology advanced so much since World War II that the Swiss lesson is no longer applicable? Does your assessment change depending on whether people are resisting an outside force or their own domestic government gone rogue? *See* Ch. 16, Concluding Exercise 3.

2. **CQ:** For the dictatorships discussed in case studies *infra*, consider, as a practical political matter, how much advanced military technology can “domestic tyrants” intent on preserving a functioning state really use against their own populations? Do private arms give citizens more protection, or do they just impose more risk that the state will use higher levels of violence?

3. *Canada*

Chapters 3, 4, and 6 provide some Canadian history, including how the failed American invasion during the War of 1812 strengthened Canada’s sense of national identity, and its rejection of the less hierarchical system of government in the United States. The cultural differences between the United States and Canada have been reflected in the different gun laws of the two nations, with handguns being much rarer in Canada than in the United States. *See* David B. Kopel, *The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy: Should America Adopt the Gun Controls of Other Democracies?* (1992). More sources on Canadian gun law past and present are listed in the Notes & Questions.

In 2012, the Canadian Parliament passed Bill C-19, which repealed Canada’s federal registry of all privately owned long guns, by a vote of 159-130 in the House of Commons and 50-27 in the Senate. Handgun registration had existed since the 1930s and was not repealed; nor was the registration of certain long guns classified as “restricted.” What follows is excerpted from the debate on the bill in the House of Commons. In Canada, as in the United Kingdom, “government” is often used to mean the party that currently has the majority in Parliament.

Parliament of Canada, 41st Parliament, 1st Session

Ending the Long-Gun Registry Act

Feb. 13, 2012

Hon. Diane Finley [of the Conservative Party of Canada] (for the Minister of Public Safety) moved that Bill C-19, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, [Saskatchewan,] CPC [Conservative Party of Canada]):

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and honoured to have the opportunity to begin the third reading debate on Bill C-19, ending the long-gun registry act. I thank the public safety minister and the parliamentary secretary for allowing me the honour to lead off on this debate.

The legislation before us today fulfills a long-standing commitment of our government to stand up for law-abiding Canadians while ensuring effective measures to crack down on crime and make our streets and communities safer for all Canadians. The bill before us today is quite simple. It would put an end to the need for law-abiding hunters, farmers and sports shooters to register their non-restricted hunting rifles and shotguns. It is nothing more and nothing less.

For those who are not familiar with this issue, there were two requirements to gun ownership in Canada. One was registration and the other was licensing. I am sure by now that my hon. colleagues on both sides of the House are very familiar with my position on Bill C-19. I feel that laying a piece of paper beside a firearm, which is called registration, does nothing to improve public safety.

Instead of explaining my position over again, I have decided to simply highlight testimony from several expert witnesses who appeared before the public safety committee as it studied Bill C-19 last November. There is a recurring theme in all of their remarks and the four elements of that theme are: First, the long gun registry has been a colossal waste of money; second, it has targeted law-abiding gun owners, not the criminal use of firearms; third, it has done nothing to enhance public safety; and fourth, the data is so horribly flawed that it must be destroyed.

For the rest of my remarks, I will read into the record witnesses' testimony. The first person I will quote is Mr. Greg Farrant of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters who had this to say about Bill C-19:

A paper trail of trained, legal, licensed firearm owners does not address the real problem. Even a well-run registry, which this is not, will not prevent random violent crime. Believing in that ignores the glaring reality that the vast majority of criminals don't register firearms; and in the rare case when they do, a piece of paper and the creation of a system where possibly 50% of the firearms in Canada are not included³⁸ does nothing to anticipate the actions of an individual, nor do anything to prevent such actions in the first place.

38. [Due to massive noncompliance.—Eds.]

In the case of the long-gun registry, there's a glaring absence of fact-based evidence to support its existence. Suggestions that gun crime in Canada has declined since the introduction of the long-gun registry under Bill C-68 ignores the fact that gun crime, particularly gun crime using long guns, has been on the decline in this country since the 1970s, two decades before this registry ever came into being. Crimes committed with long guns have fallen steadily since 1981. Bill C-68 was not introduced until 1985 [*sic*, 1995] and wasn't mandatory until 2005.

The present system focuses all of its efforts on law-abiding firearms owners and includes no provisions for tracking prohibited offenders, who are most likely to commit gun crimes.

This should be about who should not have guns rather than about who does.

Another prominent argument we've already heard here today is how many times per day the system is used by police. . . . We've recently heard 14,000 and 17,000. . . . The vast majority of so-called hits on the registry have little or nothing to do with gun crime. The majority of these are cases of an officer maybe stopping a vehicle for a plate identification or an address identification, which automatically touches all databases, including the long-gun registry, despite the fact that the check has nothing to do with firearms in the first place.

The next quote I will read is from Solomon Friedman, who is a criminal defence lawyer. He stated:

You will no doubt hear in the coming days and weeks from various interest groups about how the long-gun registry is a minor inconvenience, merely a matter of paperwork. We register our dogs, our cats, and our cars, they say. Why not register our shotguns and rifles, as well? As you know, the registration scheme for non-restricted long guns, and for prohibited and restricted firearms as well, is enacted as federal legislation under the Criminal Code and under the Firearms Act.

With the criminal law power comes criminal law procedure and, most importantly, for the nearly two million law-abiding licensed gun owners in Canada, criminal law penalties. Unlike a failure to register a pet or a motor vehicle, any violation of the firearms registration scheme, even the mislaying of paperwork, carries with it the most severe consequences: a criminal charge, a potential criminal record, detention, and sometimes incarceration. This is hardly comparable to the ticket under the Provincial Offences Act or the Highway Traffic Act. . . .

In addition, registry violations are often grounds for colourable attempts on the part of police, the crown, and the chief firearms officer to confiscate firearms and revoke lawfully obtained gun licences. . . . [L]ong-gun registry violations [are] used as a pretext to detain individuals, search their belongings and their homes, and secure evidence to lay additional charges.

Parliament ought not to be in the business of transforming licensed, law-abiding, responsible citizens into criminals, especially not for paper crimes.

There are millions of Canadian gun owners who will be glad to know that in the halls of Parliament Hill, hysteria and hyperbole no longer trump reason, facts, and empirical evidence.

. . . [T]he registration of firearms, aside from having no discernible impact on crime or public safety, has merely alienated law-abiding firearms owners and driven a deep wedge between gun owners and law enforcement.

The next quotation is from Sergeant Murray Grismer of the Saskatoon[, Saskatchewan] police service. He said:

. . . [T]he registry for non-restricted rifles and shotguns . . . should be abolished. Thousands of police officers across Canada, who are in my opinion the silent or silenced majority, also share this position.

. . . [T]he Canadian Police Association . . . adopted their position without ever formally having polled their membership.

The Saskatchewan federation is the only provincial police association that polled its entire membership on the issue of the registration of firearms. When polled, the Saskatoon Police Association was 99.46% against the registry, while our compatriots in many of the other Saskatchewan police forces were 100% in opposition to the registry.

. . . [T]he registry can do nothing to prevent criminals from obtaining or using firearms. École Polytechnique, Mayerthorpe, Spiritwood and Dawson College are synonymous with tragic events involving firearms. However, the firearms registry for long guns would not, could not, and did not stop these tragic events. The retention of the firearms registry or records will do nothing to prevent any further such occurrences. . . . [E]ven Canada's strict licensing regime and firearms registry cannot prevent random acts of violence.

For the officers using the registry, trusting in the inaccurate, unverified information contained therein, tragedy looms at the next door. . . . Knowing what I do about the registry, I cannot use any of the information contained in it to square with a search warrant. To do so would be a criminal act.

Projections from within the Canadian Firearms Centre privately state that it will take 70 years of attrition to eliminate all of the errors in the registry and to have all of the firearms currently in Canada registered. This level of inaccuracy is unacceptable for any industry, let alone law enforcement. . . .

I would like to now quote from Linda Thom, the Canadian Olympic gold medal winning shooter, who said:

—I'm accorded fewer legal rights than a criminal. Measures enacted by Bill C-68 allow police to enter my home at any time without a search warrant because I own registered firearms, yet the same police must have a search warrant to enter the home of a criminal. I'm not arguing that criminals should not have this right—they should. I'm arguing that this right should be restored to me and all Canadian firearms owners.

My next quotation comes from Ms. Diana Cabrera of the Canadian Shooting Sports Association. She had this to say:

—I'm an international competitor shooter. Although I'm Canadian, I currently compete for the Uruguay national team. . . . The challenge of obtaining the public safety goals . . . are major concerns . . . the fear of confiscation, the perceived social stigma of firearm ownership and demonization, and the many costs and burdensome processes involved. . . . There is no question that the long-gun registry has deterred individuals from entering their shooting sports. . . . The main issue for competitive participants is the fear of imminent criminality. They may easily find themselves afoul of uniformed law enforcement or [Canadian Border Services Agency] officers, even if all the paperwork is in order. Any paperwork error may lead to temporary detention, missed flights, missed shooting matches, and confiscation of property. . . . Law enforcement and media coverage of firearm issues have made this situation even worse. Firearm owners are subject to spectacular press coverage in which reporters tirelessly describe small and very ordinary collections of firearms as an "arsenal". . . . Will I be targeted at a traffic checkpoint if a CPIC verification says I possess firearms?

Tony Bernardo, executive director of the Canadian Shooting Sports Association, talked about the number of firearms owners of guns in Canada. He said:

Based upon the Canada Firearms Centre's polling figures, in 1998 there were 3.3 million firearms owners in Canada. On January 1, 2001, 40% of Canadian gun owners—over 1 million people—became instant criminals.

Fewer than half the guns in Canada are actually in the registry. . . . Getting the ones that are out there to actually come into the system would be like pulling teeth. . . . To get those people to come forward now, you would have to go right back to the very basics of the act and change the very premise of the act; the first sentence says that it's a criminal offence to possess a firearm without a licence.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz: . . .

I would like to point out to the member something that was said at committee. I have to lay this on the public record here. During the eight years from 2003 to 2010, there were 4,811 homicides, and of these, 1,408 involved firearms. The data Statistics Canada gathered revealed that only 135 of the guns were registered. In just 73 cases, fewer than 5% of all firearms homicides, was the gun registered to the accused, and some of them of course may be innocent. Only 45 of the 73 cases involved long guns, fewer than 1% of homicides. One hundred and twenty-three police have been shot and killed. Only one of these murders involved a registered long gun and it did not belong to the murderer.

We are focusing on the wrong thing. All the statistics I have heard, and the member referred to some of them, are completely irrelevant in the way they are being cited.

We really need to dig to the bottom of this. I have done that. I had to change my mind on this issue after I had dealt with it for one year. I had to do a 180 and tell

myself after I had looked at the evidence that the firearms registry is not working. I thought one could not be opposed to gun control, but many people confuse gun control with the firearms registry. It is not, and that is what we need to remember.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, [Québec,] NDP [New Democratic Party]): . . .

From the outset, I have been in favour of maintaining the firearms registry. In fact, I was in favour of creating it. Unfortunately, we have a tendency to quickly forget history, and that is why we keep making the same damn mistakes all the time. We are forgetting why the registry was created. The firearms registry was created under Bill C-68. I would like to give a short history lesson. I would like to tell you what really happened, since the Conservatives like to reinvent history.

This bill was introduced because, in 1989, a deranged man entered the École Polytechnique with the expressed intention of shooting the young women who were going to school there. He had mental health problems, but whatever the reasons, this crazed gunman entered the school, targeted people and killed them. We must remember this. My heart bleeds for these victims.

Yet since that time, the Conservatives have been constantly using the issue of abolishing the firearms registry to gain political advantage. They have turned it into their pet issue, as though Canada would crumble if we kept the firearms registry. . . .

The goal was for our society, our country, to have a record of who owns guns and how many they own in order to ensure that the individuals have the right to own those guns, that they are storing the weapons safely, and that they do not intend to use them for criminal purposes. Is it a threat to public safety for a society to seek that assurance? If so, what a terrible society. This is not a perfect system, but if we have to choose between scrapping it entirely and improving it, I think we would be better off improving it.

. . . You do not, however, throw the baby out with the bathwater just because the Liberals did not know how to do their job. You try to improve things.

That is what we strove to do, on our side of the House. We listened to people with completely opposing points of view. We listened to those who said that the registry must not be touched. That is what we do in the NDP: we listen to what people have to say. We do not listen only to one category of individuals in society, as the members opposite have done on this issue. We listened to the concerns of hunters, aboriginal people, first nations and police chiefs. We listened to the concerns of almost all stakeholders so that we could attempt to eliminate the irritants.

Obviously, if you are a hunter, you do not want to be labeled a criminal for forgetting to register a weapon. However, what our colleagues opposite do not admit is that the irritants have been largely removed. There are now fewer complaints because of the armistice [an amnesty allowing registration by people who had missed the original deadline] and the fact that there are incredibly generous time frames for the registration of firearms. . . .

The Conservatives are speaking on behalf of a minority of people and the National Rifle Association. There is perhaps no hard evidence that this is the case, but there is something fundamentally bizarre. As a lawyer, I know that when something factual seems to point to but one conclusion, even if not by direct association, there is a good chance that it will be fact. Given that the witnesses who appeared

before us in committee are the same people who travel around the United States advocating that every American citizen should carry a weapon in their pocket, I can put two and two together and work out what truly motivates them.

When I talk to hunters—and there are many in my neck of the woods—I ask them what is the matter with the gun registry. They have told me that, at first, it was cumbersome, and that they did not know how it worked. They do not seem to really understand how it works. They also told me that, with time, they have gotten used to it, have registered their guns and do not talk about it.

In a similar vein, I can just imagine the debate that took place when the lawmakers introduced automobile licensing. People travelled by horse and buggy, and I am sure that there was not much registration. How did we establish the registration system when we began driving cars? I am trying to imagine the debates that took place in the early days of Confederation.

That said, we do not have to get rid of something just because it irritates people. After conducting studies and having discussions with various people who were for or against the registry, we presented some very reasonable proposals to remove the irritants.

From the outset, I have tried to understand why our friends opposite have mounted such a visceral attack on the registry. Thinking of the victims does elicit great emotions in me and I do feel very sad. But I can still take Bill C-19, read it and ask myself, what complaints do our Conservative friends have? First, they say that it does not save lives. No one here can confirm this.

When I asked the question in committee, it made the government's witnesses uncomfortable. It bothered them when I asked them whether they could tell me with certainty and with evidence to back their claims, that not one life had been saved thanks to the firearms registry. Chiefs of police came to tell us that they were using the registry. People in suicide prevention came to tell us that since the registry was established, suicide rates had dropped. Generally speaking, long guns are used for suicide. A smart person can put two and two together and realize that the number of suicides with a long gun goes down when there is a registry. The problem was that no one was able to tell me that the registry had not saved at least one life. Saving a single life is certainly worth \$1 million or \$2 million a year. If we can save a few lives a year, then so much the better.

Whether some people like it or not, the registry is that and more. I would not base my entire argument on the fact that the registry saves lives because often, people will counter the argument by saying that the registry did not prevent a man from gunning down women at the Polytechnique. That is the type of debate we are having. No one on this side of the House is claiming that the registry is going to prevent a mentally ill person from walking around with a legally obtained gun and doing whatever he wants with it. That is one of the Conservatives' arguments. However, evidence shows that the police have used the data in the registry in their investigations in order to find out how many guns a person possesses, and so forth. . . .

Quebec wants to have the data transferred to it. How does transferring the data to Quebec hurt anyone? The province does not want to use the data to criminalize people. It has no jurisdiction when it comes to the Criminal Code. The friends of the members opposite who are hunters will not have a problem. If Quebec wants to legislate in this area and ensure that people with long guns are registered and wants to know how many weapons the registrants have, then the data will be useful.

Clause 11 of Bill C-19 includes a shocking loophole: I could own a legally obtained weapon and transfer ownership to my colleague on my right, and the only question I would be asked would be whether I had reason to believe that my colleague should not have a weapon.

Some people might contradict me on this, but honestly, I do not really get the sense that he should not have a weapon, so I transfer ownership of the weapon because I do not feel like having it anymore and I need the \$300. So I give the weapon to my friend. If the Conservatives cannot see the loophole in that, then there is a problem. It is not safe.

Let us turn to the Commissioner of Firearms' report. From what I know, the commissioner is not a hysterical person or someone who is out of touch. The commissioner's report includes facts and is based on factual data collected year after year demonstrating how the registry works and how it is useful. I would encourage hon. members to read this report, because having read it, members cannot in all decency rise in this House and vote in favour of Bill C-19 because we know what steps have been taken to address all the irritants. And that is all the hunters, aboriginal peoples, first nations, gun collectors and the rest were asking us for: to have a way of registering a weapon without it being more worrisome and damaging than necessary. Everything is there, everything is permitted and registration hardly takes 15 minutes. Hold on. We may want to prevent the proliferation of weapons in circulation, but we will no longer be complying with our international treaties. . . .

In closing, there are so many things that need to be said. People write to me about this every day to share data with me. The public health authorities in Quebec are calling unanimously for the registry to be kept. This is important, and it has been proven that the registry has had an impact when [it] comes to long guns. . . .

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we clear up the record on one thing. It is not something the opposition has done throughout this debate, much of which I have been privy to.

I heard the hon. member say that we had heard testimony at the committee about a reduction in suicide rates. That is absolutely not the case. In fact, the expert testimony and evidence we heard at committee was that suicide rates had no correlation whatsoever with the long gun registry and had more in fact to do with the introduction of medications, the SSRIs.³⁹

For the member to stand up in the House and say that the long gun registry is correlated in any way with the prevention of suicide is just wrong. However, that is consistent with all of the other messages by the opposition.

I would like my hon. colleague to reiterate the testimony she heard directly linking declining suicide rates and the long gun registry. That is not what I heard and not what other members of the public safety committee heard. . . .

39. [Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors—the class of drugs that includes Prozac and Zoloft and is commonly prescribed to fight depression and other disorders.—Eds.]

Ms. Françoise Boivin:

Mr. Speaker, I will cite two sources. The first one would be the people from the Association québécoise de prévention du suicide. They spoke in French, but I imagine that the hon. member was listening to the interpretation. They said very clearly that the registry had an impact. Directors of Quebec's public health said that making it more difficult to access long guns had an impact. Statistics show that long guns had been used in most suicides. The registry makes it more difficult to access long guns. . . .

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, [Quebec,] Liberal): . . .

The government has been very shrewd in presenting this issue in very simplistic black and white terms, namely that the problem of guns in cities is a problem of hand-guns and that when we talk about long guns, we are talking about rural populations who need the long guns either to protect their agricultural operations or to pursue their traditional culture of hunting, as the hon. member across the way mentioned before. However, as I mentioned in my speech on second reading, this is a false dichotomy because more and more urban dwellers are buying long guns and replicas of guns they see in movies and video games. In fact, in the metropolis of Toronto alone, not a rural region but the great metropolis of Toronto, there are 287,000 non-restricted firearms registered. To say it is just a rural versus urban issue is a false argument.

The second myth or false argument is that all of these inquiries to the gun registry, some estimated to be as high as 17,000 per day, are a function of routine or perfunctory inquiries, for example, of a driver of a car who is receiving a parking ticket. In other words, all of these queries are said to be automatic and secondary to the rather routine and mundane primary queries. However, that is not what the committee heard from Mr. Mario Harel, chief of police of the Gatineau police service and vice-president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, who told the committee:

There is truth to the fact that a number of these are what has been referred to as "auto-queries." However these cases are rare, which we believe is an endorsement of the fact that law enforcement views this information as a valuable tool, a bit of information that, when combined with other information, assists in assessing a situation an officer may face.

The third myth or false argument is the idea that the registry has not been proven to save lives. There was a study presented to the committee by Étienne Blais, Ph.D., and Marie-Pier Gagné, M.Sc., and Isabelle Linteau showing that the registry does save lives. Let us put that aside for a moment, because we can get into a battle of studies and the hon. member for Yukon will bring up Dr. Gary Mauser's study and others. We can get into these battles between studies, but let us look at this from a logical, practical or common sense point of view. I know the party opposite likes to focus on practical, common sense arguments.

It is very hard to prove that the registry saves a life. Theoretically, it makes sense. Practically, it is very hard to prove. For example, it is impossible to prove that I made it to Ottawa via the highway today and remained alive because of the 100 kilometre an hour speed limit, which, by the way, I respect. It is very hard to prove that is why I am here speaking to the House today. In fact, there will be no headline tomorrow saying that the life of the member for Lac-Saint-Louis was saved

because of the 100 kilometre per hour speed limit. I will not be a statistic, but we know that this speed limit saves lives. It is something that makes sense and it is very hard to prove that someone is alive because of either this speed limit or the registry.

A fourth myth or false argument is the idea that people are still killed with long guns even though we have a registry. I would stress that there is no policy instrument that can fully prevent that which it aims to prevent. It can only control that which is socially undesirable.

This is what I would call an ironclad law of public policy. Public policy is almost always based on the findings and recommendations of social science which itself by definition comes with associated margins of error.

I can boldly predict based on this ironclad law of public policy that dog bites will continue into the foreseeable future even by dogs that have been registered with city hall. I can put my money on that. I will also predict that car theft will continue into the future even though cars are registered with the province.

Unfortunately, it is clear to all of us that gun crimes will not disappear even should the registry by some miracle survive. There will be, unfortunately, future gun crimes, some of which will be quite heinous. It is unfortunate and this will happen even if the registry were to survive.

It is interesting that members opposite will say that registering guns just does not work because criminals do not register guns. I can see that point. Criminals do not register their guns. Therefore, that means criminals do not register their handguns. The only people registering handguns would be law-abiding citizens, as the members across the way like to invoke. As I said in my speech at second reading, the people in my riding [district for electing members of a legislature] who are gun owners are sterling citizens. They are the most active volunteers, conscientious and responsible, but that is not the point.

The point I am trying to make with respect to the handgun registry is that if the Conservatives were logical, they would say that registries do not work because criminals do not register firearms; therefore, they are getting rid of the long gun registry and they are getting rid of the handgun registry. Thankfully, they are not getting rid of the handgun registry. That points out the fundamental contradiction in their thinking on gun control.

The fifth myth or false argument is that the registry is wasteful and useless. I have heard that many times. We hear that from the Minister of Public Safety on a continual basis. We have evidence from the police, including the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)]. If the government does not buy the RCMP's evidence, then there is a problem between the government and the RCMP. There is a lack of faith in the RCMP by the government. There is concrete evidence that the registry helps with police investigations.

I will quote Mr. Mario Harel, the chief of the Gatineau police service and vice-president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, who said that the elimination of the gun registry will add significant costs to their investigations, costs which will be downloaded to police services and lead to crucial delays in gaining investigative information.

The word "downloading" seems to come up a lot with the government. It downloads costs of the prison agenda and all kinds of other things to the provinces. Here is an example where again the government will be downloading costs, in this case to provincial and municipal police forces.

One does not have to take Mr. Harel's word for it. One just has to listen to what Matt Torigian, the chief of Waterloo Regional Police, has said about the long gun registry's usefulness in police investigations. He has given a couple of concrete examples. One is real and the other is more hypothetical, but based on typical cases that the police are involved with. He said:

We came across a crime scene recently with a man who was obviously deceased by gunshot and a long gun was at the scene. Because of the registry, we were able to trace the weapon to the person who had just sold it to the man who was deceased. We determined it was a suicide and the investigation stopped there.

We know from this example that if there had been no registry the police would have thought that maybe it was a crime and would have had to open up an investigation. Many hours of valuable police time would have been wasted looking for a perpetrator of a crime that was really a suicide.

Another example given by Chief Torigian is more hypothetical but no doubt commonplace. Say a group of thieves break into a farmhouse near Montreal and steal a shotgun. They saw it off to conceal it better under their clothes. They drive to Windsor, Ontario, where in the course of committing a bank robbery they drop the gun and flee the scene. Because of the registry, the police find out that the gun is owned by a Montreal man, a victim of theft. This might give the force a lot more leads to go on. For example, there might be witnesses to the break-in in Montreal. The registry would thus allow coordination of efforts between police departments in order to efficiently resolve the case and move on to something else.

There is more anecdotal evidence. The following example is from the 2010 RCMP firearms report, the one that was ready a while back but was only released on January 19 after the committee had finished its hearings on the bill:

A large municipal police force contacted CFP NWEST for assistance in recovering obliterated serial numbers on two firearms seized in a robbery and kidnapping investigation. After the serial number of one of the guns was restored, NWEST used the CFP's Registry database to determine that the gun was registered to one of the suspects and had not been reported lost or stolen.

In another example the registry helped police link a grandfather's gun to his grandson who had perpetrated a gun crime. Again, I quote from the RCMP report:

CFP NWEST was asked to assist in a shooting investigation. They confirmed, through the Canadian Firearms Information System, the firearm was one of seven registered to the same individual, and it had not been reported lost, missing or stolen.

RCMP investigators met with the registered owner who was able to account for only four of his seven firearms. The subject was interviewed in order to establish a possible link between him and the shooting suspects.

As a result of the interview, the owner's grandson was identified as one of the accused in the shooting, and all seven firearms were accounted for in the follow-up interview of the accused. Numerous firearms-related charges were laid in relation to this incident.

The police caught the grandson. If the police had not caught the grandson by using the registry, the grandson might still be wandering around with a gun. Who knows what might have happened.

This is another point I would like to make about those who want to dismantle the registry. They will not admit to possibilities, and this is a fundamental error when it comes to social science. It is all about probabilities and possibilities.

Dr. Gary Mauser made a fine presentation at committee. It was quite rigorous and he was a very agreeable witness. This is not an attack on Dr. Mauser. After I gave him some examples of how it was plausible the registry might have saved lives, I asked him, in his opinion, in the 10 years the registry has existed is it not possible that one life may have been saved. I was not even asking Dr. Mauser was one life saved; I was asking him if it is not possible in this universe of probabilities that one life may have been saved. His answer was a categorical, "It's impossible."

This is what we are dealing with. We are not dealing with open-minded thinking on this issue. We are dealing with categorical statements that actually are nonsensical when we really think about it. Ending the registry would be a mistake.

The Liberal Party in the last election campaign was quite cognizant of the fact that some legitimate law-abiding firearms owners feel criminalized by the system, that first-time failure to register not be a criminal offence, thereby compromising with one of the points the government is making. There was some movement on the issue. It would have solved the problem and it could have kept the registry. People would not have felt criminalized and Canada would be safer.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to this bill a number of times. I would say to my hon. colleague that I certainly have never separated rural and urban Canadians' concerns around the long gun registry nor rural and urban Canadians' use of long guns. In fact, we are well aware that both rural and urban Canadians utilize long guns.

A good portion of what the member is saying makes sense, but I will tell him what the people in my riding and I have a hard time with. We never hear concerns that this legislation that has been brought in has criminalized Canadians. It is not for want or need of registering these long guns. A lot of times it boils down to errors made in the system which cause registrants, law-abiding Canadian citizens, to be not necessarily targeted but subjected to these crazy search and seizure provisions and criminal sanctions because of it. We are making Canadians into criminals because of paper errors. Nobody thinks that is an effective use of government legislation, Canadian taxpayer dollars, or police resources and time. . . .

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan–Coquihalla, [British Columbia,] CPC): . . .

I believe it is important to share with the House the frustration that I hear from the rural residents in my riding. They are law-abiding citizens and they are taxpayers, and yet they are forced to comply with a system created out of Ottawa that does nothing but inconvenience the lifestyle they work hard to enjoy.

Everyone in the House knows that criminals do not register their guns. It is often a repeated point in this debate but it is the truth. However, more important, we need to recognize that there are times when a registered gun is used to take a life. Recently, in my riding, a family lost a loved one as a result of domestic violence.

Did the registered gun stop the alleged murderer from pulling the trigger? Sadly, it did not. For those people in society who are capable of taking a life, the fact that a gun may or may not be registered means nothing to them. The simple fact of the matter is that the long gun registry has not stopped crime, nor is it saving lives.

I have also listened to the opposition arguments in favour of the long gun registry. The opposition suggests that its greatest contribution is that it provides law enforcement with a record of where guns are, and not just where they are but what kinds of guns they are.

Those who followed the committee hearings for Bill C-391 last year will know that members heard testimony from numerous respected and experienced police officers. Those experienced officers told us that the information provided by the long gun registry was not reliable. I have met with many front-line officers who have made it very clear that they cannot rely on the registry to confirm if a gun may or may not be at that address. In fact, if officers were to rely solely on the long gun registry, they would be putting their life and the life of their colleagues at risk.

We also know that there are long guns that have never been registered and those that have not been registered properly, and situations where model numbers or catalogue numbers were used instead of serial numbers.

The long gun registry has been in place for over a decade. What are the results? The registry has not stopped crime, nor has it saved lives. Millions of dollars were spent on the registry and what are the results for the taxpayers? We have a database that front-line officers tell us that they cannot depend on. . . .

One of the challenges that many communities in my region are facing is an overpopulation of deer. On the surface it may not seem like a problem, however, deer destroy small gardens and can be aggressive to small animals and even adults. They also present a real danger to motorists. The reality is that fewer people are hunting these days, in part because of the burden and costs of dealing with issues like the long gun registry. In my riding, many residents have told me that they feel the quality of life in rural Canada is threatened. That is why I believe it is important we take action on their issue. . . .

I am proud to say that our government is now investing \$7 million a year to make the screening process for people applying for a firearm's licence stronger. Bill C-19 would not change any of those requirements. In fact, no one would be able to buy a firearm of any kind without passing the Canadian firearms safety course, the background check and without having a proper licence.

I support the bill because it would eliminate a law that places an unnecessary burden on law-abiding Canadians. The bill would also free up resources that could be better spent on anti-crime initiatives to help make our streets safer.

We need to be honest with ourselves about the real gun problem in Canada. It is not just the legally acquired shotguns and rifles in the hands of our farmers and hunters that is the problem. While we continue to penalize them, it may seem like a solution to some members opposite, but doing so does not stop crime. A failed registry and a flawed database is not an answer.

Between 2005 and 2009, police in Canada recovered 253 firearms that had been used in the commission of a homicide. Some of those guns were registered, most were not. However, we need recognize that the registry failed 253 times to prevent crime, much as it failed in my riding last year. As a result, I cannot support a process that requires law-abiding, tax paying citizens to continue to dump money into a system that offers no tangible results. . . .

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): . . .

I have had a number of constituents in my riding office over the last number of years who have come in, World War II veterans, for example, who have had their firearms confiscated for no reason other than forgetting to renew their registration. They had been registered. I have seen these people come into my office absolutely stricken, feeling that they were treated like criminals by a registry that was created by the former Liberal government.

Has the member heard of any of these people coming in, talking about how they were treated by officials who subjected them to these laws? . . .

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George–Peace River, [British Columbia,] CPC): . . .

The long gun registry has been expensive. This is an indisputable fact. The [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation], not known for its Conservative bias, has estimated a total cost of over \$2 billion over the 17 years of the registry. Let me remind members that the former Liberal justice minister, Allan Rock promised it would not cost a cent more than \$2 million. That is a hefty price to pay for an inferior product, as we can all agree. The \$2 billion could have gone a long way in other safety initiatives, including preventive action or rehabilitative programs.

Across this country, Canadians are working hard to provide for their families. They do not throw money away on items or services that are not beneficial or practical for them or for their families. It is time that we follow their lead and do away with the needless spending on the registry.

The long gun registry does a fine job of collecting the names of those using their long guns for sport and protecting their livestock. It does an awful job at stopping illegal activity, using guns that were never legally purchased or registered in the first place. That is because the people listed in the registry are individuals who have acquired and wish to use their long guns in legal ways.

They have followed their government's requirements. They comply because they wish to abide by the law. These people are not the ones committing gun crimes in Canada. This is the key reason that the long gun registry is an ineffective piece of legislation.

This is not a surprise to me, yet I suspect it will come as one to the opposition. Most criminal activity naturally operates outside of the law, hence its criminality. Guns used in crime are generally not legally purchased or registered. More often than not, they have been brought into Canada for criminal use and for that reason are never registered. This renders the registry useless in both tracking down criminals and protecting Canadians from harm. . . .

We are looking forward to the day that law-abiding Canadians can relax and know that their information has been completely destroyed. That is why Bill C-19 also includes a provision to destroy all data collected by the registry in the last 17 years. This aspect is extremely important, as it is necessary to protect innocent citizens from ever being targeted by their government again.

Canadians gave their support for the abolition of the registry last May. Our government stands by our promise to remove it from the federal level forever. . . .

Mr. Bob Zimmer:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way brought up one of the most misunderstood facts about the registry. She brought up questions about licensing.

That is one thing this government would not change. It would be just as hard to purchase a weapon now as it has been in the past. That all has to do with licensing of firearms as opposed to the registration of law-abiding farmers and gun owners. It is an apples and oranges argument. We would not change licensing, it would be just as difficult as it was before. We would continue to provide safety for Canadians. . . .

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. *Non-restricted, restricted, and prohibited firearms.* Bill C-19 only repealed the federal registration requirements that applied to “*non-restricted*” firearms, such as most traditional rifles and shotguns. Prior law had divided guns into three categories:

- *Non-restricted* firearms. This includes rifles and shotguns that are not restricted or prohibited.
- *Restricted* firearms. This includes handguns that have a barrel longer than 105 mm (about 4.1”) in length and a caliber other than .25 or .32. It also includes long guns that can be folded or telescoped down to less than 660 mm (about 26”) in length. All AR-15 pattern semi-automatic rifles are designated as restricted firearms by federal regulation. Restricted firearms may be lawfully owned with a special permit, but are subject to stricter regulations on transportation, storage, and use than non-restricted firearms.
- *Prohibited* firearms. This includes all handguns in .25 or .32 caliber or with barrels of 105 mm or less (except for certain Olympic target pistols).

In addition, semi-automatic rifle magazines are limited to five-round capacity and handguns are generally limited to ten-round magazines. Notwithstanding the repeal of the long gun registry, Canadian law still requires all gun owners to obtain a gun-owner’s license.

2. What are the implications of a public domestic gun registry? What are the positives or negatives of mandating private citizens disclose their ownership of firearms? Is a gun registry a necessary first step toward gun confiscation? If you were a Canadian MP or Senator, and your party allowed you to vote your conscience on the registration repeal, how would you have voted? Why? If you thought that the pro/con arguments were about equal, would you have voted in accord with the majority view in your riding (district)?

3. *Quebec.* Opposition to the effort to repeal the long gun registry was centered in the province of Quebec. After the passage of the repeal, Quebec unsuccessfully sued to prevent the destruction of the registry data for Quebec gun owners’ long guns. Quebec stated that it wanted to maintain its own, provincial registry. The Canadian Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that Quebec could not block the federal government in Ottawa from destroying federal registration records for Quebecois. *Quebec (Attorney General) v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2015 SCC 14, [2015] 1 S.C.R. 693.

After the Supreme Court decision, the Quebec provincial legislature voted to create a long gun registry to be maintained by the provincial government. Critics of the registry sued, arguing that a provincial registry is preempted by federal law. The trial court dismissed the challenge, *Association canadienne pour les armes à feu c.*

Procureure générale du Québec, 2017 QCCS 4690 (CanLII), and the appellate court affirmed, *Association canadienne pour les armes à feu c. Procureure générale du Québec*, 2018 QCCA 179 (CanLII). The defunct federal registry had included 1.6 million long guns from Quebec; nine months after the registration deadline, the number of firearms registered in Quebec was slightly over half the total of those that had been federally registered. See *De Plus en Plus d'Armes Enregistrées*, *Le Quotidien*, Oct. 12, 2019 (post-deadline registrations); *Deadline has Passed, but 75% of Quebec's Long Guns Aren't Registered*, *Presse Canadienne*, Jan. 31, 2019.

Quebec, a majority French-speaking province with a cultural and legal tradition distinct from the rest of English Canada, has long maintained its right to govern itself. As such, Quebec legislators have often passed laws that come into conflict with the Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms (e.g., banning religious symbols for public-sector employees, restricting English-language advertisements, and imposing speech codes).

4. If you were a strategist for Canada's Liberal Party, which enacted the gun registration law, how much political capital would you have spent in trying to defend the law? As things turned out, long gun registration helped cost the Liberals control of government in the 2006 election, partly because of a scandal involving the discovery that millions of dollars in government funds that were given to an advertising agency to encourage gun owners to comply with the registration law were instead diverted into a slush fund for Liberal politicians. Out of power, the Liberals continued to defend registration, and lost the 2008 federal election and then the 2011 federal election. The 2011 election gave the Conservative Party a majority (rather than just a plurality) in Canada's multi-party Parliament, thus enabling the repeal of registration in 2012.

According to Bill Clinton, in 1996, New Jersey Governor James Florio lost his 1993 re-election bid because of Florio's defense of the state's ban on "assault weapons," and Clinton declared his own willingness to lose reelection in 1996 over the federal ban. *Prez Hits the Road Assails GOP as He Launches Re-election Bid*, (N.Y.) *Newsday*, June 23, 1995 ("Jim Florio gave his governorship for it. If I have to give the White House for it, I'll do it."). If you were an elected official, what gun control or gun rights measures would you defend at the cost of your own reelection?

5. In 2013, the town of High River in Alberta, Canada, experienced significant flooding following torrential downpours. In response, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) conducted door-to-door searches, checking for stranded people and animals as well as gas leaks and biohazards. However, it was later discovered by High River residents that the RCMP had improperly seized over 600 legally owned firearms from over 100 homes. See *Gun Grab in High River Was a Serious RCMP Failure*, *National Post*, Feb. 13, 2015. The civilian review commission for the RCMP sternly criticized the seizures. See *Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP, Chair-Initiated Complaint and Public Interest Investigation into the RCMP's Response to the 2013 Flood in High River, Alberta* (2016). Eventually, the Canadian federal government paid \$2.3 million in reparations to High River residents. Interestingly, though gun registry records were destroyed following the repeal of the long gun registry in 2012, it is realized that the RCMP used copies of registry records to make these seizures. See Lorne Gunter, *The Gun*

Registry's Legacy—Creating Needless Paperwork Criminals, Toronto Sun, Sept. 16, 2016. The Alberta provincial government has ordered an inquiry. Bill Kaufman, *RCMP Forced Home Entries in Flooded High River to Be Subject of Inquiry*, Calgary Herald, Oct. 17, 2019.

6. Along with repealing the registry, **Bill C-19** included transitional provision 29: “The Commissioner of Firearms shall ensure the destruction as soon as feasible of all records in the Canadian Firearms Registry related to the registration of firearms that are neither prohibited firearms nor restricted firearms and all copies of those records under the Commissioner’s control.” In accordance with this provision, the RCMP were instructed to complete all existing informational requests and then destroy the documents immediately in all regions (with the exception of Quebec, which did not have its documents destroyed until 2015 on account of the Supreme Court challenge). *Quebec (Attorney General) v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2015 SCC 14 (2015), 1 S.C.R. 693. Despite the assurances made to the public and to other government officials, however, questions still loom around the supposed destruction of the registry lists. A **report** by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada published in 2015 investigated one particular claim, and was unable to find conclusive evidence that the RCMP had retained access to the registry. In May 2021, these claims resurfaced again, as new evidence was discovered that showed the RCMP referencing data that could only have been obtained from the (supposedly destroyed) registry. Brian Lilley, *Evidence Shows Mounties Kept a Copy of the Gun Registry*, Toronto Sun, May 2, 2021.

7. In 2020, Justin Trudeau’s government passed Bill C-21, which explicitly prohibits so-called assault-style weapons (**Registration, Can. Gaz. SOR/2020-96** (May 1, 2020) (implementing regulations)). Because assault-style weapons are not a category of firearm, the regulations outlaw specific firearm platforms, such as the AR-10 and AR-15. Also banned are “Firearms with a bore 20mm or greater” [.787 inches], and “Firearms capable of discharging a projectile with a muzzle energy greater than 10,000 Joules.” The term “bore” refers to the inside of the barrel of the gun. These regulations initially sparked **outrage** among Canadian shotgun owners, who felt that the regulation would incorrectly encompass a wide variety of hunting shotguns. Many shotguns can be fitted with a choke at the front of their barrel that restricts the spread of fired projectiles. To accommodate such additions, the end of the barrel is flared and threaded—making it larger than the 20mm restricted by C-21. This, however, was **refuted by the RCMP**. They measure the bore from farther down on the barrel to avoid unintentional shotgun inclusion.

To enforce their ban, the government had planned to introduce a compensated surrender program (euphemistically called a “buyback,” although the government had never owned the guns). As of August 2021, the surrender program has not been implemented. **C-21** outlines provisions for lawful continued ownership of prohibited firearms, “subject to strict conditions including no permitted use, no import, no further acquisition, no sale and no bequeathal.” Additionally, persons wishing to keep their weapons must also register them and complete the Canadian Restricted Firearm Safety Course. The **RCMP recommends** that individuals have their firearms professionally “deactivated,” if desired, or presents the option of exporting them if the proper licenses are obtained.

8. For more on Canadian firearms laws, see R. Blake Brown, *Arming and Disarming: A History of Gun Control in Canada* (2012) (the first comprehensive

history of gun rights and gun control in Canada); Caillin Langmann, *Canadian Firearms Legislation and Effects on Homicide 1974 to 2008*, 27 *J. Interpersonal Violence* 2303 (2012) (several different time-series analyses find no beneficial impact on homicide or spousal homicide from any Canadian gun control laws enacted in 1977 or later; homicide rates were associated with factors such as unemployment, percentage of population in low-income brackets, police officers per capita, and incarceration rates). Canada's main firearms law is the Firearms Act, as amended. The website [Firearms Law Canada](#), maintained by a Canadian attorney, is a good starting point for information about statutes and regulations. Professor [Wendy Cukier](#) is Canada's leading scholarly advocate of gun control, and Professor [Gary Mauser](#) is Canada's leading scholarly skeptic. Activist groups include the [Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights](#) and the [National Firearms Association](#).

4. Mexico

The text of the Mexican constitutional right to arms appears in Section A.1.a. As the excerpt below explains, the Mexican federal gun control has mostly nullified the constitutional rights.

Ernesto Villanueva & Karla Valenzuela

Security, Firearms and Transparency: Myths and Reality of the Right to Own and Bear Firearms in Mexico

2012

First: The starting point that must remain clear is that the People's prerogative of owning and possessing firearms for their self-defense and security is a fundamental human right foreseen in the 10th article of the current Constitution and has been part of the text of our Supreme Law since its 1857 predecessor. It did not appear as an addition or constitutional reform by what is denominated the Power of Constitutional Reform or the Permanent Constituent; rather, it has been part of the initial text of both constitutions, so there is no doubt about the will of the Constitutional Power (i.e., the original, sovereign political will that is not subject to a prior Constitution). This translates into a group of fundamental legal norms that give life to the Mexican State, both in its liberal 19th century version and in its 20th century social-liberal form or its dogmatic or teleological intentions (i.e., the ends or purposes it seeks) from the Constitution to the present day.

This right has not been imposed, but self-legislated by the Constitutional Power's own will. . . .

At the Constituent Congress of 1856-1857, after deliberations for and against the right to own and possess firearms, the proposal was approved with 67 votes in favor and 21 against in its first part and 50 votes in favor and 21 against in its second part. During the debates of the Constituent Congress of 1916-1917, the proposed Article 10 presented by the Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, Venustiano Carranza, by way of General Francisco J. Mujica was approved unanimously and without discussion. . . .

Second: The right to own and carry firearms has become perceived in a negative way possibly because of the convenience this represents to the Mexican political regime, and the conceptions it has of political stability and the freedoms of the governed.

. . . We must also dismantle the encompassing social stigma using information that will allow us to confront each of the supposed “dangers” the exercise of this constitutional right would allegedly bring. It is important to point out that these claims are not the result of empirical investigations into the subject-matter to substantiate at least a majority of these contentions/perceptions. At least, none based on data available to the public.

The process of progressive debilitation affecting the ability of the institutions charged with providing security and procuring justice to fulfill their constitutionally and legally-mandated duties has brought about a redefinition of different concepts and values within Mexican society. It is necessary to determine the proper scope and limits of the right to own and carry firearms. . . .

Day by day, not only is the number of public spaces which assure citizens the fundamental right to freedom of transit and the most-fundamental right to life increasingly constricted, but so too is the number of those private spaces that in principle demand even greater protection.

It is not, however, through the restriction of the fundamental rights of the People that public security and social confidence in our public institutions may be restored. To the contrary, an opportunity presents itself to make effective the fundamental rights consecrated in the Constitution, including, of course, the right provided by the Article 10, by reforming the secondary legislations to potentiate its normative efficacy in order to guard the legal values it protects: life and property. The right to own and carry arms is not, in principle, an end unto itself; it is a prerogative that enables the governed to defend against any potential action that places them in real, immediate or imminent danger. The underlying principle is self-evident: It is preferable to have a firearm and never need it, than it is to need a firearm and not have one. In any case, as indicated by its very name, it is the People’s right, their prerogative; it is not their obligation.

Third: To enforce the right to own and carry firearms, there must be a series of reforms to the current legislation and, in particular but not exclusively, to the Federal Firearms and Explosives Law (LFAFE). . . .

. . . The following is a list of some, but not all, of the ways the secondary law goes against the nucleus of the fundamental right in question:

- (a) It restricts the possibilities of gun ownership and possession to a series of firearms whose calibers and characteristic, in most cases, lack the capacity and potency to effectively stop an aggressor;
- (b) It stems from the absurd supposition that the citizenship is schooled and trained in the correct use of firearms. As is well known, practically no one, save the people who are or once were part of one of the many different security forces, and the people who utilize firearms for hunting or sport, and alleged criminals, has any sort of instruction on the use of firearms. This possibility does exist in the comparative experience of other

countries however. This fact, paradoxically, makes the regulatory law an obstacle for the citizenship to own and carry firearms for their defense and security;

- (c) It limits the task of firearms control to the military authorities, revealing lingering notes of authoritarianism that is not present in other contemporary democracies, where these chores have been assigned to the civilian authorities, as is the case in, say, the United States.
- (d) It establishes a wide margin for bureaucratic discretion in the issuance of the various permits for the ownership and possession of firearms, in addition to creating a greater waiting period and more requirements than is perceived in the compared experience with other countries. This also represents an obstacle for the adequate exercise of the fundamental right enshrined in the 10th article of the Constitution.
- (e) It creates a monopoly favoring the military authorities regarding the production and sale of firearms. These measures limit the possibilities and potential of the public to lawfully participate in this activity without providing society any legal argumentation or justification as to how they honor the right established by Article 10 of the Constitution. This is part of the legacy of authoritarianism in our country and runs contrary to international best practices; and
- (f) The concept of “home” established by the Law is restrictive. . . . The penumbra of the concept does not allow us to determine if certain places such as commercial establishments or other places where the right to self-protection and self-defense may be exercised.

Fourth: One should remember that fundamental rights lack entity if they do not have normative guarantees allowing them to be exercised. . . . Such is the case with the Federal Firearms Law which, instead of protecting the rights granted by Article 10, in fact restricts them by overextending the legal powers of the secondary law by altering and modifying the sense of the law it was meant to regulate.

Fifth: In the passing of years, particularly recent years, one can perceive how the area dominated by the Rule of Law has been reduced, allowing for greater prevalence of ever-widening islands of insecurity, corruption and impunity throughout the national territory. There are fact-based analyses supporting this observation.

. . . Worse still, the recent assassinations of public servants, candidates to public office and well-known political leaders have brought to light a disquieting question: How can the Mexican State defend the security of its citizens, when it cannot defend the physical integrity of a growing number of men and women charged with enforcing the Law? It is not our position that allowing the population to exercise their right to own and carry firearms is “the” solution to the violence and generalized insecurity throughout the country. It is, however, part of a long list of pending tasks that will be necessary for the people on foot, almost the totality of the population, to be able to carry an instrument for their self-defense in the framework of the Constitution. It would be futile to recount all of the human rights, from the first to the most recent generation, if the most basic requirements for their exercise are not met: the existence of physical and spiritual life. Without a human life

to enjoy them, all rights become moot. It is improbable that the immobility of the community and the government's bet on silently waiting will be enough to recover the tranquility we have lost. . . . The expansive exercise of the right to own and carry arms must be accompanied by a process of evaluation and reformation of the educative system. Education is a vehicle for transmitting the consciousness that give people the cognitive elements allowing them to exercise the sociological notion of citizenship. The right to own and carry firearms in terms of what the regulatory law has developed is inversely proportional to its due exercise. In effect, the Mexican intellectual and technical diet regarding the use of firearms has historically been found lacking, nurtured instead by moral judgments, and deprived of the elements present in relative international best practices.

Sixth: The recovery of the normative effectuality pertaining to this right on behalf of the People implies a substantial reform or perhaps even the abrogation of the current LFAFE and the implementation of a new legal framework, derived from the best practices concluded from past experience.

. . . Among the many changes required we can include those relative to civic education. . . .

Today, the references available to society are not sympathetic to elements drawn from empirical research . . . ; elementary and middle school textbooks do not cover this fundamental right; and the vacuums of information that should be filled by the right to knowledge granted by Article 6 of the Constitution, are substituted with discourse and news media imagery that perpetuate the myths and prejudices surrounding firearms. Paradoxically, this only serves to generate a vicious circle of social disinformation.

It would be redundant to say that personal responsibility is not out of the scope of civic education. . . . In other words, formal and informal educational programs must emphasize the use of firearms in a manner that is rational, responsible, limited and focused on self-defense and personal security.

Seventh: Simultaneously, a future regulatory law must take into account, at least, the following considerations:

- (a) The subordination of the authorization of permits for the ownership and possession of firearms to the successful completion of technical instruction courses on the use of firearms, for their ideal use in personal security and self-defense situations. Today, existing firearms-related courses, certifications and technical studies are available only to law enforcement agents, leaving the civilian population in a state of defenselessness. It is evident that the lack of instruction in this matter could potentially facilitate the fundamental right in question becoming a danger to society instead of a complementary tool for the action of the State, within the bounds of the Constitution. For this reason, police academies, military command zones and especially private firearms-instruction centers should provide the widest array of instruction courses on the subject. The presence of private firearms-instruction centers throughout the country should be encouraged, but their self-defense curricula should be subject to previously established, objective criteria.
- (b) The establishment of clear criteria regarding the authorization of weapons-carry permits that allow for a reasonable degree of predictability, something which today does not exist.

- (c) The creation of mechanisms to dissuade people from carrying firearms in public without the proper license, in order to incentivize the registration of the greatest possible number of firearms. This will allow for a degree of control that will disincentive people from participating in the black market, which today fills the void caused by the restrictions in the current legislation.
- (d) Indicating, in a restrictive manner, the firearms destined for the exclusive use of the Armed Forces, so that citizens may have access to firearms with an adequate capacity for safeguarding their lives, physical integrity and their property. In other words, doing the exact opposite of what the legislation dictates today.
- (e) The monopoly on the sale and fabrication of firearms on behalf of the SEDENA [the national army] should be eliminated, allowing the participation of the private sector in this quadrant of the economy, subject, of course, to supervision by the competent authorities. This decision would not only expand supply, but also reduce the costs of acquiring a firearm while fighting illegal arms traffic (by establishing tariffs for the importation of firearms by private persons, with the restriction that they obtain a letter of naturalization in customs practices through the so-called tax-exempt franchises) and creating employment opportunities in the industry, as comparative experience has demonstrated.
- (f) The specific and personal information contained in firearms registrations should be kept confidential, under the premise that knowledge of the names of gun owners and the type of firearm registered would eliminate the elements of surprise and preventive dissuasion that are coupled with the ownership and possession of firearms.
- (g) Mechanisms guaranteeing transparency must be put into place throughout the entire process to allow the community to follow and verify the emergence of this legal institution in Mexican society.
- (h) All indirect measures designed to constrain gun rights (such as high permit costs, prolonged waiting periods, among others) should be eliminated.

Eighth: It is no secret that the Mexican state is currently going through a period of weakness or the Rule of Law is fragile in ample segments of the country. A simplistic pseudo-solution in this context would be to wait for a better moment to give life to our civil rights, which include the human right to the possession and ownership of firearms.

This stance, which may appear attractive in its simplicity, does bring with it certain risks, not just to the spread and survival of democracy, but to the permanence of a national identity and the survival of common citizens, particularly the vast majority of the population who does not have access to bodyguards and protection details, to privileged and guarded areas for recreation and socialization, to securely guarded schools and neighborhoods; in sum, all of the things that help to make life more livable.

There are no rational reasons to allow the weakening of society's efforts to restore the physical and psychological security that has been lost, opting to merely hope that a miracle (and it would certainly be a miracle), or transient administrative measures such as constantly replacing public servants, will restore them on their own.

The citizens of Mexico can wait for someone or something to provide them with reforms that would, in the long term, allow these times to be looked back upon as a dark but transient time in our nation's history; or they can seize this historic moment and use the current institutional crisis as an opportunity to initiate a normative reformation and a process of change in the various pernicious social and cultural practices that plague us today, without leaving aside this human right that would serve, at the very least, to halt the increasing areas of insecurity, particularly for those in society who are the least fortunate. The once untouched areas of comfort held by middle income sectors have not been immune to erosion or intrusion in these last few years. This alone justifies that deciding to look the other way is no longer an option.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. For the current text of Mexico's constitutional right to arms, see Section A.1. For the text of Mexico's national gun control statute, and for prior versions of the constitutional guarantee, see David B. Kopel, *Mexico's Gun Control Laws: A Model for the United States?*, 18 Tex. Rev. L. & Pol. 27 (2014). The article also provides data about gun ownership in Mexico, the practical operation of Mexican gun laws, and current controversies, such as the smuggling of U.S. guns into Mexico.

2. Villanueva and Valenzuela argue that violent crime is destroying the fabric of life in Mexico, and that the Mexican gun control statute should be changed so that Mexican citizens can purchase, possess, and carry effective arms for self-defense, and receive training in doing so. If you were a member of the Mexican Senate or the Chamber of Deputies, which, if any, of Villanueva's and Valenzuela's specific proposals would you vote for?

3. *Citizen militias*. With the government unable or unwilling to protect the public, Mexican citizens in some areas have formed community defense militias. The government has sometimes cooperated with these militias, and sometimes attempted to disarm them. See Carlos Alonso Reynoso, *Movimientos Recientes de Autodefensas y Policías Comunitarias en México* (2018); Raúl Ornelas & Sandy E. Ramírez Gutiérrez, *Los Grupos de Autodefensa en Michoacán*, 4 De Raíz Diversa 249 (no. 7, Jan. 2017); Dudley Althaus & Steven Dudley, *Mexico's Security Dilemma: Michoacán's Militias: The Rise of Vigilantism in Mexico and Its Implications Going Forward* (Wilson Center, Working Paper, 2014).

4. *Fast and Furious*. In early 2009, the ATF regional office in Arizona organized a plan to coerce licensed firearms dealers to allow firearms sales to buyers who were obviously straw purchasers. The buyers were supplying arms to Mexican drug gangs, principally the Sinaloa Cartel. ATF told the gun stores that the buyers would be followed the moment they left the store, and the ATF would thus be able to break up gun-running gangs. To the contrary, ATF made no such effort. The guns disappeared into Mexico and, according to the Mexican Senate, were used in over 200 homicides. ATF's objective was for the American guns to be found, to be traced by ATF to the United States (since their serial numbers would be used to show that the guns were recently sold at retail in the United States), and to be used to demonstrate the need for Congress to pass gun control laws. The scheme began to unravel

in December 2012, when American Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry was murdered with a Fast and Furious rifle. Although there is little evidence that Attorney General Eric Holder knew about Fast and Furious from the outset, the Attorney General and White House worked diligently to attempt to cover up Fast and Furious, eventually leading General Holder to be the first Attorney General held in contempt of Congress. See Katie Pavlich, *Fast and Furious: Barack Obama's Bloodiest Scandal and the Shameless Cover-Up* (2012); 158 Cong. Rec. H4177 (June 28, 2012).

5. In August 2021, the United States of Mexico sued eight American firearms manufacturers for “actively facilitating the unlawful trafficking of their guns to drug cartels and other criminals in Mexico.” Attorneys for plaintiffs include the gun control organization presently known as Brady. The allegations of tortious behavior of the defendant manufacturers are very similar to the allegations made by Brady in the lawsuits against manufacturers that the group organized in the 1990s and early 2000s. (At the time, Brady called itself “Handgun Control, Inc.”). See Ch. 9.E. Some of the factual allegations, such as the percentage of Mexican crime guns that come from the United States, are disputed by sources cited in David B. Kopel, *Mexico's Gun Control Laws: A Model for the United States?*, 18 Tex. Rev. L. & Pol. 27 (2014). The lawsuit would seem to be barred by the federal Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA), which bars most tort suits against firearms manufacturers who comply with U.S. law. Ch. 9.E. However, the complaint briefly argues that the PLCAA does not apply to lawsuits involving harms that occurred in a foreign nation. Filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Massachusetts, the complaint is available on the Student Materials page of the website for this textbook, <http://firearmsregulation.org/StudentMaterials.html>.

5. Venezuela

President Hugo Chávez was first elected in 1998, leading the United Socialist Party. He stated that a peaceful society is one in which citizens do not have guns. His political movement styled itself as the Bolivarian Revolution and aimed to rule according to “twenty-first century socialism.” Chávez died March 5, 2013, and was succeeded by Nicolás Maduro.

As of 2009, it was estimated that Venezuela's population of 29 million people owned about 15 million firearms, including illegal ones. *Venezuelan Government Announces Disarmament Plan—Again*, Vice News, Sept. 23, 2014.

At Chávez's urging, the Control of Arms, Munitions and Disarmament Law was enacted by the National Assembly in June 2012, coming into force in June 2013. Textually, the law allows firearms to be owned for sports or self-defense. Private sales of firearms were prohibited; personally possessed firearms may only be sold to the government. In May 2013, the Ministry of Justice ordered that all gun stores (*armerías*) be closed. The government's gun-owning company is the Compañía Anónima Venezolana de Industrias Militares. According to the law, the government always owns all firearms, and individual possession is merely a lease of government property—which the government can “recuperate” at any time. To buy a gun, a person must have a license. According to the legislation, no licenses would be issued for the next two years. Citizens may purchase no more than 50

cartridges per year. Prison sentences for possession of an illegal gun are four to six years, and four to eight for carrying. David Smilde, [Citizen Security Reform, Part 5: Gun Control](#), *Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas*, Aug. 5, 2013.

From time to time, the government runs amnesties to encourage citizens to surrender their arms, sometimes in exchange for a gift, such as electronics. “Disarmament must come from the conscience of the youth” (“Hace falta que este desarme se haga con la colaboración de la juventud desde su conciencia”), President Maduro [declared](#) at the beginning of a 2014 surrender program.

In the last two decades, Venezuela has become extremely dangerous. Its murder rate is the second highest in the world, exceeded only by Honduras. Caracas, the capital and largest city, is the third most dangerous city in the world. Stiven Tremaria, *Violent Caracas: Understanding Violence and Homicide in Contemporary Venezuela* 63-64 (2016) (San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and Acapulco, Mexico, are worse).

The national homicide rate in 2012 was 48 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants; the rate in Caracas was 122. *Id.* at 63. As of 2011, 91 percent of Caracas homicides were perpetrated with firearms, and 5 percent with bladed arms. *Id.* at 65. “The exponential growth in homicide rates in the last two decades has coincided with an increase in brutality. Victims were shot multiple times in public during daylight; 30 percent of all victims murdered with firearms were shot more than six times, and 16 percent received more than eleven gunshots.” *Id.* (citations omitted). Robbery is common; in Caracas, 70 percent of robberies “are committed by armed motorcyclists, mainly during rush hour in traffic jams on the main traffic arteries.” *Id.* at 66.

Police officers are often murdered for the purpose of stealing their firearms. “Before 2005, most police officers died in the line of duty. But nowadays, 65% of crimes against officers are motorcycle and weapon theft.” [Murdered for Their Guns, Venezuela’s Police Are Now Victims of Crime](#), *The Guardian*, Nov. 4, 2015 (noting 252 security officers killed in Jan.-Oct. 2015).

Under the Chávez/Maduro regime, society has been militarized. The military, now called the National Bolivarian Armed Forces, has repeatedly suppressed protests or other threats to the regime’s perpetuity. Beginning in 2002, the government began to establish *colectivos*—paramilitary groups loyal to the regime. With names such as *Colectivo La Piedrita*, *Tupamaros*, and *Grupo Carapaica*, the groups parade with arms in public, and have close ties to the government. Here is a video of pro-Maduro militiamen marching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1xD3qsVy3I>.

“The strategy of installing progovernment militias has certainly counteracted any efforts to reduce the availability of firearms, and has certainly also increased membership of gangs and other illegal armed groups. Presently, the number of firearms in legal or illegal civilian possession is estimated at approximately eight million.” Tremaria, at 72 (citing research from 2011).

A key role for *colectivos* is attacking and sometimes murdering anti-government protesters. This allows the government to deny responsibility, since the killings were not formally perpetrated by the government. Maria C. Werlau, *Venezuela’s Criminal Gangs: Warriors of Cultural Revolution* 90 (2014);⁴⁰ [Armed Civilian Bands](#)

40. Werlau is President of the Free Society Project and Executive Director of the Cuba Archive.

in *Venezuela Prop Up Unpopular President*, N.Y. Times, Apr. 22, 2017; UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, *UN Human Rights Team's Findings Indicate Patterns of Rights Violations amid Mass Protests in Venezuela* (2017) ("armed colectivos routinely break into protests on motorcycles, wielding firearms and harassing or in some cases shooting at people").

In anticipation of a new round of anti-government protests in April 2017, Maduro promised "a gun for every militiaman!" He announced that the *colectivos* would be expanded to 400,000 members. Venezuela's Maduro Arms Supporters in Preparation for "Mother of All Protests," *PJ Media*, Apr. 19, 2017.

Often, *colectivo* members are recruited by Cuban agents, instructed in Marxism-Leninism, and taught how to "kill and repress," as one former Cuban agent put it. Besides Cubans, trainers are supplied by FARC, the Colombian Marxist terrorist organization. Werlau, at 90. Sometimes they are sent to Cuba for training. *Id.* at 91.

"Colectivos control vast territory across Venezuela, financed in some cases by extortion, black-market food and parts of the drug trade as the government turns a blind eye in exchange for loyalty." *Armed Civilian Bands in Venezuela Prop Up Unpopular President*, N.Y. Times, Apr. 22, 2017. Professor Fermín Mármol, of University of Santa María, predicts that "[i]f tomorrow the revolution loses the presidency, the colectivos will immediately change to urban guerrilla warfare." *Id.*

Recall from Chapter 4.A.3 the 1774 incident in which the British military governor sent a contingent of Redcoats to break up an illegal political meeting in Massachusetts. The Redcoats desisted when they saw that were far outnumbered by armed Americans. Such an event would not occur in Venezuela today, where the government has made sure to have much more armed power than protesters. For examples, here is a video of *colectivos* using a FN machine gun against protesters in Caracas in 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4jUlo7AOoA>. Here is another video of *colectivo* gun use: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCIL1CwhW4U>.

The protesters have rocks and Molotov cocktails.⁴¹ They also have created large slingshots that use a four-person crew to throw "baby-food jars full of paint or even human excrement." For defense, protestors may wear swim goggles, "create shinguards from old magazines and duct tape," make body armor from carpet scraps, or carry shields made from wood or oil drums. *The Battle for Venezuela, Through a Lens, Helmet and Gas Mask*, N.Y. Times, July 22, 2017.

The Venezuelan dictatorship has announced that it will never relinquish its power. Its human rights abuses make it one of the worst regimes in the Western Hemisphere, exceeded in its repressiveness only by Cuba. See, e.g., Human Rights Watch, "Venezuela: Events in 2017" in World Report (2017); Human Rights Watch, *Crackdown on Dissent* (2017). See generally James Ausman, *The Devastating Venezuelan Crisis*, 10 *Surgical Neurology Int'l* 145 (July 26, 2019).

The ordinary (nongovernment) gun crime situation, while still severe, has recently abated, thanks to the communist regime's destruction of the economy. Although cartridges are readily available on the black market, criminals are

41. Flammable liquids in a bottle. The name was first used by Finns resisting the 1939 Soviet invasion. Stalin's Foreign Minister was Vyacheslav Molotov.

increasingly unable to afford the cost of \$1 per round. Moreover, hyperinflation has made the Venezuelan currency (the Bolívar) not worth robbing even from a bank, and muggings are not worth the trouble because the victims no longer have anything worth stealing. Beatrice Christofaro, *Venezuela's Economic Crisis Is Now so Bad That Criminals Can't Afford to Buy Bullets*, Insider, May 28, 2019.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. **CQ:** Compare the Chávez-Maduro policies with those of the Stuart kings of England, including their efforts to create a “perfect militia” solely of loyalists to their dictatorial regime. Chs. 2.H, 22.H.

2. **CQ:** John Locke (Chs. 2.K.2, 22.K.2) and Patrick Henry (Ch. 4.A.6) warned against waiting too long to forcibly resist an incipient tyranny. Is it too late for Venezuela?

3. News reports indicate that some Venezuelans regret the gun control policies their government has implemented since 2012. See, e.g., José Niño, *Gun Control Preceded the Tyranny in Venezuela*, Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) (Jan. 22, 2019); Hollie McKay, *Venezuelans Regret Gun Ban, “A Declaration of War Against an Unarmed Population,”* Fox News, Dec. 18, 2018. To what extent does Venezuela serve as a modern example that citizen arms are an essential guard against government tyranny? Can you think of other modern examples?

4. Reports on violent crime in Venezuela are available from the [Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia](#).

5. In response to a home invasion by a gang of four youths, the victim shot one of the invaders, who was the son of a politically powerful lawyer. The judiciary upheld the criminal conviction and imprisonment of the victim. The decision was criticized for disregarding “legitimate self-defence” under the Criminal Code of Venezuela “as well as under the legislation of countries governed by the rule of law.” *José Daniel Ferrer García v. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 28/2012, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/WGAD/2012/28. 28 (2012).

6. Australia

The history of arms and arms control in Australia through 1991 is a subject of a chapter in David B. Kopel, *The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy: Should America Adopt the Gun Controls of Other Democracies?* (1992). However, Australia is mainly of interest to Americans because of what happened later in the decade.

Gun laws in Australia are made at the state level. Historically, Western Australia was the most restrictive. In 1988, a bitter fight over gun registration in the most populous state, New South Wales, led to the defeat of the incumbent party that had enacted a registration law.

But by the mid-1990s, universal gun registration was the law in most of Australia. Persons who worried that registration lists could be used for confiscation were derided as paranoid extremists.

Working with renowned gun control expert and advocate Rebecca Peters, the national government, led by Prime Minister John Howard, made plans for major steps forward. However, the government decided to withhold the program until

the right moment. That moment came in April 1996, when a man using two semi-automatic rifles murdered 35 people and wounded 23 at the Port Arthur tourist site on the island of Tasmania. The government immediately unveiled the National Firearms Agreement.

To be implemented, the agreement required the assent of the legislatures of Australia's six states and two mainland territories, which was obtained. A new temporary tax was imposed, to raise \$AU500 million to pay remuneration for the confiscation of approximately 643,726 firearms. Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Australia, *The Australian Firearms Buyback: tally for number of firearms collected and compensation* (2002). This was approximately a fifth or a sixth of the total gun stock. Since Australia's population at the time was about 20 million, the tax amounted to about \$AU25 per person.

All semi-automatic and pump-action rifles and shotguns were prohibited. The confiscation included .22 rimfire rifles, which had long been used for rabbit hunting. The program was euphemistically called a "buyback," although the government had never owned the guns in the first place. Nor were the guns for sale; the registered guns were surrendered at confiscation centers under pain of imprisonment. There were no known examples of civil disobedience. In the state of Queensland, registration was brought in contemporaneously with the confiscation. Ownership of any gun for self-defense was prohibited. Likewise prohibited, as in the United Kingdom, was *any* item whose purpose is self-defense. Thus, tasers and chemical defense sprays are forbidden. Carrying knives or sticks for defense also became illegal.

To outsiders, the political ease of the confiscation might have seemed surprising. Yet despite Australia's vast open spaces, the country's population is over 85 percent urban, about the same as Japan's. Unlike North America, Australia's ecology did not lend itself to a hunting culture. Australian hunting is mainly duck hunting in the relatively few areas with enough good water, as well as rabbit hunting. However, an estimated quarter of the prohibited firearms were illegally retained, rather than surrendered. Peter Reuter & Jenny D. Mouzos, *Australia: A Massive Buyback of Low-Risk Guns, in Evaluating Gun Policy*, 121, 141 (Jens Ludwig & Philip J. Cook eds. 2003). These were presumably guns that had not previously been registered.

In 2003, the Howard government successfully led another confiscation program, which took hundreds of models of handguns. As in Canada and New Zealand, all handguns in Australia had been registered and tightly controlled since the 1930s. In all three nations, handgun ownership has always been lower relative to long guns than is the case in the United States. Handgun crime involving registered handguns was rare. For example, in 2001 and 2002, only one registered handgun was used in a homicide. In addition to the confiscation program, the government also runs "buyback" programs to encourage target shooters to give up their sport and voluntarily sell their guns to the government.

Today, for the remaining types of lawful handguns, the licensing process requires several months' probation with an accredited target-shooting club, after which a person may apply to the police for a license. Licensees must participate in a given number of competition shoots annually or monthly. Almost no one (except the government) may possess handguns over .38 caliber, or above a certain barrel length (100mm for revolvers, 120mm for semi-automatics). The safe storage rules

for handgun owners include monitored alarm systems, even for antique pistols made before 1900 for which no commercial ammunition currently exists.

Over the last two decades, Australians have bought enough new firearms to replace the number that were confiscated. Of course, the new guns are of different types from the confiscated ones.

Before and after 1996, the homicide rate and the suicide rate were falling in Australia. Did the 1996 laws contribute to the decline? Several studies found no effect on homicide, and mixed results on suicide. Stuart Gilmour, Kittima Wattanakamolkul & Maaya Kita Sugui, *The Effect of the Australian National Firearms Agreement on Suicide and Homicide Mortality, 1978-2015*, 108 Am. J. Pub. Health e1 (Sept. 2018) (no statistically discernable effect on homicide or suicide); Jeanine Baker & Samara McPhedran, *Australian Firearm Related Deaths: New Findings and Implications for Crime Prevention and Health Policies Following Revisions to Official Death Count Data*, 10 Int'l J. Crim. Just. Sci. 1 (2015) (no effect on homicide, but lower suicide rates); Wang-Sheng Lee & Sandy Suardi, *The Australian Firearms Buyback and Its Effect on Gun Deaths*, 28 Contemp. Econ. Pol'y 65 (2010) (no effect on firearms homicide or firearms suicide rates); A. Leigh & C. Neill, *Do Gun Buybacks Save Lives? Evidence from Panel Data*, 12 Am. L. & Econ. Rev. 509 (2010) (no statistically significant effect on firearms homicides; large drop in firearms suicides, although the data do not exclude the possibility of a substitution effect resulting in no aggregate saving in lives).

However, a much-noticed article in *JAMA* (Journal of the American Medical Association) reported that the 1996 law did reduce homicide and suicide. Simon Chapman, Philip Alpers & Michael Jones, *Association Between Gun Law Reforms and Intentional Firearm Deaths in Australia, 1979-2013*, 316 JAMA 291 (2016).

A subsequent study examined the methodology of the *JAMA* article. The methodology did show significant before/after effects from 1996. But that same methodology also found significant before/after effects for earlier years in the 1990s—years when gun laws did not change. Accordingly, “[c]urrent evidence showing decreases in firearm mortality after the 1996 Australian national firearm law relies on an empirical model that may have limited ability to identify the true effects of the law.” Ben Ukert, Elena Andreyeva & Charles C. Branas, *Time Series Robustness Checks to Test the Effects of the 1996 Australian Firearm Law on Cause-Specific Mortality*, 14 J. Experimental Criminology 141 (2017).

As Professor Gary Kleck pointed out, the *JAMA* analysis was univariate, that is, it had no direct control variables. (See Section B.2 for discussion of the limitations of studies that do not attempt to control for social variables.) Surprisingly, the 1996 law appears to have caused an increase in gun accidents. Perhaps, suggests Kleck, the reason is that gun owners surrendered firearms with which they were familiar, and replaced them with other firearms with which they were not; alternatively, the data might simply reflect suicides being misclassified as accidents. (Coroners sometimes make such classifications out of sensitivity for the decedent’s family.) Gary Kleck, *Did Australia’s Ban on Semiauto Firearms Really Reduce Violence? A Critique of the Chapman et al. (2016) Study* (2018).

According to the *JAMA* article, “[f]rom 1979-1996 (before gun law reforms), 13 fatal mass shootings occurred in Australia, whereas from 1997 through May 2016 (after gun law reforms), no fatal mass shootings occurred.” Chapman et al., at 298. The authors defined a “mass shooting” as one in which five or more people

were killed.⁴² The causal mechanism was apparently the ban on what the authors called “rapid-fire” guns. *Id.* at 291-93. Six of the 13 crimes were spree killings—that is, crimes in which the criminal or criminals shot people at different locations, with a sufficient time interval between two locations to reload. Some of these took place on multiple floors of the same building, while others had very large time intervals. For example, one “mass shooting” involved three criminals killing a total of five people over the course of a month, with the crimes taking place at multiple locations and in two different states. Kleck, at 16-18. Given the ample time for a criminal to reload a gun from one day to the next, or while traveling from one location to the next, it is difficult to see how a gun’s “rapid-fire” capability would be relevant.

By Kleck’s analysis, there were seven crimes in which five or more people were killed in a single location. Of those, two involved types of guns that were covered by the National Firearms Agreement. *Id.* at 18-19. Subsequent to the Agreement, there have been six mass murders (five or more fatalities, in a single location) in Australia perpetrated with means other than a firearm; from 1979 to 1996 (the pre-Agreement years covered by the *JAMA* study), there had been none. *Id.* at 19-20.

The *JAMA* authors did not respond to the critique from Ukert, Andreyeva, and Branas. They did respond to Kleck, pointing out that Kleck did not suggest what control variables *should* have been included. Further, the *JAMA* authors had noted the possibility of extraneous factors, such as cell phones making it possible for emergency responders to reach gunshot victims more quickly, and thus save their lives. Simon Chapman & Philp Alpers, *Australia’s 1996 Gun Law Reforms Halted Mass Shootings for 22 Years: A Response to Criticism from Gary Kleck*, 10 *Contemp. Readings in L. & Soc. Just.* 94, 101-02 (2018).

In 2018, Australia did have a mass shooting, as that term is defined in the *JAMA* article. A grandfather killed his four autistic grandchildren, the children’s mother, his wife, and himself. The murderer was upset about losing a custody dispute and shot the victims in their beds. Australian Associated Press, *Margaret River Shooting: Murder-Suicide Could Not Be Predicted, WA Premier Says*, *The Guardian*, May 14, 2018.

The Australian government reports that there are currently about 2.89 million legally registered firearms in Australia, owned by 816,000 licensees; meanwhile there over 250,000 long guns and 10,000 handguns in the black market. Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, *Illicit Firearms in Australia* 7, 27 (2018). Illicit arms have been used by terrorists. For example, in 2014, a radical Islamist took 17 people hostage at the Lindt Chocolate Café, in the heart of Sydney’s financial and legal district. He was armed with a semi-automatic shotgun, which is prohibited. Two victims were killed. The gun was supplied by a Middle Eastern organized crime group that is based in Sydney and supportive of terrorism. April Glover, *Middle Eastern Crime Family “with Links to Muslim Extremists Sold Shotgun to Terrorist Man Haron Monis for \$570” Days Before the Lindt Café Siege*, *Daily Mail Australia*, Dec. 10, 2017.

42. The *JAMA* count did not include a September 2014 family murder-suicide, because there were four victims, plus the perpetrator, who killed himself. *Lockhart Shooting: “Egocentric Delusion” Drove Geoff Hunt to Shoot Dead Wife and Children Before Killing Himself, Coroner Says*, Australian Broadcasting Corp., Oct. 8, 2015.

In 2015, a radical Islamist teenager assassinated an unarmed police office accountant outside the New South Wales Police Force headquarters in Parramatta, Sydney. The murder weapon, a revolver, apparently was supplied by a Middle Eastern gang. Mark Morri, *Parramatta Shooting: Farhad Jabar's Gun Allegedly Came from Middle Eastern Crime Gang*, Daily Telegraph, Oct. 7, 2015. In response, the government's Firearms and Weapons Policy Working Group (FWPWG) recommended another round of amnesties for the surrender of firearms, in the hope of collecting unregistered guns. Accordingly, a three-month amnesty was held in 2017, in which 57,324 firearms were voluntarily surrendered without compensation. Australian Government, National Firearms and Weapons Policy Working Group, National Firearms Amnesty 2017 Report 6 (Dec. 2017).

Could the Australia model—a ban on self-defense, registration of all guns, and confiscation of about 20 percent of all guns—be used in the United States? President Obama so suggested: “We know that other countries, in response to one mass shooting, have been able to craft laws that almost eliminate mass shootings. Friends of ours, allies of ours—Great Britain, Australia—countries like ours. So we know there are ways to prevent it.” Barack Obama, Presidential Statement, October 1, 2015. U.S. Representative Eric Swalwell (D-Cal.) urges that the United States adopt legislation based on the Australian model. Eric Swalwell, *Ban Assault Weapons, Buy Them Back, Go After Resisters: Ex-Prosecutor in Congress*, USA Today, May 3, 2018. The call has been echoed by other American political leaders.

Professor Philip Alpers, coauthor of the *JAMA* article discussed above, is hopeful that the Australia model eventually will be followed in the United States. However, he considers it “inconceivable that a public safety measure on this scale might occur any time soon in the United States. Australia’s gun buybacks amounted to confiscation of private property, albeit fairly compensated, under the threat of jail time. In the United States, destroying an equivalent one-third of the country’s civilian firearms would require sending 90 million weapons to the smelter. Further, an attitude adjustment would be required.” Philip Alpers, *Australia’s Gun Laws Can’t Work in America—For Now*, *Geo. J. Int’l Aff.* (Mar. 30, 2018).

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. What parts, if any, of the Australia model could or should be adopted in the United States. **CQ:** For the confiscation issue, consider Professor Johnson’s analysis of the “remainder problem,” in Section B.5.

2. *Further reading:* Simon Chapman, *Over Our Dead Bodies: Port Arthur and Australia’s Fight for Gun Control* (2013) (overview by one of Australia’s leading gun control advocates); Denise Cartolano, *Check “Mate”: Australia’s Gun Law Reform Presents the United States with the Challenge to Safeguard Their Citizens from Mass Shootings*, 41 *Nova L. Rev.* 139 (2017); Jonathan Weg, *We Don’t Come from a Land Down Under: How Adopting Australia’s Gun Laws Would Violate the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution*, 24 *Cardozo J. Int’l & Comp. L.* 657 (2016).

3. The leading gun policy advocacy groups in Australia are the [Sporting Shooters’ Association of Australia](#), and [Gun Control Australia](#).

4. *Papua New Guinea.* Besides writing extensively on Australia, Professor Philip Alpers is author of *Gun-running in Papua New Guinea: From Arrows to Assault*

Weapons in the Southern Highlands (Small Arms Survey Occasional Paper, 2005). The secessionist movement in Bougainville, PNG, is discussed in David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *Micro-Disarmament: The Consequences for Public Safety and Human Rights*, 73 UMKC L. Rev. 969, 983-85 (2005) (also discussing disarmament programs in Cambodia, Albania, Panama, Guatemala, and Mali).

5. *New Zealand*. As of 2013, New Zealand's 4.3 million people owned over 1 million firearms. Chaz Forsyth, *New Zealand Firearms—An Exploration into Firearm Possession, Use and Misuse in New Zealand* (2013).

Approximately 230,000 people have arms licenses. Every year, about 10,000 new people apply. Of the licensed owners, under 50,000 belong to a gun club or other firearms organization. Annually, there are about 500 violent crimes in which firearms are used.

New Zealand followed the United Kingdom's lead in the early 1920s by enacting gun control laws based on fears of communist revolution. In 1983, a new Arms Act repealed registration for long guns, at police request. In 1984, a program for shooter licensing was created. Handguns are lawful, but much less common than shotguns and rifles. David B. Kopel, *The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy: Should America Adopt the Gun Controls of Other Democracies?* (1992).

In 1997, a criminal murdered six people at Raurimu. New Zealand left its laws intact and did not adopt the Australian model of mass confiscation. Ownership of semiautomatic long guns had already been subjected to a more stringent licensing system than other guns.

There were no mass shootings in New Zealand for the next two decades. But in April 2019, a criminal who advocated for racism, gun control, and extreme environmentalism murdered 51 people at a mosque in Christchurch. The New Zealand government quickly implemented a gun confiscation program on the Australian model. Newly prohibited were all semi-automatic centerfire rifles, all shotguns of any type with a magazine capacity over five, and any rifle of any type with an ammunition capacity greater than ten, which included semiautomatics, bolt action, lever action, and pump action rifles, and all long gun magazines over ten rounds. *Arms (Prohibited Firearms Magazines, and Parts) Amendment Regulations 2019*, Order in Council, June 19, 2019; New Zealand Police, *Firearms law changes & prohibited firearms*.

Compliance has been higher than with arms surrender programs in the United States (for which compliance tends to be near zero) but significantly lower than in Australia. By the December 2019 final deadline, about 56,000 of the government-estimated 170,000 firearms affected had been surrendered. *Gun Buyback: Over 56,000 Guns Collected as Police Release Official Figures*, NZ Herald, Dec. 21, 2019; Thomas Manch, *Claims That Banned Firearms Are Being Hidden as Gun Buyback Ends with 50,000 Collected*, Dominion Post, Dec. 20 2019. Last-minute compliance may have been reduced by reports of extensive data privacy breaches of the records of gun owners who did surrender their arms. Noah Shepardson, *New Zealand's Mandatory Buyback Program Leaked Gun Owners' Personal Info*, Reason, Dec. 4, 2019. Unlike in Australia, relations between firearm owners and the police had been mutually respectful rather than antagonistic. That is now a thing of the past; the criminal at the mosque has succeeded at his objective of inflaming culture war.

The leading gun policy organizations in New Zealand are [Gun Control NZ](#), which argues that the 2019 laws should be the starting point for much more

control. On the other side is the [Council of Licensed Firearms Owners](#), which has launched a [Fair and Reasonable](#) public information to oppose proposed new laws, and criticizes defects in the application of the 2019 ones.

7. *Japan*

David B. Kopel

Japan, Gun Laws

in 2 Guns in American Society: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, Culture, and the Law 449 (Gregg Lee Carter ed., 2d ed. 2012) (revised for this work)⁴³

Japanese law prohibits the ownership of rifles and pistols and imposes very strict licensing for shotguns and air guns. The firearms law appears to be both a cause and a consequence of the relatively authoritarian nature of Japanese society. Starting in the 1990s, Japan has begun to work to export its firearms policies on other nations.

Japanese gun law starts with prohibition as the norm: “No-one shall possess a fire-arm or fire-arms or a sword or swords.” From there, some exceptions are created.

Japanese sportsmen are permitted to possess shotguns for hunting and for skeet and trap shooting, but only after submitting to a lengthy licensing procedure. Air rifles (but not air pistols) are also allowed for sporting purposes.

A prospective gun owner must first attend classes and pass a written test. Shooting range classes and a shooting test follow; 95 percent pass. After the safety exam, the applicant takes a simple “mental test” at a local hospital, to ensure that the applicant is not suffering from a readily detectable mental illness. The applicant then produces for the police a medical certificate attesting that he or she is mentally healthy and not addicted to drugs. The police investigate the applicant’s background and relatives, ensuring that both are crime-free. Membership in “aggressive” political or activist groups disqualifies an applicant. The police have unlimited discretion to deny licenses to any person for whom “there is reasonable cause to suspect may be dangerous to other persons’ lives or properties or to the public peace.”

Gun owners must store their weapons in a locker and give the police a map of the apartment showing the location of the locker. Ammunition must be kept in a separate locked safe. The licenses allow the holder to buy a few thousand rounds of ammunition, with each transaction being registered.

Civilians can never own handguns. Small caliber rifles were once legal, but in 1971, the Government forbade all transfers of rifles. Current rifle license holders were allowed to continue to own them, but their heirs must turn them into the police when the license-holder dies.

43. A longer analysis, with footnotes, is David B. Kopel, *Japanese Gun Control*, 2 *Asia-Pac. L. Rev.* 26 (1993).

The severe controls on gun ownership in Japan are consistent with Japanese practices regarding other matters which are guaranteed by the Bill of Rights in America, but which are subject to extensive control in Japan. For example, Japan has no meaningful limits on police search and seizure. A person who is arrested may be held incommunicado for long periods of time, and not released unless he confesses. *Call to Eliminate Japan's "Hostage Justice" System by Japanese Legal Professionals*, Human Rights Watch, Apr. 10, 2019. Criminal trial procedures are, compared to the trials in the U.S., much more heavily tilted towards the government, and acquittals are extremely rare. Trial by jury has been abolished. Restrictions on speech and the press are much broader than in the U.S.

Guns first arrived in Japan along with the first trading ships from Portugal in 1542 or 1543. The Portuguese had landed on Tanegashima Island, outside Kyushu. One day the Portuguese trader Mendez Pinto took Totitaka, Lord of Tanegashima for a walk; the trader shot a duck. The Lord of Tanegashima made immediate arrangements to take shooting lessons, and within a month he bought Portuguese guns, or *Tanegashima* as the Japanese soon called them.

The *Tanegashima* caught on quickly among Japan's feuding warlords. The novelty of the guns was the main reason that the Portuguese were treated well. The Japanese rapidly improved firearms technology. They invented a device to make matchlocks⁴⁴ fire better in the rain (the Europeans never figured out how to do this), refined the matchlock trigger and spring, and increased the matchlock's caliber. The Arabs, Indians, and Chinese had all acquired firearms long before the Japanese, but only the Japanese mastered large-scale domestic manufacture.

By 1560, firearms were being used effectively in large battles. In 1567, Lord Takeda Harunobu declared, "Hereafter, guns will be the most important arms." Less than three decades after Japan saw its first gun, there were more guns in Japan than any other nation. Several Japanese feudal lords had more guns than the whole British army.

It was Lord Oda Nobunaga whose army truly mastered the new firearms technology. "Nobunaga's strength derived from a superior arsenal and the use of foot soldiers armed with muskets . . . to displace the mounted warrior with the historically despised infantryman." Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* 45 (1982). The advantage in battle shifted "to those who held Japan's foreign ports and metal works." *Id.*

At Nagashino in 1575, three thousand of Nobunaga's conscript peasants with muskets hid behind wooden posts and devastated the enemy. *Id.* at 63. Feudal wars between armies of samurai knights had ravaged Japan for thirteen decades. Nobunaga and his peasant army, equipped with matchlocks, conquered most of Japan, and helped bring the feudal wars to an end. Part of his advantage lay in controlling most of the areas that produced arms in large scale. *Id.* at 79.

Guns dramatically changed the nature of war. In earlier times, after the introductions, fighters would pair off, to go at each other in single combat—a method of fighting apt to let individual heroism shine. Armored, highly trained samurai

44. [The standard firearm of the time. The shooter would light a match, then use the match to inflame a slow-burning wick, and the wick would ignite the gunpowder. See Chs. 2.I.1, 23.A.1.—Eds.]

had the advantage. But with guns, the unskilled could be deployed *en masse*, and could destroy the armored knights with ease. Understandably, the noble *bushi* class thought firearms undignified.

Starting out as a groom for Lord Nobunaga, a peasant named Hidéyoshi rose through the ranks to take control of Nobunaga's army after Nobunaga was assassinated. A brilliant strategist, Hidéyoshi finished the job that Nobunaga began, and re-unified Japan's feudal states under a strong central government. On August 29, 1588, Hidéyoshi announced "the Sword Hunt" (*taiko no katanagari*) and banned possession of arms by the non-noble classes. He decreed:

The farmers in the various provinces are strictly forbidden to have in their possession long swords, short swords, bows, spears, muskets, or any other form of weapon. If there are persons who maintain unnecessary implements, cause hardship in collection of annual taxes, and foment uprisings, or commit wrong acts toward the retainers, they shall, needless to say, be brought to judgment. . . . So that the long and short swords collected shall not be wasted, they shall be [melted down and] used as rivets and clamps in the forthcoming construction of the Great Buddha. This will be an act by which farmers will be saved in this life, needless to say, and the life to come. . . . Collect the above-mentioned implements without fail and deliver them [to us].

Berry, at 102-103 (brackets in original).

The Western missionaries' *Jesuit Annual Letter* reported that Hidéyoshi "is depriving the people of their arms under the pretext of devotion to religion." 2 James Murdoch, *A History of Japan* 369 n.4 (1930).

The Japanese experience was consistent with the belief of Aristotle and Plato that deprivation of a role in the armed defense of a society would lead to deprivation of any role in governing that society. See online Chapter 21.B.1. Berkeley professor Mary Elizabeth Berry explains: "The mounted magistrates who rounded up everything from muskets to daggers changed men's thoughts about themselves. Farmers had borne arms for centuries and taken part in the contests that helped fix the rights of lordship. Their military role brought political influence and obscured class boundaries. A pivotal member of his community by the warring-states era, the armed peasant symbolized opportunity. The confiscation of his weapons, far more than a 'hardship,' altered a condition of life." Berry at 104.

Besides disarming peasants, Hidéyoshi was particularly keen on disarming the Buddhist monasteries, whose armed monks had long been power centers that were not easily controlled by a central government. Berry, at 86. Within the cities, non-nobles were eventually allowed to carry short swords but not long ones. In case of a confrontation with a samurai, the samurai with his long sword would have a considerable advantage. Constantine Nomikos Vaporis, *Voices of Early Modern Japan: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life During the Age of the Shoguns* 78-79 (2013).

In 1591, Hidéyoshi forbade farmers to abandon their fields for wage labor or a trade. Men in the military class were forbidden to exist without a master. The next year, changes in residence from one district, village, or province to another were forbidden. A police state was established to stop occupational or geographical mobility.

Berry, at 106-10, “[T]he armed peasant and the presumption of social mobility” had been “constant[s] in the warring states world.” *id.* at 108. Formerly, villages had been “an armed unit of resistance to authority.” *Id.* Hidéyoshi’s cleavage of the noble and peasant classes ended the possibility of them working together to resist central power. Further reading on Hidéyoshi: Stephen Turnbull, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi* (2010).

Enforcement of the above was mostly left to the *daimyo* (great lords) of any given province. There are no known reports of major resistance, and in at least some areas, implementation was gradual. Berry, at 137. As applied, the government’s policy seems to have concentrated mainly on preventing non-nobles from carrying swords; there were later rebellions in which peasants used firearms, indicating that disarmament of the peasants was not comprehensively accomplished. See Tamara Enomoto, *Giving Up the Gun? Overcoming Myths about Japanese Sword-Hunting and Firearms Control*, 6 *Hist. of Global Arms Transfer* 45 (2018). Or perhaps some nobles retained large enough armories to supply local rebellions.

The inferior status of the peasantry having been affirmed by the sword carrying ban, the Samurai enjoyed *kiri-sute gomen*, permission to kill and depart. Any disrespectful member of the lower class could be executed by a Samurai’s sword.

After Hidéyoshi died in 1598, Tokugawa Iéyasu won the ensuing power struggle and founded the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1603; it would rule Japan until 1867. Peasants were assigned to a “five-man group,” headed by landholders who were responsible for the group’s behavior. The groups arranged marriages, resolved disputes, maintained religious orthodoxy, and enforced the rules against peasants possessing firearms or swords. The weapons laws clarified and stabilized class distinctions.

Historian Noel Perrin suggests that the anti-gun edicts were part of a xenophobic reaction against outside influences, particularly Christianity. The Samurai were culturally willing to discard firearms because, unlike firearms, swords were graceful to use in combat. Noel Perrin, *Giving Up the Gun: Japan’s Reversion to the Sword 1543-1879* (1979).

“The separation of classes, the regulation of movement, the monopolization of political power by the military, the restriction on arms—these policies, if sometimes laxly enforced, remained law in mid-nineteenth century Japan.” Berry, at 239. During the early twentieth century, the gun controls were slightly relaxed. Tokyo and other major ports were allowed to have five gun shops each, other prefectures, three. Revolver sales were allowed with a police permit, and registration of every transaction was required.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the military came increasingly to control civilian life. Historian Hidehiro Sonoda explains: “The army and the navy were vast organizations with a monopoly on physical violence. There was no force in Japan that could offer any resistance.” *Seventy-Seven Keys to the Civilization of Japan* (Tadao Umesai ed., 1985).

After World War II ended with Japan in ruins, the military was reviled by the Japanese people, and abolished by General MacArthur’s occupation government. The MacArthur government also dismantled centralized national control of the police. In 1946, MacArthur’s government ordered the Japanese police to begin carrying guns; finding out that this edict was still being ignored in 1948, the American occupation forces distributed revolvers to the Japanese police.

Today, the police have reverted to central national control, and many of the American-style restrictions on police power that the occupation government wrote into the new Japanese Constitution are ignored. The American-imposed policy of police armament remains in place, though.

But unlike in America, police regulations and culture do not valorize police gun ownership and use (and therefore, unlike in America, do not promote a broader gun culture by example). No officer would ever carry a second, smaller handgun as a backup, as many American police do. Policemen may not add individual touches, such as ergonomic grips or a preferred holster. While American police are often required to carry guns while off-duty, and almost always allowed to if they wish (even when retired), Japanese police must leave their guns at the station. Unlike in the United States, desk-bound police administrators, traffic police, most plainclothes detectives, and even the riot police do not carry guns.

One poster on Japanese police walls ordered: “Don’t take it out of the holster, don’t put your finger on the trigger, don’t point it at people.” Shooting at a fleeing felon is unlawful under any circumstance, whereas American police and citizens are both authorized to use deadly force to stop certain types of escaping felons. In an average year, the entire Tokyo police force only fires a few shots.

Historically, Japan has had a very high suicide rate, although there has been notable progress in recent years. Several decades ago, Japanese scholars Mamon Iga and Kichinosuke Tatai argued that one cause of Japan’s suicide problem was that people had little sympathy for suicide victims. Iga and Tatai suggested that the lack of sympathy was based on Japanese feelings of insecurity and consequent lack of empathy. They traced the lack of empathy to a “dread of power.” That dread is caused in part by the awareness that a person cannot count on others for help against violence or against authority. In addition, said Iga and Tatai, the dread of power stems from the people being forbidden to possess swords or firearms for self-defense. Mamon Iga & Kichinosuke Tatai, *Characteristics of Suicide and Attitudes toward Suicides in Japan, in Suicide in Different Cultures* 255-80 (Norman Faberow ed., 1975).

In 2017 in Japan, there were 306 homicides, 4 of which involved firearms. (The homicide data does not include murder/suicides in which parents kill their children and then themselves; such deaths are classified as suicides.) In a population of over 120 million, there were only 2,332 reported robberies in 2016. “[Japan: Crime Statistics](#),” in Knoemo.com World Data Atlas. Some scholars argue that Japanese crime reporting rates are unusually low because victims fear retaliation from the organized criminal gangs (Yakuza) who perpetrate much of the crime. Even so, gun crime is very rare, and violent crime is far lower than in the United States or Western Europe.

To gun prohibition advocates, Japan represents the ideal, with near-prohibitory controls, and nearly no gun crime. Skeptics argue that Japan’s low crime rates are mainly due to cultural factors.

It is also argued that Japanese-style gun laws, whatever their efficacy, are particularly unsuited to the United States, since American ownership of guns is deeply tied to American concepts of individualism, self-protection, and freedom from oppressive government. To many in Japan, where the focus is on the group rather than the individual, the American attitude seems absurd and barbaric.

On the evening of October 17, 1992, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a Japanese exchange student named Yoshihiro Hattori and a teenager from his host family, Webb Haymaker, entered a carport, mistakenly thinking that the home was hosting

a Halloween party. The teenagers had the wrong address. Frightened by the rapidly approaching young males, Bonnie Peairs screamed for help and her husband Rodney came running with .44 Smith & Wesson revolver. He yelled “freeze!” Haymaker retreated and tried to get Hattori to stop, but Hattori, apparently not understanding the American idiom that “freeze!” can mean “Don’t move or I’ll shoot,” advanced towards Mr. Peairs, who pulled the trigger and shot him dead.

Rodney Peairs was acquitted of manslaughter in a criminal trial, partly because Haymaker testified that, in the dark, Hattori’s camera might have looked like a gun, and that Hattori waved his arms at Peairs.

Although the incident initially attracted only brief attention in the national American press, the shooting horrified Japan, where television networks devoted massive coverage to “the freeze case.” In July 1993, President Clinton apologized to Hattori’s parents Masaichi and Mieko. At Yoshi’s funeral, the parents stated, “The thing we must really despise, more than the criminal, is the American law that permits people to own guns.”

Over the next several months, 1.7 million Japanese and 150,000 Americans signed Mrs. Hattori’s “Petition for Removing Guns from Households in the United States.” Working with the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, the Hattoris delivered the petitions to President Clinton personally on November 16, 1993, a few days before final Senate passage of the Brady Bill. President Clinton told the Hattoris that he believed that only police and the military should have handguns.

Mrs. Hattori tells Japanese audiences that the petitions led to the passage of the Brady Bill. Mr. and Mrs. Hattori filed a civil suit against Peairs, won \$653,000, and used part of the money to set up foundations which award money to anti-gun groups in the U.S., and which bring an American student to Japan each year, to experience gun-free life.

Spurred in part by the Hattori tragedy, in the 1990s Japan began funding gun surrender programs in South Africa, pushing the United Nations to act against private gun ownership, and supporting gun prohibition around the world.

Although the core of the gun prohibition campaign is a belief that Japan’s policy is culturally superior, another basis is the fact that, [according to the Japanese National Policy Agency \(NPA\)](#), handguns are smuggled into Japan from the United States, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Russia, Brazil, Peru and South Africa. The NPA reports that the main techniques are “(1) spot-welding of guns to a car imported from overseas to Japan, (2) smuggled aboard fishing boats, (3) concealment in sea or air cargo and (4) concealment in hand carrying luggage inside items such as electric appliance.”

Ironically, Japan has a large firearms manufacturing industry, geared towards the export market. Browning firearms are manufactured there, as are several other well-respected brands of shotguns.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. *International transmission of cultural norms.* The Hattori tragedy brought to light the sharply different attitudes toward private gun ownership in Japanese and American society. What weight should Americans give to Japanese criticisms of America’s gun culture? More generally, should Americans view widespread criticism

from other nations toward an American practice as presumptive evidence that the criticized practice is unwise? When are such cross-national (and cross-cultural) criticisms persuasive?

2. Compare the Japanese approach to eliminating privately owned rifles to the U.S. 1994 “assault weapons” ban (which sunset in 2004). In 1971, the Japanese government forbade all transfers of rifles, allowing license holders to keep them but requiring heirs to turn over the guns when the license holder died. The U.S. “assault weapons” ban grandfathered existing guns, which remained freely transferable. In 2013, Senator Dianne Feinstein, sponsor of the 1994-2004 ban, introduced a bill for a new permanent ban, S.150, 113th Congress (2013); under an early draft of the bill (although not the bill as introduced), current owners could keep their guns if they paid a \$200 per gun tax and got local police permission. The guns could never be transferred, and upon the owner’s death, they would be confiscated. If you were designing a new ban, which approach would you favor? Why? Can you identify any constitutional problems with a law that prohibited owners from selling these guns or passing them on to heirs?

3. The United States and Japan have many cultural differences, including dramatically different experiences with firearms ownership and regulation. One consequence of this is vast differences in the number of private firearms, rate of firearms homicide, and rate of firearms crime in the two countries. Constitutional questions aside, what is the likelihood that the United States could pass and effectively implement Japanese-style gun laws? Would the degree of government control necessary to create such a gun-free society in the United States be worth the elimination of nearly all violent crime involving guns?

4. Would effective implementation of Japanese-style firearms regulation in the United States require cultural change in the United States? If so, would you recommend a gradual process or a quick drastic change? Is that gradual process similar to the slippery slope fear that seems to drive some objections to gun control? Is legislation sufficient to facilitate the necessary cultural change? Can you think of other areas of policy where law and culture collided in a dramatic way? Do those examples offer any lessons for the gun question? Aside from legislation, what other tools are available to push cultural change?

8. *China After 1976*

In 1949, Mao Zedong led a revolution that overthrew the Republic of China and replaced it with a communist government, renaming the nation the People’s Republic of China. Mao ruled until his death in 1976, which resulted in the end of the “Cultural Revolution” he had launched in 1966.

During the Cultural Revolution, China had “no legal system so to speak . . . the social, economic, cultural and political lives have no laws or regulations to abide by.” Xin-yi Hou, *Review and Outlook in the Process of Rule of Law in China Since Reform and Opening Up*, Tianjin Leg. Sci. 5, 7 (Winter 2011).

After Mao died in 1976, his wife and three of her cohorts (“the Gang of Four”) were purged, and a more pragmatic group took power, led by Deng Xiaoping. He launched the *Boluan Fanzheng* (拨乱反正) [Bring Order Out of Chaos] campaign, which aimed to clear the names of those who had been wrongfully prosecuted in

the past. In 1978, the Communist Party of China (CPC) adopted the *Gaige Kai-fang* (改革开放) [Reform and Opening-Up] strategy. During this period, “the main objective of reconstructing the rule of law [was] to restore the legal system and necessary legal order destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.” Hou, at 8.

This section describes the laws and regulations enacted after the Cultural Revolution on weapons owned by parties other than the armed forces (the People’s Liberation Army, the People’s Armed Police, and China Militia). These laws and regulations do not cover Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. Many Chinese legal materials are available at the Pkulaw website, and the citations in this section indicate which documents are available there. There is also an [English-language version of Pkulaw](#).

a. Firearms

From 1981 to 1996, firearms in China were regulated by the *Qiangzhi Guanli Banfa* (枪支管理办法) [Measures for the Control of Guns]. The *Banfa* was replaced by the *Qiangzhi Guanli Fa* (枪支管理法) [Law on Control of Guns] on October 1, 1996, with amendments added in 2009 and 2015. The current law governing firearms in China is the 2015 revised version of the *Qiangzhi Guanli Fa*.

b. The Cultural Revolution and Its Aftermath

During the Cultural Revolution, “especially after Jiang Qing⁴⁵ mentioned ‘*Wengong Wuwei*’ (文攻武卫) [Attack with words but defend with arms], mass organizations around the country started to openly raid military units stationed locally and the militia for weapons and ammunition.” Hui Zhou, *A Research on the Reform of Gun-Control System in China* 30 (Shandong Univ. Master’s Thesis, 2010). One of the major reasons behind the implementation of the 1981 *Banfa* was “to restore the gun control effort, which has been critically damaged during the Cultural Revolution, and to confiscate the large number of guns scattered throughout the society.” *Id.* at 31.

Compared to the previous regulations on firearms, the 1981 *Banfa* reduced the scope of officials eligible to carry firearms to “leading cadres working in the border areas, coastal defence areas, and other remote areas.” *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Qiangzhi Guanli Banfa* (中华人民共和国枪支管理办法) [Measures of the People’s Republic of China for the Control of Firearms] (promulgated by the Ministry of Public Security, Apr. 25, 1981, expired), art. 3, § 2, CLI.2.967(EN) (Pkulaw). The 1981 law affirmed that firearms may be issued, among others, to “[t]he security sections of factories and mines, enterprises, government departments, schools and universities, research institutions, that have the necessity to be fitted out with firearms.” *Qiangzhi Guanli Banfa* art. 4, § 1. Thus, many government agencies besides law enforcement and state or collectively owned enterprises could keep firearms for guarding their own premises.

45. A/k/a “Madame Mao,” Mao’s former secretary and fourth wife. Jiang Qing was arrested in 1976, sentenced to death, commuted to life imprisonment, and committed suicide in 1991.

The private ownership of firearms was generally prohibited, with a hunting exemption: “As regards the non-professional hunting personnel, only citizens aged eighteen or over may keep hunting rifles, and each can keep no more than two hunting rifles.” *Qiangzhi Guanli Banfa* art. 6. Individuals or organizations that possess firearms “shall apply to the local county or municipal bureau of public security for firearm licenses.” *Id.* art. 12.

When licensed individuals moved to a new county or city, individuals had to “return for cancellation their firearm licences to the original licence-issuing public security organ and obtain firearm-transport passes. On their arrival at their destinations, they shall present the firearm-transport passes to the local public security organ and go through the procedures for obtaining new firearm licences.” *Id.* art. 17. Short-term transport of firearms required a transport pass; the individual would “apply to the county or municipal public security bureau stationed at the destination of transportation for a transport pass. Upon arrival at the destination, the applicant shall present the transport pass to the local public security organ and go through the procedures for registration or for obtaining a new firearm licence.” *Id.* art. 18.

China in the early 1980s was somewhat chaotic. Using the crime data from Guangdong Province as an example, “[s]ince the first year after the Reform and Opening-up, there are more than 30,000 criminal cases provincial wide in 1979, and that number goes over 50,000 in 1981, which is the highest peak for the number of criminal cases in the province since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China.” Chen Leigang (陈雷刚), *1983 Nian Guangdong “Yanda” Shimo* (1983年广东“严打”始末), *Hong Guang Jiao* (红广角), at 33 (Aug. 2012).

c. Changes in 1996

In support of tighter firearms laws in 1996, then-Minister of Public Security Tao Siju stated that “the number of crimes committed with the aid of firearms is increasing annually, and has become one of the outstanding issues threatening the public security order of the society.” *Guanyu <Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Qiangzhi Guanli Fa (Caoan)> de Shuoming* (关于《中华人民共和国枪支管理法(草案)》的说明) [The Explanation Regarding the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Control of Guns (draft)] (promulgated by the Ministry of Public Security, effective May 11, 1996), CLLDL.148 (Pkulaw). Further:

The overflow of firearms leads to the decrease of the sense of safety among the people, thus buying guns for self-defense becomes a necessity for some people, causing a vicious circle. Due to the large number of guns owned by civilians, criminals can obtain guns easily, leading to an increasing number of crimes committed with the aid of guns. With participants using guns in some affrays, these incidences are becoming increasingly violent, and the [police] handling of such events is becoming very difficult. The wildlife preservation effort of the state is greatly undermined due to the large number of guns circulating in society.

Id. § 1, ¶ 1.

The new law aimed “[t]o limit the number and scope of hunting firearms to the minimum.” *Qiangzhi Guanli Fa* § 2, ¶ 3. Then-Minister Tao explained that “all

firearms must be registered with the public security organ within three months after the law goes into effect” and “those who refuse to register their firearms within this period will be prosecuted with illegal possession of firearms (art. 50).” *Id.* § 3, ¶ 1. The *Shuomin* also mentions three possible results after one had registered his or her firearms:

If the firearm is legal in the past and remains to be legal under the new law, after the registration and other relevant procedures, the continued possession is permitted; if it is illegal not only in the past but also under the new law, it shall be confiscated after the registration, but the owner is exempt from criminal prosecution if the firearm is turned in during this period; if it is legal in the past, but the owner no longer satisfies the conditions for legal possession due to the limited scope of the new law, the firearm shall be confiscated.

Id. § 3, ¶ 1.

Firearm ownership by private individuals is limited to “[h]unters in hunting zones and herdsmen in pastoral areas.” *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Qiangzhi Guanli Fa (2015 Xiuzheng)* (中华人民共和国枪支管理法 (2015 修正)) [Gun Control Law of the People’s Republic of China (2015 Amendment)] (promulgated by the 20th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People’s Congress, July 5, 1996, amended for the first time by the tenth meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People’s Congress on August 27, 2009; and amended for the second time by the Third Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People’s Congress on April 24, 2015, effective Apr. 24, 2015) art. 6, § 3, CLL.1.252601(EN) (Pkulaw). The firearms owned privately by hunters and herdsmen “may not be taken out of the hunting zones or the pastoral areas.” *Qiangzhi Guanli Fa*, art. 12.

The new *Qiangzhi Guanli Fa* limited the scope of government/party officials eligible to carry firearms. Unlike the 1981 *Qiangzhi Guanli Banfa*, the current law only allows “People’s policemen of the public security organs, State security organs, prisons and institutions of reeducation through labour, judicial policemen of the People’s Courts and the People’s Procuratorates, people’s procurators who are charged with the task of investigation of cases, and customs coast guards” to carry firearms. *Qiangzhi Guanli Fa*, art. 5. The new law ended the common practice of allowing government and party officials other than law enforcement to possess firearms, which was “considered to be a symbol of one’s official status.” Zhou, at 33. To centralize the issuance of firearms permits, public security organs “at or above the county level shall be in charge of the control of guns in their administrative regions respectively.” *Qiangzhi Guanli Fa*, art. 4. Thus, government agencies other than law enforcement lost their authority to arm themselves without obtaining prior approval from their local public security bureaus.

According to a 2019 press release from the Ministry of Public Security, “from January to November 2018, there are a total number of 42 crimes nationwide where firearms were used.” Ministry of Public Security, *Quanguo Daji Zhengzhi Qiangbao Weifa Fanzui Zhuanxiang Xingdong Qude Mingxian Chengxiao* ¶ 3 (全国打击整治枪爆违法犯罪专项行动取得明显成效) [The nationwide special operation on cracking down crimes involving guns and explosives has achieved tangible results] (Jan. 9,

2019). The ministry reported the following confiscations in 2018: “hunting firearms: 12,000, air guns: 42,000, black powder firearms: 38,000, modified nail guns and other firearms: 54,000, all types of cartridges: 3.69 million, explosives: 416 tons, detonators: 500,000.” *Id.*

Are the above figures accurate? Not necessarily. “[C]rime statistics should be more carefully understood as part of a legitimization apparatus in China” since Beijing “mainly relies on performance such as economic development and crime control for its legitimacy.” Jianhua Xu, *Legitimization Imperative: The Production of Crime Statistics in Guangzhou, China*, 58 *Brit. J. Criminology* 155, 156 (2017).

d. The Broad Definition of Forbidden Guns

The legal definition of guns in the current *Qiangzhi Guanli Fa* refers to “the various kinds of guns that, with gunpowder or compressed gas as the propelling force and with a barrel for projecting metal bullets or other substances, can readily inflict injury upon people, cause death or render them unconscious.” *Qiangzhi Guanli Fa*, art. 46. There had been no definition in the previous arms law, which only listed “the types of guns that are within the purview of the respective regulations without providing definitions for guns.” Chen Zhijun (陈志军), *Qiangzhi Rending Biaozhun Jubian de Xingfa Fenxi* (枪支认定标准剧变的刑法分析) [Using the criminal law perspective to analyze the drastic change on the standards of identifying guns], *J. Nat’l Prosecutors Coll.* 107 (Sept. 2013).

When a “gun” is confiscated by law enforcement during an investigation, it will be examined by the “prefecture (municipal) level public security organ.” *Gongan Jiguan Shean Qiangzhi Danyao Xingneng Jianding Gongzuo Guiding* (公安机关涉案枪支弹药性能鉴定工作规定) [The regulation for public security organs on identifying guns and ammunition involved in criminal investigations] (promulgated by the Ministry of Public Security, Dec. 7, 2010, effective Dec. 7, 2010) art. 2, CLI.4.144563 (Pkulaw). If a gun does not fire standard cartridges, it is treated as a prohibited item if its projectile has “specific kinetic energy” greater than 1.8 Joules per cubic centimeter. *Jianding Gongzuo Guiding*, art. 3, § 3. The “specific kinetic energy” is based on “the ratio between the kinetic energy of the bullet and the maximum cross-sectional area of the bullet.” The National Commission on Forensic Science Standardization, *Qiangzhi Zhishangli de Fating Kexue Jianding Panju* (枪支致伤力的法庭科学鉴定判据) [Identification criteria to cause casualty of firearms] 2 (2008). Specific kinetic energy is measured at 50cm from the muzzle for firearms, and 30cm for air/gas guns. *Id.* at 2. A projectile with a kinetic energy of 1.8 joules per square centimeter is not strong enough to break human skin, but it could damage an eye. Chen, at 109-10.

Chen argues that the 1.8 Joule standard is “an unreasonable expansion from the current regulatory documents on interpreting the definition of a gun, as well as creating an overly restrictive interpretation on the definition of a toy gun.” *Id.* at 113. This gap between the public understanding and the legal definition of guns creates many cases where persons convicted of illegal possession or trafficking of guns had no knowledge that toy guns can be treated as real guns in the eyes of the law. For example, in a case from Tianjin, a major coastal city in northern China, the court found:

From August to October 12, 2016, defendant Zhao Chunhua set up a shooting gallery for business purposes near the waterside platform on Li

Gongci Street, Hebei District, Tianjin Municipality. At around 10 p.m., October 12, 2016, Zhao's above-mentioned activity was found, and she was arrested on the spot with nine items that have the resemblance to guns, other relevant gun parts and plastic bullets by public security officers conducting a patrol. According to the Judicial Expertise Center of Tianjin Municipality Public Security Bureau, the test results show that six out of the nine confiscated items are usable guns that are propelled by compressed gas.

Zhao Chunhua Feifa Chiyou Qiangzhi An (赵春华非法持有枪支案) [*People v. Zhao Chunhua* (crimes involving illegal possession of guns)], CLI.C.8726848, at ¶ 8 (Pku-law, Tianjin Hebei District People's Ct. Dec. 17, 2016).

Zhao's daughter claimed that "everybody knows that those guns are toy guns" and her mother "had absolutely no idea that those [toy guns] are real guns according to the legal definition." Shao Ke (邵客), *Tianjin Laotai Bai Shejitan Beipan Feifa Chiyou Qiangzhi Zui, Jingfang Jiandingchu 6zhi Qiangzhi* (天津老太摆射击摊被判非法持有枪支罪, 警方鉴定出6支枪支) [A Tianjin elderly woman is convicted of illegal possession of guns for setting up a shooting gallery; police have identified six guns], Pengpai Xinwen (澎湃新闻) [The Paper] (Dec. 29, 2016), ¶ 2 & ¶ 7. Zhao was convicted of illegal possession of guns and received a sentence of imprisonment for three years and six months. *People v. Zhao Chunhua*, ¶ 11.

Wide media coverage of the case "sparked anger over what many people see as the uncompromising application of the law." Ben Blanchard, *Chinese Woman Jailed over Balloon-popping Guns Set Free*, Reuters, Jan. 26, 2017. On appeal, the "Tianjin No 1 Intermediate People's Court reduced the punishment to three years in prison suspended for three years, which meant Zhao was released from custody." Yin Cao & Yining Peng, *Shooting Gallery Owner Wins Appeal over Gun Sentence*, China Daily, Jan. 27, 2017.

In 2018, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate together issued an "official reply," requiring prosecutors to consider other elements and not just muzzle energy. For "guns powered by compressed gas and having low muzzle energy," prosecutors should look into "the appearance, material, projectile, purchase place and channel, price, use purpose, and lethality of the gun involved, whether the lethality can be easily improved through modification, as well as the subjective cognition, motive and purpose, past behaviors, and illegal gains of the perpetrator." *Official Reply of the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate on Issues Concerning Conviction and Sentencing in Criminal Cases Involving Guns Powered by Compressed Gas and Air Rifle Pellets* (promulgated by the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, Mar. 8, 2018, effective Mar. 30, 2018), art. 1, CLI.3.312342(EN) (Pkulaw). In a follow-up explanation, the Supreme People's Procuratorate explained that the joint "official reply" was needed because some prosecutors had "mechanically applied the relevant laws and judicial explanations regarding the use of the number [of guns identified in the case] to determine the severity of the case. Such practices have violated the criminal justice principle of determining the appropriate crime and punishment for the responsible party and caused unreasonable and inappropriate convictions and sentencing." Wan Chun (万春) & Yang Jianjun (杨建军), <*Guanyu She yi Yasuo Qiti wei Dongli de Qiangzhi, Qiqiang Qiandan Xinshi Anjian Dingzui Liangxing Wenti de Pifu*> Jiedu ¶ 2 (关于涉以压

缩气体为动力的枪支、气枪铅弹刑事案件定罪量刑问题的批复》解读》[The Explanation on the Official Reply on Issues Concerning Conviction and Sentencing in Criminal Cases Involving Guns Powered by Compressed Gas and Air Rifle Pellets], the Supreme People's Procuratorate website (Apr. 22, 2018).

e. Knives

Knives remained largely unregulated in China until 1983. "From 1983, the management of cutters in China has gone through several modes: from no specialized regulation to 'classification + permission' and eventually to 'classification management' alone." Xie Chuanyu (谢川豫), *Woguo Guanzhi Qiju Lifa Yanjiu* (我国管制器具立法研究) [Legislative research on controlled instruments in China], *Journal of People's Security University of China (Social Science Edition)*, 129, 129 (Oct.-Dec. 2016). National statutes regulating knives include *Xingfa* (刑法) [Criminal Law] (art. 130 & art. 297); *Renmin Jingcha Fa* (人民警察法) [People's Police Law] (art. 6, § 5); *Jieyan Fa* (戒严法) [Martial Law] (art. 16); *Tielu Fa* (铁路法) [Railway Law] (art. 60); *Minyong Hangkong Fa* (民用航空法) [Civil Aviation Law] (art. 101 & art. 193).

Certain knives are defined as "controlled knives" and are subject to special restrictions. Carrying a controlled knife into a public space and "endangering public safety, is to be sentenced, when the circumstances are serious, to not more than three years of fixed-term imprisonment, detention, or control." *Xingfa*, art. 130 (2017 amend.). A person bringing a controlled knife into "an assembly, parade, demonstration is to be sentenced to not more than three years of fixed-term imprisonment, criminal detention, control or deprived of political rights." *Xingfa*, art. 297 (2017 amend.). For merely carrying a controlled knife in public places, the punishment is detention "for not less than 5 days but not more than 10 days" plus a fine of up to 500 yuan. *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Zhian Guanli Chufa Fa* (中华人民共和国治安管理处罚法) [Public Security Administration Punishments Law of the People's Republic of China] (promulgated by the 17th Session of the Standing Committee of the 10th National People's Congress on Aug. 28, 2005, amended by the 29th Session of the Standing Committee of the 11th National People's Congress on Oct. 26, 2012, effective Jan. 1, 2013) art. 32, CLI.1.188539(EN) (Pkulaw).

Starting in 1983, controlled knives were defined as daggers, triangular knives, spring-loaded knives "and other similar single-blade, double-blade and triangular-blade knives." *Gongan Bu dui Bufen Daoju Shixing Guanzhi de Zanxing Guiding* art. 2. (公安部对部分刀具实行管制的暂行规定) [Temporary Regulation of the Ministry of Public Security on Implementing Controls on Certain Knives] (promulgated by the Ministry of Public Security, Mar. 12, 1983, partially effective), CLI.4.1580 (Pkulaw).

Controlled knives were only for the military and law enforcement. However, a Dagger Carry permit was available for "professional hunters, geological explorers and other individuals who work in the wilderness that must carry daggers due to the needs of their professions." *Id.* at art. 3. Manufacturers of controlled knives had to obtain a "Specialized Knives Manufacturing Permit." *Id.* at art. 5. Controlled knife retailers needed permissions from their local county or city public security bureau and had to "maintain a registry of buying and selling records ready for inspections by the public security organ." *Id.* at art. 6.

In 2002, the State Council issued an edict cancelling existing permits for carry, sales, and manufacturing. *Guanyu Quxiao Diyipi Xingzheng Shenpi Xiangmu*

de Jueding (关于取消第一批行政审批项目的决定) [Decision on the Cancellation of the First Batch of Administrative Approval Items] (promulgated by the State Council, Nov. 1, 2002, effective Nov. 1, 2002), CLI.2.44187 (Pkulaw). This Decision ended the following permits regarding knives: item 104 (canceling “Specialized Knives Manufacturing Permit”), 105 (canceling “Dagger Carry Permit”), 106 (canceling “Administrative Approval for Selling Controlled Knives”), 107 (canceling “Specialized Knives Purchase Permit”). Xie claims that in this second stage of the regulation on knives, “the focus of the regulation is on identifying controlled knives under the current, still existing classification management model for knives.” Xie, at 130.

The 1983 *Temporary Regulation on Implementing Controls on Certain Knives* only gave “a general description of the scope of controlled knives, which lacks a standardized identifying criterion. This further stirs controversies in society due to arbitrary enforcement in practice.” Zhang Jiazhong, *The Issue in Legal Documents About Management of Public Security of Controlled Knives*, J. Guizhou Police Officer Vocational Coll. 16, 18 (July-Aug., 2012).

The confusing standard on controlled knives was replaced in 2007 by specific definitions from the Ministry of Public Security. A controlled knife is now any of the following:

1. A dagger: contains a handle, a blade and a fuller [a groove in the blade to reduce weight]; the tip of the knife has an angle of less than 60 degrees; may have single, double or more edges on the blade;
2. A triangular knife: a knife used in machining that has a triple-edged blade;
3. A spring-loaded knife with self-locking mechanisms: a folding knife with a blade capable of being secured or locked when deployed with springs or other locking mechanisms in the handle;
4. Other similar sharp knives with single, double or triple edges: all other single, double or multiple-edged knives with a blade longer than 150 mm and an angle of less than 60 degrees on the tip;
5. Other single, double or multiple-edged knives with an angle greater than 60 degrees on the tip, but with a blade longer than 220 mm.

Guanzhi Daoju Rending Biaozhun art. 1 (管制刀具认定标准) [Standard for Identifying Controlled Knives] (promulgated by the Ministry of Public Security, Jan. 4, 2007, effective Jan. 4, 2007), CLI.4.89274 (Pkulaw).

The definition of controlled knives from art. 1, § 5 includes “the most commonly used cleavers in family lives, watermelon knives used by fruit vendors and chopping knives widely used in the countryside” if their blades exceed 220mm (8.6 inches). Xie, at 130.

The northwestern region of Xinjiang has especially tight knife control. The Xijiang local authority is now “requiring all knives in the township to be engraved with the ID number of the owner.” *Xinjiang Qizhao Weixun Daoju Bixu Kezhu Yongzhe Shenfenzheng Haoma* ¶ 5 (新疆奇招维稳刀具必须刻铸用者身份证号码) [Xinjiang’s creative measure to maintain social stability: knives must bear engravings of the owner’s ID number], Dongwang (東網) [Oriental Daily News], Jan. 10, 2017. A *Wall Street Journal* video shows a transaction with the engraving. Clément Bürge, *Life Inside China’s Total Surveillance State*, Wall Street J., Dec. 19, 2017 (video at 3:56 to 4:30).

However, the specific regulations on knives in Xinjiang are largely unavailable via Chinese legal databases like Pkulaw or even local government websites in Xinjiang. The only Xinjiang regional regulation on knives available via Pkulaw has no requirements on engraving owners' information on knives, but only requires manufacturers of controlled knives to "engrave business or trade names and numbers (serial number or batch number) on their products." *Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu dui Bufen Qiju Shishi Guanzhi de Zanxing Banfa* (新疆维吾尔自治区对部分器具实施管制的暂行办法) [Temporary Regulation of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Implementing Controls on Certain Items] (promulgated by the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Government, May 9, 2012, effective Aug. 1, 2012), art. 10, CLI.11.610698 (Pkulaw). In this Xinjiang regional regulation, the term "controlled item" is broader than the list of "controlled knives" from the national *Zhian Guanli Chufa Fa*. In Xinjiang, "controlled items" include "[d]angerous instruments like hatchets, battle axes, adzes, folding sickles, etc." *Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu*, art. 3, § 2.

Major cities such as Shanghai and Guangzhou have previously implemented temporary ID registration requirements for knife buyers when cities were hosting major events. In 2010, the Shanghai municipal government "decided to take special measures to administrate cutters during the hosting of Expo 2010 Shanghai" and established a "[r]eal name registration system for selling and purchasing" for "dangerous cutters." *Announcement of Shanghai Municipal People's Government on Strengthening the Safety Administration of Cutters* (promulgated by the Shanghai Municipal People's Government, Apr. 15, 2010, effective Apr. 15, 2010), art. 5, CLI.11.406172(EN) (Pkulaw). As for Guangzhou, during the 2010 Asian Games similar temporary measures were taken, namely a "real name registration system for purchasing and selling dangerous cutters." *Guanyu Jiaqiang Daoju Anquan Guanli de Jueding* art. 4 (关于加强刀具安全管理的决定) [Decision on Strengthening the Safety Administration of Cutters] (promulgated by the Guangzhou Municipal People's Government, Oct. 26, 2010, expired).

Notwithstanding all the above, a quick search on Taobao, a primary Chinese online shopping website, with the keyword "菜刀" [Chinese cleaver], produced 100 pages of results with 48 individual listings on each page. Many of these online vendors have posted shipping restriction notices and refuse to ship their knives to Xinjiang or Tibet; some other vendors even refuse to ship to Beijing and Inner Mongolia.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. **CQ.** Ancient Chinese thought and law on arms are covered in online Chapter 16.A. The Mao period in China is covered *infra* Section D.3.

2. The U.S. State Department issues annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. The annual reports on China describe human rights violations there. In retaliation, China's Information Office of the State Council issues its own reports on the United States. *E.g.*, [Human Rights Record of the United States in 2017](#), XinhuaNet, Apr. 24, 2018. The reports always castigate the United States for, inter alia, insufficient gun control. Do you agree? **CQ:** Online Chapter 18 details the efforts of gun control advocates and gun rights advocates to have their preferred position recognized as an international human right.

3. China's restrictive gun laws have not eliminated private possession of firearms. Handguns and rifles still circulate due to smuggling, theft, lax controls at firearm factories and arsenals, and small-shop or home production. Defiance of gun laws is on the rise, increasing by more than 50 percent in 2015, according to government statistics. See Te-Pin Chen, *Shooting Highlights Gun Concerns in China*, Wall St. J., Jan. 4, 2017. What might explain this sharp rise?

4. Despite China's strict knife laws, there have been several deadly knife attacks in recent years. Nine students were killed and ten injured in a knife attack in April 2018 outside a school in the Shaanxi province. Two were killed and nine hurt in a meat cleaver attack at a Wal-mart store in Shenzhen in July 2017. Three assailants killed five and wounded ten others in a February 2017 knife attack in the Xinjian region. Several attackers with knives killed 29 people and wounded more than 100 others at train station in Kunming, Yunnan in April 2014. Multiple unrelated stabbings at schools from 2010 to 2012 killed at least 25 and injured over 100.

9. Thailand

Formally speaking, Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. Over the past decades, it has alternated between periods of democracy and periods of military rule.

Thailand's Interior Ministry reports that there are over 6 million registered firearms in the nation, whose population is over 66 million. About 4 million additional guns are estimated to be illegally owned. In 2013 there were 7.48 gun homicides per 100,000 people, compared the U.S. rate of 3.55. *A Look at Thailand's Fervent Gun Culture*, Deutsche Welle, Feb. 19, 2016. New legislation in October 2017 limited gun ownership to citizens only. The law also specified that a separate permit is necessary to carry a licensed gun concealed.

In the southern provinces of Narathiwat, Yala, and Pattani, jihadi terrorists aim to create an Islamic state independent of Thailand, whose population is predominantly Buddhist. The three southern states are about 80 percent Muslim, and 20 percent Buddhist. The Muslims are predominantly of Malay ethnicity, making them different from the Thai majority.

Many of the 2 million Thais who live in the far south responded by legally arming themselves. There are more guns per capita among the southerners than elsewhere. Buddhists and moderate Muslims have acquired shotguns, rifles, and pistols. *Thailand: The Red, The Yellow and the Green*, StrategyPage, Sept. 21, 2009. Some of the armed Thais serve as village defense volunteers, in a program encouraged by the government. *Thailand: All Quieter on the Southern Front*, StrategyPage, Sept. 26, 2018.

The jihadis despise the secular education offered in Thailand's public schools. They would prefer that all Muslims be forced to study in madrasas. In the south, most public school teachers are Buddhists, and most come from more northerly states.

Accordingly, schools and teachers became particular targets for the jihadis. Then, "Interior Minister Bhokin Bhalakula ordered provincial governors to give teachers licenses to buy guns if they want to even though it would mean bringing

firearms into the classrooms when the region's 925 schools reopen May 17 after two months of summer holiday." *Thailand Allows Teachers in Restive South to Carry Guns for Protection*, Associated Press, Apr. 27, 2004. "Pairat Wihakarat, the president of a teachers' union in the three provinces, said more than 1,700 teachers have already asked for transfers to safer areas. Those who are willing to stay want to carry guns to protect themselves, he said." *Id.* In Narathiwat, the president of the Teacher's Association reported that about 70 percent of the province's teachers carry guns. *Teachers Being Targeted and Murdered in Thailand*, N.Y. Times, Dec. 16, 2012.

The military provided teachers with firearms safety and tactical training. While teachers were allowed to have long guns, most chose a handgun, for easier handling and carry. Most popular were 9mm pistols made by Steyr (a high-quality Austrian company). The army sold Steyrs to teachers for 75 percent off the market price. *Teachers in Southern Thailand Learning to Use Guns*, AsiaNews, Sept. 13, 2006.

Another component of the security strategy was creating military bases on school grounds. *Target of Both Sides*, Human Rights Watch, Sept. 21, 2010. Not all schools had military bases, but they did have soldiers present for part of the day. As a retired teacher explained, "After we arrive at school, the soldiers stick around for a while until the morning flag-raising ceremony is over and the students are in their classrooms. . . . At lunchtime, the soldiers return to protect us inside the school grounds. Then the same thing happens in the afternoon when class is over. The soldiers escort us back home." *Teachers Being Targeted and Murdered in Thailand*.

These policies certainly saved some lives. In 2006, a teacher who was driving to school drove away jihadi attackers by shooting back at them. *Teachers in Southern Thailand Learning to Use Guns*.

Yet the increased defensive force did not solve everything. By 2010, nearly 330 schools had been attacked. Teachers were also attacked when alone and most vulnerable—that is, when traveling to or from school. This led to the military escorts for traveling teachers. *Teachers Take to Guns as Insurgency Targets Schools*, Inter Press Service, Sept. 27, 2010. Critics of the civilian arms program have worried that it might eventually cause an increase in intercommunal violence. Diana Sarosi & Janjira Sombatpoonsiri, *Arming Civilians for Self-Defense: The Impact of Firearms Proliferation on the Conflict Dynamics in Southern Thailand*, 23 *Global Change, Peace & Security* 387 (2011).

Not every school had full-time guards, and at some schools, teachers did not carry. On December 11, 2012, five men attacked one such school, the Ban Ba Ngo School in Mayo district, Pattani. After taking over the cafeteria, they murdered the school's two Buddhist teachers, and spared the five Muslims. The next day, the Confederation of Teachers of Southern Border Provinces announced that it was shutting down 1,300 public schools in the three southern provinces until the government provided better protection. *Thailand: Rebels Escalate Killings of Teachers*, Human Rights Watch, Dec. 17, 2012.

Steady military pressure on the jihadis slowly bore fruit after 2010. That year, there were 2,061 terrorist incidents; by 2017, the number had fallen to 489. Likewise, deaths continued their steady decline, down to 235 in 2017. Over the years, the insurgents killed over 7,000 people. *Thailand: All Quieter on the Southern Front*. Peace talks have been going on since 2013, although not all of the separatist groups are willing to negotiate.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. Was it a good idea for the Thai government to respond to terrorism by arming the public? By arming schoolteachers? Are the justifications for arming schoolteachers in Thailand different than those offered for arming schoolteachers in the United States?

2. Some Westerners believe that all Buddhists are absolute pacifists, but this has never been so, and is particularly untrue for the Theravāda branch, which predominates in Thailand, Burma, and Sri Lanka. See David B. Kopel, *Self-defense in Asian Religions*, 2 *Liberty L. Rev.* 79, 135-40 (2007).

3. *Burma*. As in other British colonies, the colonial government in Burma in the late nineteenth century aimed to disarm the subject peoples. In the Chin Hills, the people had a strong culture of hunting and archery. During the nineteenth century, they eagerly acquired firearms. “There were three things that Chin men regarded as their most valued possessions, also representing their masculinity: corrugated iron sheets, a house made of teak, and a gun.” Pum Khan Pau, *Disarmament and Resistance in Colonial Burma: A Case Study of the Chin Hills*, 21 *J. Burma Stud.* 233, 239 (2017).

For the most part, the Chin guns were flintlocks, much inferior to the British infantry rifles of the later nineteenth century. *Id.* at 241. But by avoiding open battles, and relying on ambushes, Chin resistance was effective. *Id.* at 241-42. The British “pacification” of Burma relied heavily on burning villages and shooting anyone found in possession of arms. *Id.* at 244. The British campaign backfired. “To save their guns,” all the Chin tribes united to drive out the British. *Id.* at 245. The British responded with 26,000 troops, who destroyed all food and food cultivation, to starve the Chin into submission. The policy worked, and by 1893 the Chin were mostly disarmed. *Id.* at 250-52.

Beginning in 1895-96, the British set up a licensing and registration system for the remaining guns that the Chin were allowed. This was one gun per ten houses. *Id.* at 252. Many Chin did not comply, and instead secretly re-armed. *Id.* at 252-55. The British granted Burma independence in 1948.

10. Kenya

David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen

Human Rights and Gun Confiscation

26 *Quinnipiac L. Rev.* 385 (2008) (revised for this work by Vincent Harinam)

... When Kenya attained independence from Great Britain in 1963, it was a land rich in natural resources. From the outset, its first president, Jomo Kenyatta, ruled in a brutal and repressive manner. He abused the power of his office, rewarded his political and ethnic cronies, and eliminated political rivals. Although central state planning was implemented under a pretext of fairness and efficiency, it became the mechanism for kleptocracy. A similar pattern of corruption and ethnic rivalry persists today.

Karamoja is a region in the borderlands between Kenya and Uganda. The Karamoja Cluster is the largest of the three pastoral clusters in the Horn of Africa.

Many arms from former Warsaw Pact arsenals have found their way to Africa, including Karamoja. To counteract this proliferation of firearms, the Government of Kenya, in 2000, convened a ministerial conference on small arms. This culminated in the Nairobi Declaration where 10 regional governments, including Kenya and Uganda, vowed to cooperate in stemming the supply of firearms within the region. (The Nairobi Protocol is detailed in online Chapter 18.B.2.⁴⁶)

Some disarmament activists contend that the pastoralist culture is deficient, and when this culture is coupled with modern weapons, the result is violence and poverty. On the other hand, Kilfemarian Gebre-Wold, former director of a German-sponsored disarmament program in East Africa, acknowledged that “though many pastoralist households have small arms, the rate of crime and violent incidents is not high in their community. . . . [T]he density of weapons does not mean automatically the rise of gun-related violence.”

The Kenyan government itself is responsible for much violence. In Kenya, as in much of the world, tribalism lies at the heart of politics, with devastating effects on the disfavored tribes.

Disfavored by the regimes in the capital city, Nairobi, the pastoralists have been denied legal access to land and water. The livelihood of the pastoralists depends on the preservation of their livestock. Needing to find suitable pastures, Kenya pastoralists move into and out of neighboring countries, with little or no attention to international boundaries. The movements cause misunderstandings and armed conflict between neighboring pastoralist clans. Cattle-raiding between tribes has been a custom from time immemorial. But cattle-raiding has increased due to the high price of bridal dowries (paid in cattle) and diminishing livestock due to frequent droughts. Furthermore, raiding has been commercialized in recent decades with wealthy urbanites subsidizing cattle raids in order to shore up regional beef supplies.

To secure their livestock, pastoralists have armed themselves. It has been suggested that almost all households and homesteads within the region possess a firearm or two. Among Turkana people, firearms have been an especially well-established tradition, given the need to protect their livestock from incursions by the neighboring Pokot and Samburu in north-western Kenya.

In 2005, the governments of Kenya and Uganda began a coordinated campaign to prevent their shared border from becoming a haven of safety for civilians with weapons. Estimates of the civilian gun stock, as of August 2005, ranged from a very conservative 50,000 up to 200,000 in Kenya. On the other side of the border, in Uganda, estimates ranged from 50,000 to 150,000.

The first stage in gun confiscation is typically the announcement of a “voluntary” surrender program, accompanied by promises that the government will provide security. The government also promises to provide full compensation for surrendered weapons, but none of the promises are kept.

46. [The other regional gun control treaties in Africa are among the South African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas). They are essentially similar to the Nairobi Protocol. —Eds.]

The response to livestock raiding by the law enforcement agencies is often slow and ineffective, sometimes overly forceful, and sometimes non-existent. The Kenya government's inability to provide holistic security for pastoralists and their livestock is a primary driver of violence within the region. At times, government agents have colluded in crimes against people who have been disarmed.

The populace is further aware that government has not kept its promises to develop the area, or even to provide basic goods and services. With government corruption out of control, it is unlikely that the promises could be kept, even if the political will to do so were present.

Disarmament is followed by destitution. The pastoralists already live at a subsistence level, with survival dependent on the next water hole. If defenseless against cattle raids, they fall into destitution. No rational person, having seen her neighbors in such dire circumstances, would gamble her family's survival on empty government promises. Although, as the disarmament community recognizes, women are often interested in peace through disarmament, they are not willing to remain passive while their families suffer and die. According to scholars Margie Buchanan-Smith and Jeremy Lind, "[t]here are anecdotal reports of women defending themselves with guns. . . . Women often request ownership of their man's gun if he is killed. . . ."

The Kenyan government will resort to any means to collect firearms. According to West Pokot District Commissioner Stephen Ikua, "[w]e shall use force to get them." In March 2006, Internal Security minister John Michuki issued a shoot-to-kill directive for the entire country of Kenya, giving the police free rein against the populace.

The existence of a gun licensing program creates the legal fiction that ordinary citizens can possess a firearm, a fiction which bolsters the claim that the government will follow the proper legal procedures. Yet according to Peter Mwaura of the United Nations Environmental Programme, "[i]n practice, however, only the rich and the socially or politically correct or well connected manage to obtain firearms certificates and keep them. . . . Thus the gun law can be pretty arbitrary and subjective in its application." Likewise, Taya Weiss of South Africa's pro-disarmament Institute for Security Studies stated, "[v]ery few Kenyan citizens, especially those living in remote areas, meet the criteria for a gun license and can afford to pay the associated fees."

Ordinary Kenyans are not even allowed to possess bows and arrows, and the bow laws, too, are applied discriminately. Government security agents can therefore safely assume that every ordinary person with a bow or gun lacks a license, and thus the police can shoot to kill with impunity.

If the Kenyan government had paid some attention to the needs of the people, rather than discriminating against selected tribes, conditions might not have degenerated to the point where factional fighting has become the last survival mechanism available to many pastoralists. If government would first attend to the basic life necessities of northern Kenya, survival would not necessitate weapons possession. Yet, some NGOs share the Kenyan government's fixation with arms confiscation above all else. For example, Oxfam (which is a major supporter of two international gun confiscation NGOs—ControlArms, and the International Action Network on Small Arms, Ch. 18) declares that what Kenya really needs is "community arms collection and voluntary arms surrender activities."

The pastoralists of Kenya, however, have remained armed, despite almost-continuous disarmament programs for over a century. As old arms are confiscated, fresher arms acquired from the international black market.

Some of the disarmament programs have been accompanied by brutality, a fact remembered by many tribal leaders. One operation conducted by the military in 1950 caused the deaths of fifty people. In addition, the government confiscated 10,000 head of cattle.

The problems today existed under many different governments. In 1961, when Uganda was still a British colony, then-Lieutenant Colonel Idi Amin of the Uganda's King's African Rifles crossed the border into Kenya and tortured and terrorized civilians who refused to give up their weapons.⁴⁷ Although at least 127 men were castrated and left to die, the operation failed to disarm the Turkana people of northwest Kenya.

The unsuccessful 1984 "Operation NYUNDO" (Operation Hammer) was an example of the difficulty of disarming civilians who would rather die than disarm. "Operation NYUNDO" was a collaborative effort of the Kenyan and Ugandan armies, similar to the joint campaign against civilian gun owners that began in 2005. Krop Muroto, a political activist, recalled:

No one knows to date how many people were killed in that operation that lasted three months. The community was further devastated by mass killing of their cattle. 20,000 head of cattle were confiscated, rounded up in sheds and starved to death. Among other atrocities, . . . the army used helicopter gunships, killed people and destroyed a lot of property.

Confiscation promotes violence, since tribes that have been (temporarily) disarmed become prime targets for other tribes. After the Turkana voluntarily disarmed, they suffered repeated attacks from the neighboring Pokot and Karimojong. Many members of the Pokot community fled to Uganda to avoid weapons confiscation. Later, they later returned from Uganda with newly acquired firearms to torment the Turkana, who were unable to relocate. The assurance of protection of the Turkana by the Government of Kenya did not materialize.

Later, when government attention did turn to the Pokot, Reuters reported:

Lopokoy Kolimuk, an elder in the dusty and dry village of Kanyarkwat in the West Pokot district, said the soldiers who carried out that mission were wild, beyond humanity. He said many shot Pokots on sight, or forced men to lie on the ground in a line as they ran across their backs. Other men had their testicles tied together and were then made to run away from each other, he said. Women were raped in front of their husbands, sometimes with empty beer bottles.

In April 2006, Kenyan Security Minister John Michuki told Parliament, "[t]he Government has decided to disarm the Pokot by force. If they want an experience of 1984 when the Government used force to disarm them, then this is precisely what is going to happen. . . ."

47. [Amin took over independent Uganda in a 1971 military coup. Before he was deposed in 1978 by a Tanzanian invasion, he murdered several hundred thousand Ugandans.—Eds.]

Tapangole Lokeno, another Pokot elder, stated: “It is so fresh in our minds, so when Michuki says this operation will be worse, we just wish this world would bring us down first.” Stephen Ikua, a government spokesman, said that threats were necessary in order to get civilians to peacefully surrender their firearms. He explained, “As a government, you should talk from a position of strength. You cannot come in saying you are going to respect human rights.”

In May 2006, the BBC described the latest military operation in Kenya, code-named “Okota” (Collect), utilizing tanks, trucks, and helicopters, and taking over a local school building as a barracks for the army. In the village of about 2,000 people, eight weapons were recovered. Fearing a repeat of the 1984 atrocities, 15,000 panicked people fled to Uganda with their cattle and their guns, leaving behind the aged, the infirm, and the children. In West Pokot alone, 120,000 people needed food aid, but only 68,000 received rations. Schooling was disrupted, and farmsteads were neglected.

Five weeks after the forced disarmament began, only seventy illegally possessed firearms had been recovered. Collecting a few dozen firearms seems to be reason enough for the Kenyan government to go to war against its own citizens. Apparently, confiscating a few dozen firearms is, and for decades has been, a government priority that eclipses the digging of wells, the construction of more schools, or the establishment of medical clinics. And many Kenyans seem to have the same sentiment as Charlton Heston, the former President of the National Rifle Association, who declared that the only way anyone would ever get his guns was to take them “from my cold, dead hands.”

In mid-2006, the United Nations Development Programme withdrew its support for the Ugandan side of the joint disarmament program. At the time, a major conference for the U.N. gun control effort, the Programme of Action [online Ch. 18.A.3] was underway in New York and the situation in east Africa was giving coercive disarmament a bad name. The Kenyan government likewise backed away from Operation Okota.

Instead, Internal Security Minister John Michuki launched Kenya’s Action Plan for Arms Control and Management (KNAP) on July 14, 2006, giving civil society and local NGOs, in lieu of government forces, greater responsibility for further disarmament. Rather than repeating his previous violent threats (which had turned out to be accurate), Michuki merely stated, “[t]he Government remains steadfast in its war against illicit small arms.” Although the government of Kenya has discontinued the joint forcible disarmament exercise with Uganda, the government of Uganda continues to send its own soldiers into Kenya, where they pillage and steal cattle, while recovering small quantities of weapons. Kenyan military personnel torture and abuse civilians refusing to surrender their weapons or divulge information on other armed community members.

Arms confiscation is not restricted to pastoralists or the average citizen. In March 2016, Mombasa’s Governor, Hassan Joho, was **forced to surrender** his firearm to Mombasa Central Police following a government directive. Though Joho had owned the firearm for 20 years with no misuse, the order was signed by Chief Licensing Officer Samuel Kimaru who maintained that the governor was “unfit” to carry a firearm. The disarmament came on the same day seven police officers attached to the governor were withdrawn from his home.

The letter, which was made public on the governor’s official Facebook page, required Mr. Joho to also surrender his firearm certificate, stating: “I wish to notify

you in accordance with the provisions of the firearms Act. Cap 114 laws of Kenya that your firearms certificate number 4773 issued to you on June 18, 2008 is with effect from the date of this notice, revoked as I am satisfied that the revocation is warranted under section 5(7) of the above mentioned act.” [Joho saw](#) the removal of his police escort and confiscation of his firearm as part a crackdown on political opposition.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. *Death penalty.* The Kenyan government at one point proposed execution by hanging as the punishment for the illegal possession of semi-automatic weapons. See NRA News, [Kenya Proposes Execution of Gun Owners](#), YouTube, Oct. 7, 2009 (updated Nov. 15, 2009). Assuming that one has no qualms about the death penalty, or about imposing it for crimes other than murder or treason, is the Kenyan proposal reasonable? If government agents can kill arms owners with impunity, does it matter whether a statute formally declares a death penalty?

2. What do you predict would occur in Kenya if the government were to succeed in disarming the Kenyan population?

3. *International intervention?* Is it sometimes morally legitimate for Nation A to assist the government of Nation B in disarming Nation B’s people? Under what circumstances? Is assisting in such disarmament ever morally obligatory?

Now consider the converse. Is it sometimes morally legitimate for Nation A to seek to arm the people of Nation B, contrary to the wishes of Nation B’s government? Is it ever morally *obligatory* to help another nation’s citizens prevent disarmament efforts by their own government? **CQ:** Consider how these questions were answered by the classical founders of international law (online Ch. 18.C) and my modern international law regarding genocide (online Ch. 18.D).

4. Assuming one favors citizen disarmament as a general matter, is there some level of state dysfunction where the argument for disarmament fails? What are the characteristics of that dysfunction? Does Kenya exhibit those characteristics?

Is allowing individual access to private firearms in failing or dysfunctional states reasonable? Are private arms a component of a long-term strategy for building stable and just relationships between government and citizenry? Are private arms a tool allowing citizens a chance to survive in emergencies caused by failed or malevolent states?

5. *Counter-terrorism.* In 2013, Islamist terrorists executed a well-planned attack on the Westgate Mall, in Nairobi. They murdered 60 people and would have murdered hundreds more but for the intervention of armed citizens. Ronald K. Noble, who served as Secretary-General of Interpol from 2000 to 2014, argues that there are two security approaches to such attacks. One is target-hardening, which would include metal detectors and large contingents of armed police at the entrances to every potential target. Noble contends that while a selected number of potential targets can be hardened, it is impossible to harden all or most targets. The other alternative is the title to Noble’s video: [Armed Citizens Can Help Stop Terrorist Massacres Like Nairobi and Paris](#). The video includes graphic footage of the attack and of the response of armed citizens. According to Noble, “[t]his is not an American argument, nor a political argument. In these horrific situations, law-abiding armed citizens have helped protect others and literally saved lives, and the world should

be made aware of this reality. . . . In the hands of law-abiding citizens, guns can and do save lives.” Would Kenya be safer if, like most American states, it allowed handgun carrying by all adults who passed safety training and background checks?

6. Long before the Westgate attack, some Kenyans had been urging the government to abandon the confiscation campaigns, and instead to follow the Second Amendment model. As an essay in Kenya’s leading newspaper put it:

“How can the Government ask us to surrender our guns when we know very well that there is no security for us? If we give out our firearms, say today, who will protect us when the neighbouring tribes strike? How about our stolen livestock? Who is going to return them to us?” Mr. Lengilikwai talks with bitterness.

In the past, critics of liberalising access to firearms have argued that they would put ordinary people’s lives in peril because even squabbles in the streets or the bedroom would be resolved by bullets. Incidentally, such incidents are few and far between in the Kerio Valley despite the easy accessibility of AK-47s as well as the relatively low levels of education and social sophistication. . . . If Kenya is to achieve long-lasting stability, it ought to borrow a leaf from the US, whose constitution gives the people the right to bear arms and form militias for their own defence should the armed forces fail them, as happened in Kenya after the December elections.⁴⁸

Paul Letiwa, *Why Herders Won’t Surrender Their Firearms Just Yet*, Daily Nation, Apr. 30, 2008; see also Ng’ang’a Mbugua, *Law Should Be Changed to Free Guns*, Daily Nation, Apr. 25, 2008 (noting success of armed defense program of the people of the Kerio Valley).

Suppose that the idea of a fundamental human right to keep and bear arms became popular globally. What consequences might ensue?

7. *Further reading*, including on Uganda’s Karamoja disarmament program: Karol Czuba, *Karamojan Politics: Extension of State Power and Formation of a Subordinate Political Elite in Northeastern Uganda*, 39 *Third World Q.* 557 (2018); David-Ngendo Tshimba, “Our” Cows Do Matter: *Arguing for Human and Livestock Security Among Pastoralist Communities in the Karamoja Cluster of the Greater Horn of Africa*, 1 IHL Paper Series (no. 1, Sept. 2013) (explaining how government confiscates firearms instead of addressing the causes of economic instability); Eria Olowo Onyango, *Pastoralists in Violent Defiance of the State: The Case of the Karimojong in Northeastern Uganda*, Ph.D. diss. Univ. of Bergen (2010); James Bevan, *Crisis in Karamoja: Armed Violence and the Failure of Disarmament in Uganda’s Most Deprived Region* (Small Arms Survey 2008); Kennedy Agade Mkutu, *Guns and Governance in the Rift Valley: Pastoralist Conflict and Small Arms* (2008); Human Rights Watch, “Get the Gun!” *Human Rights Violations by Uganda’s National Arms in Law Enforcement Operations in the Karamoja Region* (2007); Ben Knighton, *Belief in Guns and Warlords: Freeing Karamojong Identity from Africanist Theory*, 4 *African Identities* 269 (2006); Ben Knighton, *The State as Raider Among the Karamojong: “Where There Are No Guns, They Use the Threat of Guns,”* 73 *Africa* 437 (2003).

48. [Following disputes about theft of the presidential election, large-scale inter-tribal violence broke out, leading to the deaths of about a thousand people and the displacement of several hundred thousand.—Eds.]

11. South Africa

David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen

Human Rights and Gun Confiscation

26 Quinnipiac L. Rev. 385 (2008) (revised for this work)

The main South African gun control statute is the [Firearms Control Act](#) (FCA), which the South African Parliament enacted in 2000 (Act 60 of 2000). The law was favored by the African National Congress (ANC), which is the only political party that has ruled Parliament in the post-apartheid era. Opposition came from Democratic Alliance, another party which, like the ANC, had opposed apartheid.

The leading advocates for the new law were Gun Free South Africa. Drafting advice was provided by Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, as well by Professor Wendy Cukier, head of Canada's gun control lobby. In the difficult political struggle to pass the FCA, Kristin Rand, the head of Gun Free South Africa, stated, "We're not naive enough to think that the reason the majority of black people don't have guns is because they believe as we do." Rather, "It's because they can't afford them." Donald G. McNeil, Jr., *Racial Edge Sharpens Debate on South Africa's Gun Laws*, N.Y. Times, Dec. 23, 1997, at A1. South Africa has also joined a regional gun control treaty, organized by the Southern African Development Community. [Protocol on the Control of Firearms and Ammunition](#) (2001). There is similar regional convention, the Nairobi Protocol, for gun control in the Great Lakes region of central and east Africa. West Africa's regional convention was created by ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States.) These conventions are discussed in online Ch. Change to 18.B.

Under the 2000 law, firearms may only be possessed if a person has been issued a license. A person may possess no more than four guns. Only one of the guns may be for self-defense. The self-defense arm may be a handgun (either a semi-automatic or a revolver) or a shotgun that is not semi-automatic. FCA, ch. 6, § 13.

"Restricted firearms" are semi-automatic rifles and shotguns. The government may administratively declare other firearms to be restricted. At the discretion of the government, a person may be granted permission to possess a semi-automatic long gun for self-defense. FCA, ch. 6, § 14.

Persons may also be licensed to possess guns for sporting purposes, including hunting. Allowable hunting arms are pistols, revolvers, and long guns that are not semi-automatic. FCA ch. 6, § 15. Members of hunting clubs and target shooting clubs may also be issued licenses for semi-automatic long guns. FCA ch. 6, § 16.

The license to possess a gun also serves as license to carry. The gun may not be carried loose; handguns must be in a holster or other container, and long guns must be carried in a holder designed for long guns. The gun may not be visible.

All guns must be registered. When not in use, guns must be stored in safes.

When the FCA came into effect, about a third of gun owners had more than four guns. They were required to sell them, or to turn them over to the government. About six hundred thousand guns have been given to the government, including in various amnesties. Section 137 of the FCA had promised compensation for guns, but lawsuits to compel payment have failed.

Licenses are valid for five years. An applicant must pass a written "competency test." Although the South African Constitution recognizes 11 official languages, the test is only given in Afrikaans and English.

The Central Firearms Registry (CFR) denies licenses to persons it considers at risk of violence. As applied, this includes being divorced, separated, or fired within the previous two years. Michelle Jones & Catherine Boulle, *Four SA Woman [sic] Killed Every Day by an Intimate Partner: NSW*, Pretoria News, Dec. 12, 2008, at 6.

Under the FCA, a license application must be determined to have “good motivation.” The CFR has never specified what it considers “good motivation” to be. Applications are often rejected with the simple statement “Lack of motivation.” Notwithstanding the statutory provisions about self-defense guns, self-defense applicants are often denied. See Estelle Ellis, *Getting a Legal Gun Is a Long Shot*, The Star, June 23, 2004, at 15. People who live in high crime areas are told that the police will protect them, notwithstanding South Africa’s very high violent crime rates. Married women may be told that they should rely on their husbands for protection.

The statutory minimum age for a license is 21 years old, an increase from the previous law, which set the age at 16. Bianca Capazorio, *Shops Report Sharp Drop in Gun Sales*, The Herald (Port Elizabeth, South Africa), Aug. 18, 2005.

The FCA achieved its objective of sharply reducing legal gun ownership. According to the South African Police Service (SAPS), the number of legal gun owners fell by 44 percent from 1999 to 2007. The number of gun stores fell from over 700 before the FCA was passed to about 200 in 2006 and about 50 in 2007. Edwin Naidu, *Getting a Gun Is Easy—for Criminals; But If You’re a Law-abiding Citizen It’s a Lot More Complicated and Will Probably Take up to Two Years*, Sunday Independent, Feb. 4, 2007, at 2; Shaun Smillie, *500 Guns But No Buyers; Gunshop Owners Are Suffering a Great Loss Following the Firearm Control Act*, The Star, June 23, 2006, at 16; RW Johnson George, *South Africa Sticks to Its Guns*, The Sunday Times (London, England), Jan. 23, 2005, at 29. Within a year, the law resulted in a 24 percent decline in foreign trophy hunting because it became very difficult for foreigners to get temporary import permits for their hunting rifles. Domestic sales of hunting rifles dropped significantly, with overall sales falling as much as 95 percent. Capazorio.

In the first decade of the FCA, the licensing process was extremely slow, often taking two years. If an owner’s license expired while a renewal application was pending, the owner was required to surrender all of his or her firearms. A 2005 English news story stated, “The regulations are bewilderingly complex and the licensing department is so slow that at its present rate it will take 65 years to re-register all South Africa’s 4.5m legally held private guns.” Johnson George. A year later, the number of licensed guns was estimated at 3.7 million. Clare Nullis, *New Lobby Aims to Fight Gun Control in Crime-Plagued South Africa*, Associated Press Archive, Jan. 26, 2006. As of early 2015, the government reported that 1,749,034 individual firearm owners possessed 3,081,173 firearms. Riah Phiyega, [Implementing the Firearms Control Act: Presentation to the National Firearm Summit 2015](#), Report of the Portfolio Committee on Police on the National Firearms Summit Held on 24 and 25 March 2015 (2015). The Small Arms Survey estimates the total of legal and illegal guns in South Africa to be 5.4 million. Aaron Karp, *Estimating global Civilian-held Firearms Numbers 4* (Small Arms Survey Briefing Paper, June 2018). South Africa’s 2018 population was about 58 million.

According to the Black Gun Owners Association of South Africa (BGOASA), the government was especially hostile to black people in urban areas who wanted guns for protection. As a result, many blacks, including business owners, acquired defensive arms illegally. Johan Burger, *Strategic Perspectives on Crime and Policing*

in South Africa (2007, Pretoria: Van Schaik); *Guns Out of Control: The Continuing Threat of Small Arms*, IRIN 1 (2006); Johnson George (quoting a gun-store owner saying that “[w]ell-off whites can retreat inside high-walled houses with expensive alarm systems and security companies offering instant armed response. But 95% of my customers are black and they can’t afford that. They buy my guns but have to leave them in my safe because they can’t get licences for them. They are all going to be driven into becoming illegal gun owners.”); M. Wines, In South Africa, Licensing Law Poses Hurdles for Gun Buyers, N.Y. Times, Jan. 3, 2005; E. Jacobs, *Anger over Gun Licence Law Sparks Protest*, IOL News, Aug. 23, 2004.

On the streets, a small pistol can be bought for 200 Rand, and an AK-47 for 800 Rand. Business Day, Nov. 25, 2005.⁴⁹ In contrast, a legal gun costs about four or five thousand Rand, plus more than a thousand additional Rand for fees and mandatory training.

Suing the government in 2010, the BGOASA claimed that 40,000 blacks had been denied firearms licenses. The lawsuit, along with years of pressure from other advocates, finally led to the government clearing out the licensing backlog. Since 2011, most license applications have been processed within 90 days.

In a subsequent lawsuit, South Africa’s High Court found certain provisions of the FCA unconstitutional. First, the licensing procedures were irrational and vague. Second, differential treatment of gun owners under certain interim provisions versus permanent provisions violated the right of equality. Third, the absence of a proper procedure for surrendering a firearm whose license had expired, as well as the absence of compensation, violated property rights. The government appealed, and before the Constitutional Court, the government prevailed on all issues. *Minister of Safety & Security v. South African Hunters & Game Conservation Assoc.* 2018, CCT177/17 ZACC 14; 2018 (2) South Africa Criminal Law Reports 164; 2018 (10) Buttersworth Constitutional Law Reports 1268.

There remains a very serious problem of gun use by violent criminals. One important source of crime guns is the South African National Defence Force (SADF). This is suggested by the fact that R5 automatic carbines and predecessor models are common crime guns. The R5 is the primary weapon of the SADF and it is not legal for citizens.

Another source of crime guns is the African National Congress. For decades the ANC fought a war to overthrow the apartheid government and was generously supplied by the Soviet Union and its proxies. Apartheid ended in 1994 when multiracial elections were held. The ANC, however, held onto its arms—estimated at 100 tons of weapons and munitions. What has happened with those arms remains secret. The BGOASA and others charge that many ANC weapons have ended up as crime guns. Maritz Spaarwater, *Not So Fast, Mac!*, Sunday Times, Aug. 9, 2009.

A third source of crime guns is the police. There is a widespread problem of corrupt police selling guns to criminals. This includes guns that were surrendered to police pursuant to the FCA. *South African Police Lost 20,000 Guns*, BBC News, Mar. 9, 2011; Carien du Plessis, *DA Takes Aim at Zuma over Mooted Clamp Down on Civilian Gun Rights*, The Argus, Oct. 26, 2009, at 5; Mbulelo Baloyi, *Surrendered Guns*

49. [As of 2021, the South African Rand is worth about six or seven American cents. The same was true as of Jan. 1, 2008, the earliest date for which we found a [USD/ZAR exchange rate](#) on the public internet.—Eds.]

“Used by Criminals,” All Africa, Jan. 29, 2007 (Cape Argus/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX); Naidu.

Some illegal arms are “home-made guns, turned out in township backyards.” Johnson George; G. Hay & N.R. Jenzen-Jones, [Beyond State Control: Improvised and Craft-produced Small Arms and Light Weapons](#) 41 (Small Arms Survey, Nov. 2018) (“In South Africa, craft accelerated under apartheid, but has since evolved into a driver and tool of criminal activity.”). Finally, many legal citizen guns are stolen during burglaries, and then sold on the black market. Although the FCA requires that guns be stored in safes, the gun theft rate in South Africa is three times the U.S. level.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. South Africa’s leading pro-gun group is the [South Africa Gunowners’ Association](#). It was formed in 1984, when the apartheid government proposed limiting the number and types of firearms that individuals could own. After defeating the government plan, SAGA began pushing to eliminate racial discrimination in gun control laws. Although SAGA prevailed in law, some abusive police administrators continued to reject license applications by blacks. Another pro-gun group is [Gun Owners South Africa](#). The leading anti-gun group is [Gun Free South Africa](#). Its patrons include Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

2. *Further reading*: Adele Kirsten, *A Nation Without Guns?: The Story of Gun Free South Africa* (2008) (how and why Gun Free South Africa helped enact the FCA); R. Matzopoulos, J. Simonetti, M. Prinsloo, I. Neethling, P. Groenewald, J. Dempers, L.J. Martin, A. Rowhani-Rahbar, J.E. Myers & M.L. Thompson, *A Retrospective Time Trend Study of Firearm and Non-firearm Homicide in Cape Town from 1994 to 2013*, 108 SAMJ [South African Medical Journal] 197 (2018) (FCA reduced firearms homicides in Cape Town for several years, but the trend was reversed starting in 2011. The authors hypothesize two major causes: First, the police cleared a large backlog of firearms license applications. Second, many firearms in government custody were corruptly sold to gangs.); Guy Lamb, *Policing Firearm Flows and Adaptive Illicit Networks: The Case of South Africa* (preprint 2018) (roles of corrupt police and corrupt licensed dealers who sell to criminals); David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *The Arms Trade Treaty: Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Prospects for Arms Embargoes on Human Rights Violators*, 114 Penn St. L. Rev. 891 (2010) (The ANC government—in flagrant violation of the FCA and international arms trade treaties ratified by South Africa—follows its apartheid predecessor by smuggling arms to allied dictatorships in southern Africa, including the murderous regime in Zimbabwe.); David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *Human Rights and Gun Confiscation*, 26 Quinnipiac L. Rev. 383 (2008) (human rights abuses in gun confiscation programs in South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda); Lesetja Simon Bopape, *An Analysis of the Firearms Control Measures Used by the South African Police Service*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of S. Afr. (exploring gaps between statute and enforcement in the FCA).

3. *Media licensing*. Like the apartheid regime, the ANC controls the South African Broadcasting Corporation’s radio and television stations, keeping them in conformity with ruling party ideology, and using the license system to exclude alternative viewpoints.

4. *Libya*. Following the fall of the Qaddafi dictatorship in 2011, Libya has become a site of civil war, anarchy, and violence. According to one estimate, Libya's 6.4 million people own about 125,000 weapons. Violence-related problems for the health care system are detailed in Gemma Bowsher, Patrick Bogue, Preeti Patel, Peter Boyle & Richard Sullivan, *Small and Light Arms Violence Reduction as a Public Health Measure: The Case of Libya*, 12 *Conflict & Health* 29 (2018).

D. LONG-TERM HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

This Chapter concludes with three essays providing long-term perspectives. The first essay, by Professor Carlisle Moody, looks at the decline in European homicide the past eight centuries. He suggests that the proliferation of firearms—especially the proliferation of firearms that were easy to keep ready for sudden self-defense—may have contributed to the decline.

In the second essay, Professor Kopel argues that murder during the last century has been far more prevalent in Europe (and the rest of the world) than in the United States—if one counts murder by government. He challenges the idea that the United States has more murder than Europe because the United States has so many more guns. Indeed, historical experience in Europe and elsewhere shows that armed populations deter mass murder, and that if mass murder does begin, intended victims who acquire arms save many lives. The essay concludes with case studies of armed resistance to genocide by Armenians and other Christians in the Ottoman Empire during World War I and by Jews in Europe during World War II.

The third essay, also by Professor Kopel, is a case study of the diverse roles of arms in largest mass murder in history: the Mao Zedong regime against the people of China from 1949-1976. The essay examines how arms prohibition was reinforced by prohibitions on communication, religion, and independent thinking and by the elimination of the rule of law.

The essay includes a detailed examination of Tibet's armed revolts against totalitarian imperialism. The story of the Tibetan Buddhist and Tibetan Muslim resistance to Mao complements the prior Section's case studies of Christian and Jewish resistance to genocide. Set among diverse people, places, and times, the three case studies examine the factors that affect the success of resistance, and the different ways in which resistance movements may succeed.

1. Individual Violence in Europe

Over the last millennium, the long-term homicide trend in Europe has been downward. In investigating the causes, some historians have suggested that, over the centuries, Europeans grew more civilized. As people became more emotionally mature, they better realized the long-term consequences of their actions and were more considerate of other people's feelings. So there were fewer duels, brawls, and so on. Further, government became strong enough begin to establish monopolies on the use of force. Undoubtedly there have been other causes; improvements in medical care for the wounded must account for at least part of the decline. So too would growing economic prosperity, in the sense that better nourished and healthier people might be less likely

to succumb to infections caused by wounds. The essay below suggests a potential additional cause: the growing ability of smaller persons to defend themselves against larger aggressors. Note that this essay's homicide data considers only homicides by ordinary criminals, and not homicides by government, such as the death penalty or mass murders of civilians. The complete version of the essay is [available here](#).

Carlisle E. Moody

Firearms and the Decline of Violence in Europe: 1200-2010

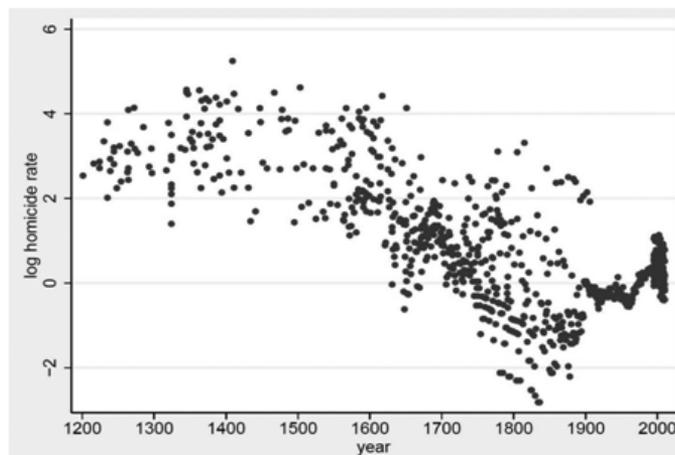
9 Rev. Eur. Stud. 53 (2017)

Personal violence has declined substantially in Europe from 1200-2010. The conventional wisdom is that the state's monopoly on violence is the cause of this happy result. I find some evidence that does not support this hypothesis. I suggest an alternative hypothesis that could explain at least some of the reduction in violence, namely that the invention and proliferation of compact, concealable, ready-to-use firearms caused potential assailants to recalculate the probability of a successful assault and seek alternatives to violence. I use structural change models to test this hypothesis and find breakpoints consistent with the invention of certain firearms. . . .

While homicide rates today are much lower than they were in the 13th century, they do not appear to be falling continuously. The trend from 1200 to at least 1500 appears to be slightly upward, or at best constant. There also appears to be an upward trend since 1900. Table 1 presents means by centuries to get a better idea of the pattern.

What theory explains the decline in homicide from 1500 to 1900? The conventional wisdom (Johnson & Monkkonen, 1996; Pinker, 2011) attributes the decline in personal violence to the "civilizing process" first suggested by Elias (1939) who hypothesized that the primary cause was the transformation of Europe from a large number of fiefdoms in the Middle Ages to a small number of large, centralized nation states under a single monarch. The centralized state instituted and enforced a monopoly on violence, known as the king's peace. . . .

Figure 1 Homicide Rates, Europe, 1201-2010



To have an appreciable effect on the homicide rate, there must be enough firearms distributed among the population of potential victims to generate a significant probability of harm to the assailant. We know that there were enough wheel lock pistols in 1517 to cause an attempted ban in the Holy Roman Empire. There is also evidence that by 1541 wheel lock pistols were in widespread use in England in the form of an English statute attempting to limit their use. A stream of legislation over the next 75 years tried unsuccessfully to regulate the increasing supply of pistols in England.⁵⁰

Table 1 Homicide Rates by Century

Century	Homicide Rate
1200s	22.68
1300s	36.84
1400s	40.79
1500s	20.28
1600s	7.84
1700s	2.48
1800s	1.78
1900s	1.18
2000s	1.41

The flintlock, familiar to most people from the US Civil War and pirate movies, was invented by the French gunsmith Marin le Bourgeois sometime between 1610 and 1615. It was the standard firearm technology for 250 years, eventually replaced by revolvers and breech loading rifles in the second half of the 19th century. Like wheel locks, flintlock pistols could be carried loaded, primed, concealed, and ready for instant use. For personal self-defense, flintlocks had all the advantages of wheel locks and were simpler, cheaper, and more durable. In addition, the flintlock could be cocked with the thumb rather than wound up with a separate tool, allowing it to be used with one hand. The flintlock technology spread rapidly.⁵¹ . . .

3. A CLOSER LOOK AT THE DATA

Homicide rates were constant or increasing from 1200 to 1500, indicating that the civilizing process was not particularly effective in Europe during that time. The first great decline appears to take place in the 1500s when homicide rates fell to half of those in the previous century. The process continues into the 1600s and

50. [For the English legislation, see Chapters 2.G, 2.H, 22.G, 22.H; for wheel lock pistols, Chapters 2.I.1, 23.A.1.—Eds.]

51. [Flintlocks are covered in Chapters 2.I.2, 3.E.2.a, 23.A.2.—Eds.]

1700s where homicide rates fall by another 50 percent or more in each century. If homicide rates are constant or increasing and then suddenly plummet, it is incumbent upon the analyst to suggest what might have happened at that time that might explain the phenomenon. . . .

The obvious test of the concealable firearms hypothesis is the Chow (1960) test which requires that the breakpoint be specified exogenously. There are two exogenous dates suggested by the theory: 1505, the earliest year the wheel lock pistol was known, and 1610, the earliest year the flintlock could have been invented. . . .

The results indicate that there is a significant downward shift in the mean [homicide rate] after 1505 and again after 1610. In addition, the trend, which was positive but insignificantly different from zero, does not become negative until after 1610. See Figure 3 below.

[Another test] indicated that there are two significant breaks, in 1621 and 1793. . . .

4. AN ATTEMPT AT EX-POST THEORIZING

The breaks in 1505 and 1621 are clearly consistent with the firearms hypothesis and not consistent with the civilizing process theory. The fact that no breakpoints are found before 1505 fails to falsify the self-defense theory. The 1793 break consists of two parts, a negative shift in the mean and a positive break in trend. The break in trend is in the wrong direction to be the result of any of the strands of the civilizing process hypothesis. The negative break in 1793 could be capturing some of the effect of the [Coalition and] Napoleonic Wars which put young men who would otherwise be committing illegal homicide into the army where they committed legal homicide.

Figure 3 Chow Breakpoint Model . . .

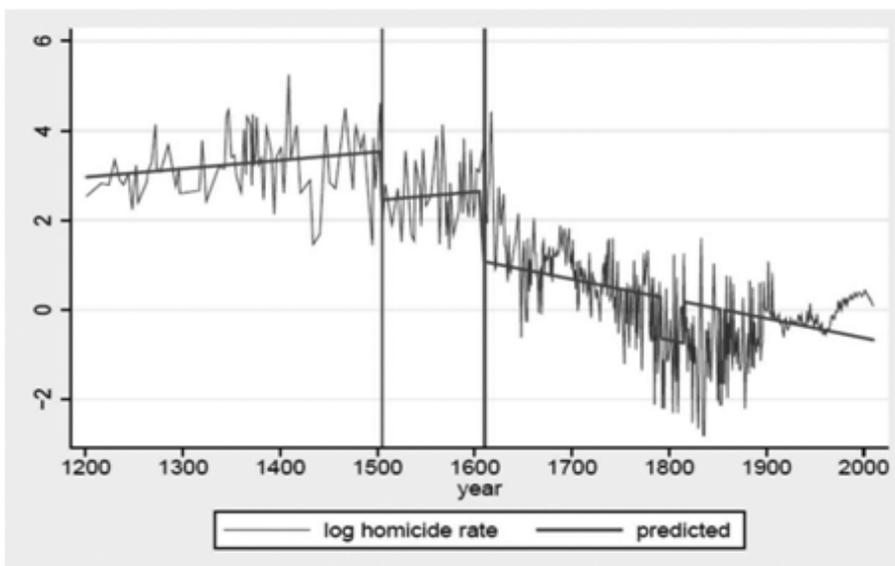
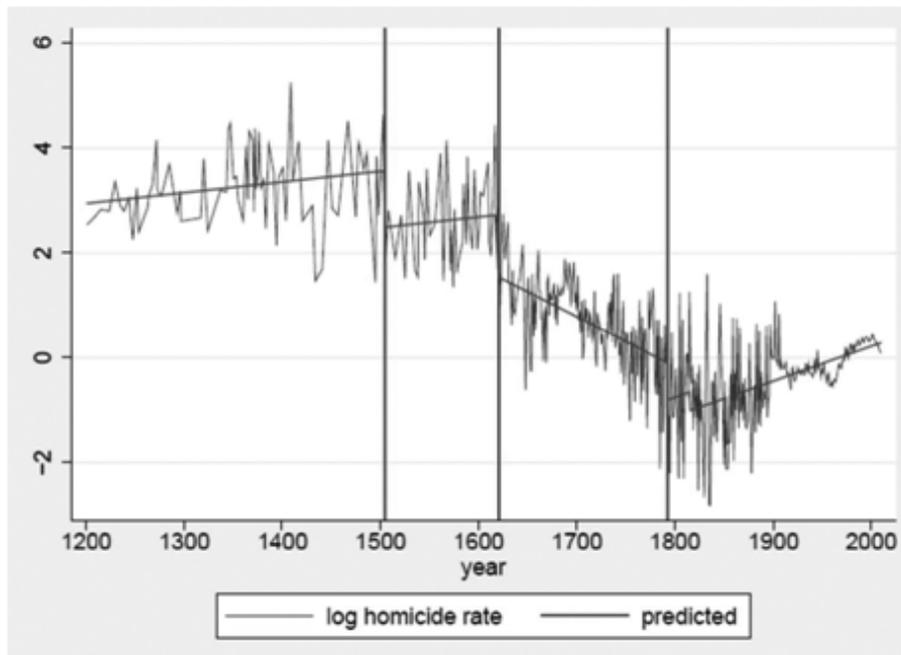


Figure 4 Breakpoints at 1505, 1621, and 1793

The positive break in trend is a function of the higher homicide rates after 1793 and could be a function of the supply of firearms. . . .

Under this theory the homicide rate peaked as firearms reached a critical mass and then decreased. After 1793 when homicide fell to historically low levels, people could have begun to feel safe enough to go about unarmed, thereby reducing the effective stock of guns. There is some evidence that this happened in England. . . .

6. CONCLUSION

The weight of evidence is that there was a negative break in the mean European homicide rate around 1505, coincident with the invention of the wheel lock pistol, but the major effect was the significant and negative break in mean and trend around 1621, coincident with the introduction and proliferation of the flintlock. The positive break in trend in 1793 is not consistent with the civilizing process but is consistent with either a reduction in the effective stock of firearms or a decrease in the deterrent effect of firearms at low assault levels. It is also consistent with inefficiency in the state's monopoly on violence and a number of other hypotheses. It is possible that firearms outlived their usefulness as weapons of self-defense when the homicide rate fell to very low levels in modern Europe. The rise in homicide after 1793 could be the result of the lethality and instrumentality effects of firearms exceeding the deterrent effect at low assault levels.

The firearms theory is plausible in that concealable firearms could deter individuals from making assaults, it is testable using breakpoint analysis on the time

series of homicide, and it is falsifiable in the sense that the discovery of negative breakpoints before the invention of concealable firearms could be interpreted as evidence suggesting some other process was reducing homicide. The civilizing process theory is also testable and falsifiable in that positive breakpoints after 1200 could be interpreted as indicating the failure of the process.

Correlation is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for causality. The correlation of the breakpoints with the introduction of concealable firearms could be coincidental, but the fact that correlation can be spurious does not mean it is spurious in any given case. All one can do is provide a plausible theory of causation, a falsifiable hypothesis, and a corresponding hypothesis test. If the hypothesis does not reject, the theory survives for possible refutation later.

There is no reason to suppose that Elias' civilizing process has had no effect on homicide, but it is not possible with currently available data to identify the separate effect of firearms and the growth of government on homicide rates. In any case, the civilizing process theory is not consistent with the rise in violence between 1200 and 1500, it does not explain the sudden and precipitous decline and reversal of trend that occurred in the 16th and 17th centuries, and it is not consistent with the 1793 reversal of trend.

According to Pinker (2011), "[Elias] proposed that over a span of several centuries, beginning in the 11th or 12th and maturing in the 17th or 18th, Europeans increasingly inhibited their impulses, anticipated the long-term consequences of their actions, and took other people's thoughts and feelings into consideration. A culture of honor—the readiness to take revenge—gave way to a culture of dignity—the readiness to control one's emotions. . . . The standards also trickled down from the upper classes to the bourgeoisie that strove to emulate them, and from them to the lower classes, eventually becoming a part of the culture as a whole". . . .

Obviously, it is much more important to inhibit your impulses and to take other people's thoughts and feelings into consideration when the other people are likely to be armed. The transition from a coarse and violent Medieval era to a more refined and gentle modern era does not have to be exclusively due to etiquette trickling down from the nobility. To quote Robert A. Heinlein . . . , "An armed society is a polite society. Manners are good when one may have to back up his acts with his life." [Robert A. Heinlein, *Beyond This Horizon* 147 (1948).]

Homicide was increasing before the invention of concealable firearms and decreasing after. While there may be many other theories, the sudden and spectacular decline in violence around 1505 and again around 1610-1621 is consistent with the theory that the invention and proliferation of concealable firearms was responsible, at least in part, for the decline in homicide. The landscape of personal violence was suddenly and permanently altered by the introduction of a new technology. The handgun was the ultimate equalizer. The physically strong could no longer feel confident of domination over the weak. The fact that potential assailants could not determine who among a set of possible victims was carrying a firearm generated an externality in which those that were armed protected those that were not and thereby multiplied the effectiveness of the stock of firearms.

[The wheel lock] must have produced an enormous sensation, for it suddenly altered the whole condition of affairs for the weaker man. Till then he had always been subject to the personal element of muscular superiority. Any armour-plated

robber knight and his gang of ruffians could raid into a merchant caravan. Small gentry were at the mercy of the turbulent local nobles. It was a predatory age but the invention of the wheel lock introduced a totally new factor into the equation. . . . There are still countries where banditry, raiding and civil wars flourish, and if we argue from personal experience it is probable that in the Middle Ages a display of armament was as protective then as now. . . .

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. Which of Professor Moody's conclusions do you find to be the strongest? About which are you most skeptical?

2. Do you agree with Heinlein's observation that "an armed society is a polite society"? Gun control advocates say that more privately owned guns lead to more violence, while gun rights advocates say that more privately owned guns deter violence. Which is correct? Could they both be wrong? Both right, in different ways?

2. *State Violence in Europe and Elsewhere*

David B. Kopel

Fewer Guns, More Genocide: Europe in the Twentieth Century

(prepared for this work)

This essay compares the relative dangers of excessive gun ownership and of excessive gun control, based on the historical record of the twentieth century.

The essay begins in Section D.2.a by presenting homicide data for the United States and Europe during the twentieth century. First, the essay considers gun death rates from ordinary crimes—robberies, domestic violence, and so on. Based on certain assumptions that bias the figure upward, if the U.S. gun homicide rate from ordinary crime had been the same as Europe's, there might have been three-quarters of a million fewer deaths in America during the twentieth century. The figure is a data point for the dangers of insufficient gun control.

Next, Section D.2.b presents data on mass murders perpetrated by governments, such as the Hitler or Stalin regimes. In Europe in the twentieth century, states murdered about 87.1 million people. Globally, governments murdered well over 200 million people. The figure does not include combat deaths from wars. As will be detailed, the death toll of all the people killed in battle in the twentieth century is much smaller than the number of noncombatants killed by governments—such as the Jews murdered by Hitler, or the Ukrainians murdered by Stalin. The mass murder by government figures are, arguably, data points for the dangers of excessive gun control.

As the data in Section D.2.c show, totalitarian governments are the most likely to perpetrate mass murder. Section D.2.d argues against the complacent belief that any nation, including the United States, is immune from the dangers of being taken over by a murderous government. The historical record shows that risks are very broad.

The record also shows that governments intent on mass murder prioritize victim disarmament. Such governments consider victim armament to be a serious impediment to mass murder and to the government itself, as described in Section D.2.e and f.

The most effective means by which citizen arms possession prevents mass murder is deterrence, according to Section D.2.g. When deterrence fails, rebels who attempt to overthrow a murderous regime usually lose, as noted in Section D.2.h. Sometimes, bad regimes can be removed by nonviolent citizen action, as described in Section D.2.i.

In worst-case scenarios, the government is slaughtering people *en masse*, and the victims have no possibility of removing the regime by forcible or nonforcible means. Even then, armed resistance can save many lives—as demonstrated by Armenians and other Christians in the Ottoman Empire during and after World War I and by armed Jews during World War II. Section D.2.j, k, and l present case studies of armed resistance in dire circumstances.

Readers who do not find the essay persuasive might still find it useful, as presentation of a viewpoint that is common among American right to arms supporters and that explains some of their skepticism about citizen disarmament and certain gun controls. For example, opponents of gun registration often point out how registration lists have been used by confiscatory dictators.

The next and final essay in this chapter, Section D.3, is a case study of how arms were used and misused during the Mao regime in China from 1949-76. Mao perpetrated the largest mass murders ever—more than Hitler and Stalin combined. The essay shows how Mao's arms policies and victim disarmament were integral to his mass killings and are a *sine qua non* for a communist regime maintaining power.

a. Excess Firearms Homicides in the United States in the Twentieth Century

If U.S. gun homicide rates were as low as European homicide rates in the twentieth century, how many lives might have been saved? The largest global dataset for firearms homicide is from M. Naghavi et al., *Global Mortality from Firearms, 1990-2016*, 320 *JAMA* 792 (2018). The relevant data are online in supplemental eTable9. In 1990, which was a very high year for firearms homicide (and for all crime) in the United States, the age-adjusted firearms homicide rate was 5.57 per 100,000 population (i.e., 557 firearms homicides per 10 million Americans). The rate in Western Europe was 0.53; in Eastern Europe, it was 1.31. The European average is 0.92. The difference between the European rate of 0.92 and the American rate of 5.57 is 4.65. In other words, there were about 465 more firearms murders per 10 million people in the United States than in Europe. The U.S. population in 1990 was nearly 249 million. Multiplying 24.9 (population in tens of millions) by 465 (excess U.S. deaths) yields 11,785. This is the excess of U.S. firearms homicides in 1990 due to the higher firearms homicide rate in the United States.

If instead of using 1990 as the base year, we use the *JAMA* data for 1990-2000, then the average U.S. gun homicide rate is 5.09 per 100,000 population; the Western European average is 0.46; and the Eastern European is 2.24. So the European average is 1.35, and the U.S.-Europe difference is 3.71. This is significantly lower than the 1990-only difference of 4.65. In order to maximize the U.S.-Europe

difference, we will make calculations based on the 4.65 figure for 1990, even though the 3.71 figure for 1990-2000 is more accurate.

Use the figure of 4.65 excess U.S. gun homicides per 100,000 population (in other words, 465 per 10 million population) for every year of the twentieth century, covering the years 1901 to 2000.¹ Over the course of the century, the United States had 745,162 more firearms homicides than if the United States had the European rate of firearms homicides.

Assume that *every* excess American gun homicide would not have been a homicide if the United States had adopted European-style gun control. That is, assume that other lethal means would not have been substituted for firearms. Do not consider the American gun homicides that are justifiable self-defense. Do not consider data about how often nonfatal defensive uses of firearms prevent homicides or other crimes. Ch. 1.C.2.

With the above assumptions, the failure of the United States to adopt European gun control was responsible for almost three-quarters of a million excess deaths in the United States in the twentieth century.

b. Homicides by European and Other Governments in the Twentieth Century

Seven hundred and forty-five thousand is a very large number. It is, however, a much smaller number, by two orders of magnitude, than the number of Europeans killed by governments in the twentieth century. International homicide statistics usually only count murders by individuals or small groups. A serial killer may murder two dozen people over several years. A mass shooter may murder dozens at once. Murderers who use explosives or arson sometimes kill even more. Even in the aggregate, individuals or small groups perpetrate vastly less homicide than is perpetrated by criminal governments.

Government is a means to organize large numbers of people for collective action. Such actions can be benign or malign. The U.S. interstate highway system, begun in part as a national defense project under President Eisenhower, constructed high-quality highways that would not have been produced so quickly by a system that relied only on entrepreneurs building toll roads. Similarly, when murder is the objective, a well-organized government can murder many more people than can murderously inclined individuals who lack massive resources. Murder statistics that do not count murder by government are missing most of the murders.

1. Although twentieth-century homicide data are available for many European nations, the Naghavi study was a breakthrough in comprehensiveness. Accordingly, it is the best source for U.S./Europe comparisons. Of course, it would be ideal if the data started in 1901, rather than in 1990. By extrapolating from the 1990 U.S. vs. Europe homicide differential, this essay is biased toward a larger gap than might be found if precise year-by-year comparisons were available for the entire century. Because 1990 was among the highest year for gun homicides in the United States, extrapolating from 1990 rates likely exaggerates the size of the century-long difference between the United States and Europe.

For simplicity, the calculation assumed a straight linear increase for U.S. population between one decennial census and the next.

A comprehensive quantitative analyses of murder by government in the twentieth century was published in 1994, by the late University of Hawaii political science professor Rudolph J. Rummel. It covered the 15 most lethal regimes from 1900 to 1987. R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (2017) (1994). He had already written a trilogy covering each of the century's three deadliest regimes. *China's Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (2017) (1991); *Lethal Politics: Soviet Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1917* (1990); and *Democide: Nazi Genocide and Mass Murder* (1991). Each of the books in the trilogy contains detailed tables and data sources. Data sources for the fourth through fifteenth deadliest regimes are provided in R.J. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (1998). That book also provides data sources and murder estimates for all other mass killings by other governments from 1900 to 1987, as well as Rummel's regression analysis of what factors are associated with democide. Much of Rummel's work, including the data, is available on his [University of Hawaii website](#), *Power Kills*. Professor Rummel analyzed the causes of mass murder by government in all his books and synthesized and summarized the causes in *Power Kills: Democracy as a Method of Nonviolence* (2017) (1997). His argument that public safety, prosperity, and peace thrive best under democratic governments is elaborated in *The Blue Book of Freedom: Ending Famine, Poverty, Democide, and War* (2006).

Not all mass murders by government are "genocide" in the narrowest legal sense. At the insistence of the Soviet Union, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1949) does not cover mass killings of economic classes, political dissenters, and so on. Rather, the Genocide Convention addresses only "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such." *Id.* art. 2; *see* online Ch. 18.D. Accordingly, Professor Rummel coined the word "democide" to denote all mass murder by government, regardless of whether the victims were selected for ethnicity, politics, economics, or other reasons.² This essay uses "democide" and "mass murder" as equivalent terms.³

2. "Democide" is narrower than "genocide," in that the former includes only killing, whereas the latter can include intentional destruction of a group by other means, such as forbidding the practice of the group's religion, rape by out-group members for the purpose of preventing reproduction within the group, deporting group members from their homeland so that once dispersed, they and will be less likely to marry and reproduce with each other, and so on.

3. Rummel's definitions are as follows: "Genocide: among other things, the killing of people by a government because of their indelible group membership (race, ethnicity, religion, language). Politicide: the murder of any person or people by a government because of their politics or for political purposes. Mass Murder: the indiscriminate killing of any person or people by a government. Democide: The murder of any person or people by a government, including genocide, politicide, and mass murder." Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 31. This essay, however, uses "mass killing" or "mass murder" as equivalents for Rummel's neologism, "democide."

Although Professor Rummel's books provide extensive data on battlefield deaths, he does not include battle deaths in his democide totals. He *does* include military killings in violation of the 1977, 1949, and prior Geneva Conventions on the laws of war. These killings include "the intentional bombing of a hospital, shooting of captured POWs, using civilians for target practice, shelling a refugee column, indiscriminate bombing of a village, and the like."⁴ Civilian deaths that occur as collateral damage to attacks on legitimate military targets, such as bombing a village "beneath which have been built enemy bunkers," is not a violation of the laws of war, and is not included in Rummel's definition of democide. The same is true for bombings that are aimed at a military target, but which hit a school or hospital because of navigation errors.⁵

Capital punishment with due process is not democide per se. "All extrajudicial or summary executions comprise democide. Even judicial executions may be democide, as in the Soviet show trials of the late 1930s. Judicial executions for 'crimes' internationally considered trivial or noncapital—as of peasants picking up grain at the edge of a collective's fields, or a worker telling an antigovernment joke," are democide. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 41.

For each nation, Professor Rummel describes the various sources that have estimated particular killings. He then offers his own "prudent or conservative mid-range estimate, which is based on my reading of the events involved, the nature of the different estimates, and the estimates of professionals who have long studied the country or government involved."⁶ He cautions that his estimates should "be viewed as rough approximations—as suggestive of an order of magnitude." He expects that future scholars might arrive at different estimates, based on further research.⁷

As Rummel points out, exactitude is impossible, partly because murderous regimes often do not admit the full scope of their atrocities. Even when data gathering has all possible advantages, exactitude may still be very difficult. For example, the Nazis kept meticulous records, and after they lost World War II, all of their records fell into enemy hands. Even so, the scholarly estimates of the number of Jews murdered by the Nazis had a difference of 41 percent between the lowest and highest figures suggested by credible scholars.⁸ The oft-quoted figure of "six million" Jews is within that range. Rummel's own estimate is 5.3 million.⁹ As that estimate indicates, Rummel is generally inclined to risk being too low rather than being too high.

Tables 1 through 3 present some of Rummel's data for democides involving particular nations. Table 1 lists the 15 deadliest regimes of the century, each of which is covered by a chapter of *Death by Government*. Table 2 covers some major European democides that were not large enough to be listed in the global top-15. Table 3 lists some other major 1900-87 democides on other continents.

4. Rummel, *Power Kills*, at 98.

5. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 37-38.

6. *Id.* at xix.

7. *Id.* at xvii.

8. *Id.* at xvii.

9. *Id.* at 112 tbl. 6.1.

Except as otherwise noted, the figures are purely domestic, and include killing only within the particular nation. The figures do include killings by Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and Japan in nations they conquered during, before, or shortly after World War II.

The tables do not include deaths from “blue water” (overseas) colonialism—such as the killings in Africa or Asia by European colonial powers. Rummel’s *Statistics of Democide* does cover colonial killings, but as detailed *infra*, those figures were based on reported massacres and the like, and greatly undercounted deaths due to forced slave labor. Those killings are certainly democide, but there has not yet been sufficient research for rigorous estimates of the colonial death tolls, which Rummel suggests could number in the tens of millions in 1900-87.

As the “Years” columns indicate, the data cover only 1900-87. “This means that post-1987 democides by Iraq, Iran, Burundi, Serbian and Bosnian Serbs, Bosnia, Croatia, Sudan, Somalia, the Khmer Rouge guerrillas, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and others have not been included.”¹⁰ Likewise not covered is the 1994 Rwandan democide. Of course, twenty-first-century genocides are not covered; for current nations experiencing or at high risk of genocide, see the [Genocide Watch](#) website.

Table 1 Mega-Murders—Over 1 Million Victims

Regime	Years	Democide (000,000s)	Summary
Deka-megamurderers (over 10 million victims)			
People’s Public of China	1949- 1987	87.6	Mao et al. communist regime. Differs from Rummel’s figure, for reasons detailed <i>infra</i> Section D.3. Does not include 3.5 million murders by Chinese communists during the 1927-1949 civil war.
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	1917- 1987	61.9	Communist regime. Includes 54.8 million within the Soviet Union, plus 6.9 million in areas conquered by the USSR. Josef Stalin’s rule (1929-1953) accounts for 43 million. On an annualized basis, the pre-Stalin regime founded by Lenin was more murderous than the post-Stalin one.
Germany	1933- 1945	20.9	National Socialist German Workers (a/k/a Nazi) Party. Includes Hitler regime’s murders throughout occupied Europe. Does not include World War II battle deaths.
China	1928- 1949	10.1	Kuomintang party. Summarized <i>infra</i> Section D.3.

10. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at xxi.

Regime	Years	Democide (000,000s)	Summary
Megamurders (over 1 million victims)			
Japan	1936- 1945	6.0	Military dictatorship. Principally, war crimes perpetrated by the Japanese army against civilians in occupied nations, such as China or the Philippines. Chinese data are summarized <i>infra</i> Section D.3.
China	1923- 1949	3.5	Communist revolutionary army before victory in 1949. Summarized <i>infra</i> Section D.3.
Cambodia	1975- 1979	1.5	Khmer Rouge communist regime. Per capita, the largest democide against a domestic population. Includes murders of ethnic minorities, intellectuals, and dissidents, plus deaths from slave labor.
Turkey	1909- 1918	1.9	Young Turks regime. Military dictatorship killings of Armenians and other Christians. Discussed <i>infra</i> Section D.2.k.
Vietnam	1945- 1987	1.7	Communist regime. Includes 1.1 million in Vietnam and 0.6 million in Laos and Cambodia. Does not include battle deaths.
Poland	1945- 1948	1.6	Communist regime, post-World War II. Ethnic cleansing of German-speaking population. Deaths mainly from subhuman conditions of deportation. ¹¹
Pakistan	1970- 1971	1.5	Islamist military dictatorship. A 267-day military attack by West Pakistan on East Pakistan (which is now the independent nation of Bangladesh). The attacks were ended by Indian military intervention. The 1.5 million figure does not include battle deaths.

11. For hundreds of years, governments in Eastern Europe had encouraged German immigration, believing Germans to be high-skilled and hard-working. However, Hitler used the existence of these *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans living outside Germany) as a pretext for his expansionist territorial demands—most notably against Czechoslovakia in 1938. *See* online Ch. 18.B.4.a. Determined to prevent a recurrence of a future war by an expansionist Germany, the Allies at the 1945 Potsdam Conference agreed to the deportation of the *Volksdeutsche*. Those in Eastern European nations were sent to Germany; those in the Soviet Union (e.g., in Ukraine) were shipped by Stalin to Siberia. In the infamous 1944 Yalta accords, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to give eastern Poland to the Soviet Union. In return, Poland was given a large portion of eastern Germany. So the Germans who lived within the former boundaries of Germany were also shipped out. The border change explain why Poland had such a large number of deportable Germans, compared to other Eastern European nations.

Regime	Years	Democide (000,000s)	Summary
Yugoslavia	1944- 1963	1.1	Josip Broz Tito communist dictatorship. Mass killings of ethnic groups and non-communists in 1944-1946, plus deaths in slave labor camps through 1963.
Suspected megamurders (data are less certain, so estimates are rougher)			
North Korea	1948- 1987	1.7	Sung family's communist absolute monarchy. Includes killings of prisoners of war and civilian South Koreans during the Korean War (1950-1953).
Mexico	1900- 1920	1.4	Porfiro Díaz authoritarian regime till 1911; revolutionary regimes and warlords thereafter. Deaths of Indians and peons on slave labor haciendas, plus massacres of civilians and conscription into slave labor by various forces in the civil wars of 1911-1920.
Russia	1900- 1917	1.1	Czarist regime. Includes about 0.5 million from Russian Empire Armenian irregulars slaughtering Kurds in Turkey in World War I, in reprisal for genocide of Armenians in Turkey. Most of the rest from deaths of prisoners of war in World War I. Some from Jewish pogroms.
Total:		203.5 million	

Table 2 Next-Largest European Domestic Mass Murders

Regime	Years	Democide (0s)	Summary
Albania	1944-1987	100,000	Communist. Ultra-totalitarian regime of Enver Hoxha.
Balkan Christians	1912-1913	10,000	Targeted by various governments.
Bulgaria	1944-1987	222,000	Communist.
Czechoslovakia	1945-1948	197,000	Coalition government including democrats and communists. Primarily reprisals and ethnic cleansing of German-speaking population.
East Germany	1945-1987	70,000	Communist.
Hungary	1919-1944	138,000	Authoritarian. Includes 79,000 in Yugoslavia in areas temporarily annexed by Hungary in World War II.

Regime	Years	Democide (0s)	Summary
Rumania	1941-1987	919,000	Fascist then communist after 1944.
Spain	1936-1975	452,000	Fascist Francisco Franco dictatorship. Mutual democide of 202,000 by Fascists and Republicans during Civil War. 250,000 by Franco thereafter.
Total:		2,108,000	

European Total Democide Calculation. Although a small part of Turkey is in Europe, and some of the Turkish genocide was perpetrated there, including against the Greek population, most of the Turkish mass murder was perpetrated against Armenians and other Christians in Asian Turkey (discussed infra Section D.2.a). So all the Turkish democide is omitted from the European total.

The communist regime in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics murdered about 5.6 million Eastern Europeans. The rest of its mass murders were within the USSR. As of 1940, the population of the Soviet Union was 194 million. Of that total, about 25.2 million lived in “republics” in Asia (Uzbek, Kazakh, Georgian, Azerbaijan, Kirghiz, Tadjik, Armenian, and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republics). The Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic was by far the largest in area and population (110 million as of 1940), and spanned Europe and Asia. Using the common figure that about three-quarters of the Russian population is in Europe, about 27.5 million of the Russian SFR population was Asian. So of the USSR’s 194 million population, about 52.7 million was Asian. Therefore, about 73 percent of the USSR population was European. Accordingly, of the 56.3 million Soviet murders within the USSR, 73 percent are assigned to Europe. The Soviet European democide is thus 41.1 million internally plus 5.6 million in Eastern Europe. Of the Russian Czarist regime’s 1.1 murders in 1900-17, half a million were in Asian Turkey with the remainder in Europe.

The total European democide is: USSR 61.9 million + Russian Czars .6 million + Nazis 20.9 million + Poland post-WWII ethnic cleansing 1.6 million + other lesser European democides (Table 2) 2.1 million = 87.1 million. The figure does not include the mass murder of about 8,000 Bosnians by the Serbian government in the early 1990s, which is discussed in online Chapter 18.D.

Table 3 Selected Hecto-Kilomurders (over 100,000)

Regime	Years	Democide (0s)	Summary
Afghanistan	1978-1987	483,000	Does not include battle deaths. Includes democides by pre-1979 regime, by the regime installed in 1979 by Soviet coup, by Soviet Union, and by other forces.
Angola	1975-1987	125,000	By communist regime following independence from Portugal.
Burundi	1964-1987	175,000	Tutsis vs. Hutus.
China	1917-1949	910,000	Warlords. Independent regimes not under the control of the Republic of China or of the communist revolutionaries. Summarized in Section D.3. ¹²
Ethiopia	1941-1974	148,000	Haile Selassie monarchy.
Ethiopia	1974-1987	725,000	Communist.
Guatemala	1956-1987	122,000	Military.
Indonesia	1965-1966	509,000	Killings of communists by the military, the select militia, and others following a failed communist coup attempt.
Indonesia	1965-1987	729,000	Against East Timor secessionists.
Iraq	1968-1987	187,000	Ba'ath party.
Mongolia	1916-1987	100,000	Communist.
Mozambique	1975-1987	323,000	198,000 by communist regime after 1975 independence from Portugal. Remainder by opposition RENAMO forces (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana).
Nigeria	1967-1970	777,000	By government and Biafran forces during Biafra's failed war of independence.
Sudan	1956-1987	627,000	Islamist military dictatorship. Against various ethnic or racial minorities.
Turkey	1919-1923	878,000	Atatürk regime. Post-World War I attacks on Armenians and other minorities. Discussed in Section D.2.k.
Uganda	1971-1979	300,000	Idi Amin military regime. Mainly against minority tribes and Ugandans of Asian descent.
Uganda	1979-1987	255,000	Post-Amin regimes.
	Total:	7,373,000	

12. Estimate from Rummel, *Power Kills*; higher than the estimate in his earlier book *China's Bloody Century*.

Sources: Except as noted below, the figures in the above tables are from R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (2017) (1994) and R.J. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (1998). The data are also on Professor Rummel's [University of Hawaii website, Power Kills](#), which in some cases adjusts the estimates slightly.

The figures differ from Rummel for two nations. For Cambodia, Rummel estimated 2 million deaths. Later research, cited in online Chapter 18.D, suggests 1.5 million. *See* Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*, at 456-65 (3d ed. 2008). The Communist China total is detailed in Section D.3.a.

The European twentieth-century democide of 87.1 million is over a hundred times larger than the highest possible estimate of American twentieth-century excess gun homicides of 745,000. At the least, the data indicate that over the long run, one's risk of being murdered is much lower in the United States than in Europe. It is not surprising that migration between the two has always been very heavily in one direction!

I am alive to write this essay because my Jewish German and Lithuanian ancestors migrated to the United States in the nineteenth century. By moving to the United States, they increased their risk of being shot by an individual criminal and drastically reduced their risk of being murdered by criminal governments. The risks did, in fact, materialize in Germany under the Nazis and the communists, and in Lithuania under the Czars, the Nazis, and the communists. Because governments are so much more effective at killing than are individual criminals (even the aggregate of all individual criminals), the United States was much safer than Europe in the twentieth century.¹³

13. [My family history is similar. My mother left communist Hungary for Austria on Christmas Eve in 1956. She had to cross a minefield at the border. By the time she left, one needed a permit to enter areas near the border. A family friend, a physician, worked at a sanatorium in that zone. He was able to obtain a permit for my mother on the ground that she needed care at the facility. From the sanatorium, a guide was to take my mother to the border and be paid upon his return. Neither my family nor the friend knew whether the guide was trustworthy. My mother, therefore, signed her name to a piece of paper, tore it in half, kept one piece on her person, and gave the other piece to the family friend. If the guide returned with the piece that my mother kept, he was to be paid. If not . . . Happily, the guide did as he promised and my mother made it.

My father was a political prisoner in then-Czechoslovakia for 16 years (six of which were in solitary confinement) for helping protesting student leaders speak and escape from behind the Iron Curtain. He was suddenly released in the 1970s.

My grandfather was minutes or hours from being put onto a cattle car to be taken to a concentration camp. When the Nazis were rounding up Jews in Hungary, a Jewish family friend who had just been lined up got the attention of my grandfather, who happened to be walking on the street nearby. My grandfather distracted the soldier who was guarding the rounded-up group, and the family friend managed to flee. The soldier realized what my grandfather did and put him into the line to take the place of the friend who escaped. My grandfather was taken to the train station to be taken to a camp. He was saved by yet another family friend, an employee at the station, who was able to get him out. He ultimately saved about 150 Jews using, among other things, his law practice's resources.

Others were not as lucky as my parents and grandfather. —G.A.M.]

As noted above, the democide figures do not include battle deaths. The toll of battle deaths worldwide from 1900 to 1987 was about 35.6 million. As Rummel shows, democracies almost never start wars with each other. Conversely, the less democratic a regime, the greater the foreign violence, although individual exceptions can be found.¹⁴ The same conditions that gravely increase the risk of mass murder of civilians—namely, nondemocratic regimes—also gravely increase the risk of wars and ensuing combat deaths.

Does gun policy have anything to do with Americans having been so much less victimized by murder than Europeans? The answer requires consideration of several subquestions: What does the historical record show about the ability of other checks on government—such as free press and fair elections—to prevent incipient mass murderers from coming to power in the first place? Considering how many different ways governments murder people, does government arms possession matter? To what extent does victim possession of arms deter mass murder or tyranny? Do other means of resistance, such as mass demonstrations, succeed against murderous or oppressive regimes? Finally, can arms be used successfully in resisting mass murder in particular, or tyranny in general?

c. The Relationship Between Freedom and Democide

The best means to reduce the risk of democide is not to have a totalitarian government. And, especially, not to have a communist government. As the data above indicate, communist regimes are responsible for the very large majority of democide in the twentieth century. The bleak record of communism is detailed in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné et al., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Jonathan Murphy & Mark Kramer trans., Harv. Univ. Pr. 1999) (France, 1991) (examination of communism in many nations, which special attention to the Soviet Union, which was the foundation and model of other communist states).

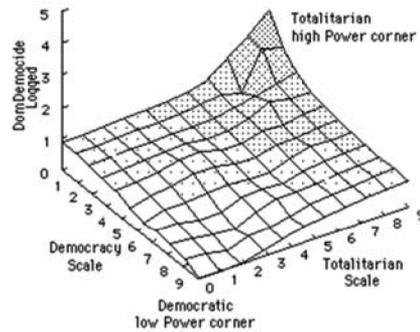
As Rummel's data show, the less free the government, the more likely it is to perpetrate domestic democide. Totalitarian regimes perpetrate by far the most democide, authoritarian regimes less so, and democratic ones least of all.¹⁵ The very strong relationship between total regime power and domestic democide is not changed by other variables such as diversity, culture, or society.¹⁶

No democratic government has committed democide against an enfranchised population. Rudolph J. Rummel, *Democracy, Power, Genocide and Mass Murder*, 39 *J. Conflict Resol.* 3 (1995). As long as true elections are allowed, governments do not mass murder voters.

14. Rummel, *Power Kills*, at 59-80.

15. Rummel, *Power Kills*, at 91-98.

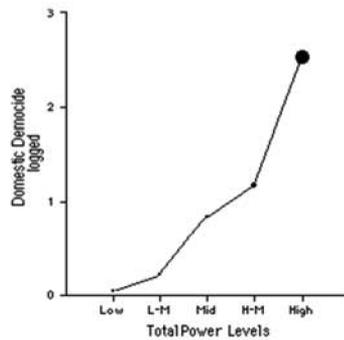
16. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide*, at 419.



* The surface is drawn by the inverse squared distance smoothing technique. Dots comprise shading and not data points. N = 214.

Source: Rummel, *Statistics of Democide*, at 379 [fig. 17.3](#).

FIGURE 17.5
Plot of the Mean Domestic Democide for Different Levels of Power



* Size of points proportionate to the mean democide. N = 214 state regimes.

Source: Rummel, *Statistics of Democide*, at 381, [Fig. 17.5](#).

Free governments do, however, sometimes commit democide against other nations. For example, Rummel reports that during World War I, the United Kingdom was responsible for the deaths of 334,000 persons due to its blockade on food imports to the enemy Central Powers (Germany, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Empire).¹⁷ The blockade was illegal under the international law of the time. The United Kingdom had every legal right to interdict the Central Powers from purchasing munitions from neutral countries, but not to blockade civilian food shipments. Even after Germany surrendered in November 1918, the blockade was continued until the Versailles peace treaty was signed in June 1919.¹⁸ See generally C. Paul Vincent, *The Politics of Hunger: The Allied Blockade of Germany, 1915-1919* (1985).

17. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide*, at 264.

18. Although the “hunger blockade” was a plain violation of the customary international law of 1915-19, the tactic was not declared to be a war crime until 1977. Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II) art. 14 (adopted 1977, entered into force 1978). The first, second, and third Geneva Conventions applied only to the treatment of combatants (e.g., outlawing certain weapons, specifying conditions for prisoners of war). The Fourth Convention, in 1949, added protections for civilians. The 1977 Protocols expanded civilian protection and extended the Geneva Conventions’ scope to include warfare within a single nation (e.g., civil war, secession movements) and not just international warfare.

Similarly, in World War II, the United Kingdom and the United States extensively bombed the Axis powers. Under the laws of war then and now, they had every right to attempt to bomb military factories; the fact that some bombs would inevitably miss their targets and hit civilians was no violation of laws of war and was not democide. However, urban bombing simply for the purpose of destroying the homes of factory workers, or just to demoralize the enemy civilian population, does qualify as democide in Rummel's view. Thus, he ascribes to the United Kingdom a democide of 424,000 for its area bombing of Axis cities in World War II.¹⁹ The same applies to area bombing by the United States during the war, for which he estimates 32,000 deaths of German civilians and 337,000 deaths of Japanese civilians. About half of the latter figure comes from the two atomic bombs used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.²⁰

Defenders of the bombing could point out that the Germans and Japanese flouted all the laws of war and perpetrated many area bombings of civilian populations, including an enormous wave against England in 1941. Further, the result of the Allied area bombings was probably a net savings of German and Japanese lives, by hastening the end of the war. This is especially so for Japan, where the military dictatorship was preparing to sacrifice the entire population ("a hundred million shattered jewels") in warfare against the expected American invasion. For careful examination of the decision to use the A-bomb, see Wilson D. Miscamble, *The Most Controversial Decision* (2011). Regardless of what one thinks of the arguments, the bombings were democides by Rummel's definition.

The largest number of democide deaths attributable to democratic government come from overseas colonialism. Rummel's books had estimated colonialism deaths of 1900-87 at 870,000, based mainly on reports of massacres and similar killings. But as he later explained on his website, he believes the total should be much higher. For example, Belgium was a democracy but starting in 1885 the Congo (later named Zaire, and today, the Democratic Republic of Congo) was directly ruled by the Belgian monarchy, which inflicted the most brutal regime of colonial system on the continent, probably killing several million and perhaps many more via forced labor. R.J. Rummel, *Exemplifying the Horror of European Colonization: Leopold's Congo* (June 24, 2003).

Reevaluation of deaths from the forced labor system in the Congo led Rummel to greatly revise his death estimates from colonialism in Africa and Asia in the twentieth century, because forced labor (de facto slavery) was common in many colonies, the "British being the least brutal and [Belgian King] Leopold and the French, Germans, and Portuguese the worst." *Id.* Rummel suggested that total colonial deaths could be 50 million, although this is a very rough extrapolation from the Congo data. As Rummel acknowledged, the research on the matter is sparse, and he urged younger scholars to investigate further. *Id.*

The democide total in Table 1 indicated about 203.5 million democides from the 15 regimes that killed over a million each. The other democides listed in Tables 2 and 3 bring the global total to around 213 million. Adding in the colonial democides, plus others not listed above, indicates a 1900 to 1987 total of over 263 million persons. This compares to a total of 36.5 million battle deaths in the entire world for the entire period. According to a [poster](#) that debuted in 1966, "War is not healthy for children and other living things." This is certainly true. According to the data

19. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide*, at 265; Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 14.

20. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide*, at 200-13.

presented here, murderous governments are six times deadlier than war, making them very dangerous indeed. The data further indicate that just about the only means of avoiding the risk of high-volume murder by government is to live in a democracy.

d. It Can't Happen Here

If it is expected that a particular government will always be free, then there would be no need in the particular nation for citizen arms to deter or resist democide within that nation. Free governments could enact any sort of gun control without worrying that citizens might need guns to resist a future government that was trying to kill them *en masse*.

But what if one's predictions about the future are wrong? What if the good government that one hoped would endure forever is taken over by totalitarians? This is what happened in Germany, as Stephen P. Halbrook describes in *Gun Control in the Third Reich: Disarming the Jews and "Enemies of the State"* (2014).

In 1928, the democratic government of the Weimar Republic was concerned about political street violence, perpetrated mainly by Nazi²¹ and communist gangs. The democratic legislature passed a law requiring a license to acquire a firearm or ammunition. Further legislation authorized the states to impose retroactive registration of all firearms.

At the time, some persons in the Weimar government had worried about the dangers of registration lists falling into the hands of extremists. For example, if Nazis or communists obtained the registration list for a town, they would know which homes to burglarize to steal guns. Both groups had an established record of criminal violence, including by armed gangs using illegally obtained guns.

In January 1933, after winning a plurality in a free election, Adolf Hitler was lawfully appointed Chancellor of Germany. Not only the registration lists, but the government itself fell into the hands of extremists. Almost immediately upon seizing power, the Nazis began using the registration lists to seize guns, knives, and other arms from members of other political parties, especially the Social Democrats, and from Jews. *See, e.g., Permission to Possess Arms Withdrawn from Breslau Jews*, N.Y. Times, Apr. 23, 1933, at E1.

The Nazi policy over the next five years was "forcing into line"—bringing all elements of civil society under party control. For example, independent gun or shooting sports clubs were outlawed. Instead, clubs were to be registered with the state and ruled by a Nazi political officer. Many clubs disbanded instead.

The Weimar gun control laws worked well for the Nazis, and so they were not revised until March 1938. Although the 1938 law was presented as a liberalization, in practice it further narrowed lawful ownership to only the Nazis and their politically reliable supporters. In October 1938, arms registration lists were used to complete the disarmament of the Jews, including even knives. Shortly thereafter, on November 9-10, 1938, the Nazis unleashed *Kristallnacht*—government-orchestrated mob violence against the Jews.²²

21. "Nazi" was a shorthand for the party's formal name, *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP)*—National Socialist German Workers Party.

22. *Kristallnacht* is literally translated as "crystal night," but often referred to as the "night of broken glass." The attacks were led by the Nazi Party's paramilitary force, the SA (*Sturmabteilung*, lit. "Storm detachment"; often called "brownshirts"). Many civilians participated.

Something similar happened in France. Founded in 1870, the French Third Republic was the glory of Western civilization. In 1936, Prime Minister Pierre Laval led enactment of a gun registration law, which exempted some sporting long guns. In May-June 1940, France was conquered by Nazi Germany, and the French gun registration lists fell into Nazi hands. Laval, meanwhile, had turned traitor, and maneuvered himself into becoming the ruler of Vichy—a fascist rump state in southeastern France. *See* Stephen P. Halbrook, *Gun Control in Nazi Occupied-France: Tyranny and Resistance* (2018); *cf.* William Shirer, *The Collapse of the Third Republic: An Inquiry into the Fall of France in 1940* (1969) (tracing the collapse to the moral exhaustion of the French people, and to the torpor and incompetence of successive French governments).²³

A prudent constitutional order aims to reduce the risk of tyranny. Tyranny prevention mechanisms include regular elections, military subordination to civilian government, restraints on executive power, free press, an independent judiciary, and guarantees of personal freedoms. Such constitutional protections are often effective.

But not always. Europe is the birthplace of democracy in a formal sense, in the city-states of ancient Greece. Yet in the twentieth century, almost all European nations were conquered by Germany, the USSR/Russia, or both, or were ruled for some period of time by local dictatorships friendly with Hitler, Stalin, or the Czars. On the European continent, Sweden and Switzerland are the only exceptions.²⁴

23. The nominal head of the Vichy regime was Philippe Pétain, the very elderly and partly senile French hero from World War I. Laval arranged to make himself the regime's official second-in-command. After the war, Laval was convicted of treason and executed. Pétain was also convicted, but allowed to spend his remaining years in prison, in light of his advanced age and great service in World War I.

24. As a neutral in World War II, Sweden freely traded with the Axis, providing the essential iron ore for the Axis war machine. There was no Axis military benefit from invading Sweden. Unlike Norway, Sweden had no Atlantic ports from which Nazi submarines could harass British shipping.

Switzerland also conducted business, primarily banking, with both the Axis and Allies. One reason Germany did not invade this relatively small nation was Switzerland's militia system. *See* Section C.2. With a gun in nearly every home on Switzerland's difficult terrain, the cost to the German military of taking and holding the country would have been excessive.

Finland was part of Czarist Russia until Czar Nicholas II was overthrown in 1917. Thereafter, Finland has maintained its sovereignty and freedom. In 1939-40, the Finns beat back an attempted conquest by Stalin's Red Army, although Finland eventually did have to cede substantial territory to the Soviet Union. *See generally* Vesa Nénye, Peter Munter & Toni Wirtanen, *Finland at War: The Winter War 1939-40* (2018).

Two European microstates maintained self-government throughout the twentieth century. Liechtenstein is a tiny principality between Austria and Switzerland; it was left alone by the Nazis and the Soviets. The Holy See (a/k/a Vatican City) comprises a few blocks within Rome. Pursuant to the 1929 Lateran Pacts between the Holy See and Mussolini's Fascist Italy, the Italian government recognized the political independence of Vatican City. During World II, Mussolini attempted to coerce the Vatican but did not invade Vatican City. Meanwhile, Pope Pius XXIII used his independence to organize an anti-Nazi network of priests in Germany, to transmit German military secrets to the Allies, and to support plots to assassinate Hitler. *See* Mark Riebling, *Church of Spies: The Pope's Secret War Against Hitler* (2015).

The list of nations to have both (1) maintained independence for the entire time since 1900 and (2) maintained free government during that time is short. There are no such nations in Asia, Africa, South America, or Central America. The full list is: Australia, Canada, Iceland, Sweden, Switzerland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States—that is, 8 nations out of the 196 nations in the world.²⁵

Over a century, the odds are low that a nation will enjoy independent and free government for the entire time. Considering free government during the time after a particular nation became independent, there are several additional nations that have maintained free post-colonial government. The largest is Israel, which won independence in 1948. There are also some islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific that have had free governments throughout their independence.

The majority of the nations that have maintained independence and freedom are part of the Anglosphere. The last proto-totalitarian ruler of England was King James II, who was deposed in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Ch. 2.H. Within the United Kingdom today, there are worrisome signs. One of the two major political parties has been led by Jeremy Corbyn, a long-time supporter of Soviet totalitarianism and of Hamas and other similar entities devoted to exterminating Jews. A polity that is well vaccinated against supporters of mass murder would never elevate a person such as Corbyn to major party leadership.

Only a foolish version of American exceptionalism would imagine that the United States has been granted some sort of permanent immunity from the dangers of totalitarianism. “[It can’t happen here](#),” people have often told themselves. Yet it did happen almost everywhere in Europe, including in democratic, economically advanced, and socially progressive nations such as Germany. As detailed in Chapters 3 through 5, the American Founders were acutely concerned about the dangers of American tyranny, and the Constitution was their best effort to prevent it. It has worked fairly well so far, but constitutions have force only so long as they are cherished in the hearts and minds of the people.

Today in America, as in the 1930s, many persons are openly hostile to the Constitution. The political fights concentrate on a President who will rule by decree. Although there are no Hitlerist professors in American higher education, there are many Marxists. As applied, the difference between Hitlerism and Marxism is slight—other than the higher murder count of the latter. *Cf.* Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center* (1948) (observing that the communist far left and the fascist far right are the same in practice).

As detailed by the [Canary Mission](#), Jew-hating student leaders are common on American college campuses. Like their national socialist German ancestors of the 1920s, they use violence and intimidation to suppress speech in favor of Jews or by Jews.

25. The 196 figure includes Taiwan, which has been independent of China since 1948, but over which China continues to make claims. It also includes Palestine, which the United Nations treats at a nonmember observer state.

Today, there are many worrisome trends that having been going on for years, under both Democratic and Republican administrations: disrespect for the rule of law; hostility to constitutional restraints on power; congressional abdication of responsibility to govern, ceding decisions to a hyperexecutive; growing hostility toward freedom of speech and religion; growing tolerance for political riots and violence against people based on political opinions; acceptance of anti-Semites and other haters as legitimate political actors and their election to high offices. *E pluri-bus unum* is giving way to division between warring social and cultural tribes. Such ills can be found in many contemporary democracies.

Persons of any political persuasion can easily point to political opponents who embrace malignity, hatred, and authoritarianism. The fingerpointing is accurate. The problem is not just one side of the political spectrum; civil society as whole is deteriorating. *See, e.g.*, Jonah Goldberg, *The Suicide of the West: How the Rebirth of Tribalism, Populism, Nationalism, and Identity Politics Is Destroying American Democracy* (2018). The people of Rome had an outstanding republic that had endured for centuries, and then they lost it. *See* online Ch. 21.B.2; Edward J. Watts, *Mortal Republic: How Rome Fell into Tyranny* (2018) (centralization, inequality, venal politicians, public's neglect in protecting republican institutions); Mike Duncan, *The Storm Before the Storm: The Beginning of the End of the Roman Republic* (2018) (covering 146 B.C. to 78 B.C.; breakdown of the "unwritten rules, traditions, and mutual expectations collectively known as *mos maiorum*, which means 'the way of the elders'").

While historians may always debate about why the Roman Republic fell, the historical fact is that it was established in 509 B.C. and breathed its last gasp in 27 B.C., after a long period of decline. The fall of a republic hundreds of years old, holding immense territory and global power, should caution Americans who fantasize that a republic established in 1776 is guaranteed perpetual existence.

No one knows the future of the United States. Over past decades, the party in power has alternated, but the overall trend has been centralization of executive power. Where today's hyperpartisan centralization will lead in a decade or a half-century is unknown. Perhaps the constitutional order will prevent the worst from happening. Perhaps not. Germany in 1900 was a progressive democracy and one of the most tolerant places in the world for Jews; in any country, things can change a lot in a few decades.

e. Arms Monopolies Promote Killing with Arms, and Killing by Other Means

Democide is not always directly perpetrated with firearms. It is possible to commit mass murder with machetes, as in the Hutu genocide of 800,000 Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. It is likewise possible to perpetrate mass murder with advanced technology, as in the gas chambers of the Nazi extermination camps. Or a government can kill millions by deliberately causing a famine, as Stalin did in Ukraine in the 1930s. *See* Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (1986).

Even so, the direct toll of government mass murder by firearms is enormous. For example, Nazi genocide of Jews and Gypsies (Roma) was initially carried out

by mass shootings. As soon as the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union began on June 22, 1941, special SS units called *Einsatzgruppen* were deployed for mass killings.²⁶ All the Jews or Gypsies in a town would be assembled and marched out of town. Then they would all be shot at once. Yehuda Bauer, *Jewish Resistance in the Ukraine and Belarus During the Holocaust, in Jewish Resistance Against the Nazis* 485-93 (Patrick Henry ed. 2014). Within a year, the three thousand *Einsatzgruppen*, aided by several thousand helpers from the German police and military, had murdered roughly one million people, concentrating on small towns in formerly Soviet territory. Hillary Earl, *The Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen Trial, 1945-1958*, at 4-8 (2009); Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe* 222-25 (1974).

Because of the psychological damage to the members of the *Einsatzgruppen*, the Nazis attempted to replace mass shootings with mobile gas vans.²⁷ But these did not work well, partly because herding people into the gas vans required even closer contact with the victims than did mass shooting. So the Nazis invented extermination camps with huge gas chambers, which were more efficient at mass killing, and which created a larger physical (and, consequently, psychological) distance between the murderers and their victims.

Possession of arms by victims is a serious nuisance to totalitarian police, such as the Nazi SS or the Soviet NKVD and KGB. If frontline forces of totalitarianism can get shot for doing their jobs, the result is not necessarily the overthrow of the totalitarian regime. But necessarily, the possibility of being shot encourages caution and circumspection. When the political police do not have an arms monopoly, their efficiency is reduced. The more secret police who end up dead or wounded, the harder it is to recruit replacements. It is harder to round up people for shipment to slave labor camps or gas chambers if the intended deportees will shoot some of the secret police who are coming to take them to the train station.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the Russian author of the most influential exposé of the communist slave labor camps under Lenin and Stalin, recalled his and his fellow prisoners' feelings:

And how we burned in the camps later, thinking: What would things have been like if every Security operative, when he went out at night to make an arrest, had been uncertain whether he would return alive and had to say good-bye to his family? Or if, during periods of mass arrests, as for example in Leningrad, when they arrested a quarter of the entire city, people had not simply sat there in their lairs, paling with terror at every bang of the downstairs door and at every step on the staircase, but had understood they had nothing left to lose and had boldly set up in the downstairs hall an ambush of half a dozen people with axes, hammers, pokers, or whatever else was at hand? . . . The Organs [of the state] would very quickly have suffered a shortage of officers and transport and, notwithstanding all of Stalin's thirst, the cursed machine would have ground

26. SS was short for *Schutzstaffel* (Protection Squadron). The SS included élite military units, but it was better known as Hitler's secret police, displacing the SA from its previous spot as key enforcer of Hitlerism. *Einsatzgruppen* means "task force."

27. Earl, at 7.

to a halt! If . . . if . . . We didn't love freedom enough. And even more—we had no awareness of the real situation. . . . We purely and simply deserved everything that happened afterward.

1-2 Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation* 13 n.5 (Thomas P. Whitney trans. 1973) (brackets added, ellipses in original).

It is no surprise that people in extermination camps, slave labor camps, and other persecution camps are not allowed to be armed. During the Holocaust, the Sobibor and Treblinka extermination camps were permanently shut down by prisoner revolts, when the prisoners managed to steal some weapons from the guards, and then use those weapons to take some more. Few prisoners survived the revolts, but they were all going to die anyway; their heroism saved many by putting the death camps out of business permanently. David B. Kopel, *The Morality of Self-Defense and Military Action: The Judeo-Christian Perspective* 108-11 (2017).

Statistically speaking, mass shootings occur predominantly in gun-free zones—that is, places where the population has been disarmed. Hitler's *Einsatzgruppen* shot a million, and Mao's 1949-51 Great Terror shot 1.5 to 2 million more. See *infra* Section D.3.d. Even one of these examples shows that mass shootings by government far outnumber mass shootings by individuals. Successful societies suppress shootings by individual psychopaths and prevent psychopaths from obtaining government power. As the history of the twentieth century indicates, this is easier said than done.

Whatever the means, murder is most frequent when governments have arms and victims do not. Guns are frequently used to coerce the conditions for mass murder by other means. For example, after the Khmer Rouge communist regime took over Cambodia in 1975, the cities were depopulated as Cambodians were marched at gunpoint to rural slave labor camps. There, they were forced to work at gunpoint. Many Cambodians were shot, but many more were worked to death in the camps or died of starvation. Armed guards also patrolled in search of Cambodians who were trying to flee, such as by escaping to Thailand.²⁸

Similarly, in the Ukrainian famine created by Stalin, the people being starved to death had to be stopped from fleeing to areas where food was available. "Under the direction of the OGPU, *militsiia* [Stalin's select militia] were deployed to liquidate kulaks [peasants who owned land] and quell opposition from other rebellious peasants during the collectivization of agriculture. And when the collectivization drive led to a mass exodus out of the countryside, the *militsiia* were assigned responsibility for enforcing a rigid internal passport and registration system to deprive the peasantry of geographical mobility."²⁹ Elizabeth J. Perry, *Patrolling the Revolution: Worker Militias, Citizenship, and the Modern Chinese State* 323 (2007). The same occurred in communist China, as detailed *infra* Section D.3.

28. Rummel, *Power Kills*, at 195-96, 201.

29. The OGPU were the communist secret police. Formally, Joint State Political Directorate under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR (Объединённое государственное политическое управление при СНК СССР). Later reincorporated as the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) and still later the KGB (Committee for State Security).

f. The Perpetrators' Viewpoints in Tyranny and Mass Murder

Most people have never plotted to become a national tyrant, and so they often do not evaluate strategy from a dictator's perspective. But consider persons who have. In 1923, Adolf Hitler attempted to lead a coup to take over the German state of Bavaria and from there, the entire nation. The coup failed and Hitler and his co-conspirators were put on trial. Thanks to widespread public support, they received light sentences. Hitler's closing speech to the trial court explained that he was born to be a dictator, and, no matter what, he would never stop trying: "My opinion is that a bird sings because it is a bird. . . . The man who is born to be a dictator is not compelled, but wills; he is not driven forward but drives himself. . . . The man who feels compelled to govern a people has no right to wait until they summon him. It is his duty to step forward." John Dornberg, *Munich 1923: The Story of Hitler's First Grab for Power* 336 (1982).

While serving several months in prison in 1924, Hitler wrote a book of political theory, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), which frankly set forth his ideas and plans, including totalitarian rule and elimination of the Jews. Having learned from his 1923 failure, Hitler no longer attempted to destroy German democracy by force; instead, he decided to destroy democracy from within, by participating in the political process. In less than a decade, he had succeeded. Notwithstanding criticism of him by Germany's free press, he won a plurality in the 1933 election, and was appointed Chancellor, under the mistaken belief that other people in the government could control him. By 1942, his empire stretched from France's Atlantic Coast to deep inside Russia.

In creating what he called "the New Order" in his empire, Hitler explained the necessity of disarmament:

The most foolish mistake we could possibly make would be to allow the subjugated races to possess arms. History shows that all conquerors who have allowed their subjugated races to carry arms have prepared their own downfall by so doing. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that the supply of arms to the underdogs is a sine qua non for the overthrow of any sovereignty. So let's not have any native militia or native police.³⁰

Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944 (H.R. Trevor-Roper ed., Gerhard L. Weinberg transl., 2d ed. 2007) 321 (statement from between February and September 1942).

Tyrants past and present are diverse, found on every continent, and comprising all races and many different ethnic groups. Their ideology might be communist, fascist, extremist religious, or absolute monarchist. Or they might have no ideology at all. Despite the diversity, mass murderers and other tyrants are united by many common practices, all of which were implemented by Hitler, Lenin, Stalin,

30. Hitler's concern about native police was well founded. Because Denmark surrendered almost immediately when Germany attacked it, the nation was not put under direct military rule. Instead, it was, for a while, treated as a friendly "protectorate" of Nazi Germany. Accordingly, the Danish police remained intact. The armed Danish police were essential in the night-time boat lift of Denmark's Jews in September 1943, to prevent the Germans from seizing them and sending them to camps. Kopel, *Morality*, at 400-04.

Mao, Pol Pot, and many other democidal regimes. They do not allow freedom of the press. They attempt to bring religion under state control. Courts are not independent. And these governments attempt to acquire a monopoly of force. This was true, for example, in [Darfur](#), Sudan, in the twenty-first century; in Indonesia's [ethnic cleansing of East Timor](#) in the 1970s; in [Srebrenica, Bosnia](#), in the 1990s; in [Kenya and Uganda](#) from the 1960s onward; in [Ethiopia against the Anuak](#) in the twenty-first century; and on the Pacific Island of [Bougainville](#). Disarmament was also the condition precedent for the mass murders of Jews by Nazis, of Armenians by Turks, and of Chinese by Mao, discussed *infra*.

As Ronald Reagan observed, "When dictators come to power, the first thing they do is take away the people's weapons. It makes it so much easier for the secret police to operate, it makes it so much easier to force the will of the ruler upon the ruled." Ronald Reagan, *The Gun Owners' Champion*, Guns & Ammo, Sept. 1975. Thus, "[t]he gun has been called the great equalizer, meaning that a small person with a gun is equal to a large person, but it is a great equalizer in another way, too. It insures that the people are the equal of their government whenever that government forgets that it is servant and not master of the governed." *Id.* Search the history of the world from ancient times to the present, and one will not find many tyrants who deviated from the principle that the state must be stronger than the people.

A government that wants to be stronger than the people does not necessarily have to prohibit all arms possession by its subjects. Hitler, Mussolini, and the Soviets allowed the politically correct to possess sporting arms. A government may even encourage armament by an allied group that is carrying out the government's wishes. For example, the Bashir dictatorship in Sudan ignored its own very severe gun control laws, and fostered armament of the Arab *Janjaweed*, who were carrying out the government's plan to mass murder the African Dafari people in western Sudan. See David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *Is Resisting Genocide a Human Right?*, 81 Notre Dame L. Rev. 1275 (2006); online Chapter 18.D. Mao tried a similar policy during the Cultural Revolution in 1967-68, distributing arms to his supporters on the far left in an effort to topple less-extremist communist leaders. See Section D.3.g.

Throughout human history, totalitarians have always disarmed their subjects. This indicates that they considered widespread citizen armament to be a serious danger to their regimes. Tyrants are evil but not stupid. A population that is well armed is much harder to tyrannize and to kill *en masse*. Often, tyranny and arms confiscation are imposed as soon as a regime seizes power—such as Mao in China in 1949, Castro in Cuba in 1959, or the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in 1975.³¹ The pattern is long-standing. See, e.g., Aristotle, [Constitution of Athens](#), ch. XV (Thomas J. Dymes trans. 1891); Plato, [The Republic](#) 353 ([Book VIII](#)) (Benjamin Jowett trans. 1928) (360 B.C.) (excerpted in online Ch. 21.B.1).

31. For China, see Section D.3.c. For Cuba, see Miguel A. Faria, *America, Guns, and Freedom: A Journey Into Politics and the Public Health & Gun Control Movements* 258-62, 267, 318-319 (2019); Miguel A. Faria, *Cuba in Revolution: Escape From a Lost Paradise* 62-64, 303 (2002). See also Enrique Encinosa, *Cuba En Guerra: Historia de la Oposicion Anticastrista 1959-1993* (1993) (history of Cuban resistance to Castro regime).

In other nations, circumstances may require aspiring tyrants to move more gradually in disarming the population and achieving absolute power. Venezuela under Chávez and Maduro (Section C.5), and seventeenth-century Great Britain under Charles II and James II are examples. Chs. 2.H, 22.H.

Although tyranny requires disarmament, disarmament does *not* always lead to tyranny. There are many countries, such as today's Luxembourg and the Netherlands, where the population has been completely or almost completely disarmed, and which are not tyrannies. In the short to medium run, a disarmed nation can remain free. Whether that is so in the long run is more questionable, according to the twentieth century's political history. A person who removes the seat belts and air bags from his or her automobile, and is conscientious in driving safely, may never be impacted by the decision to remove last-resort safety equipment. Likewise, a people that thinks that its nation is permanently immune to dictatorship or conquest may remove its last-resort safety tools. History suggests that this would be a gamble.

g. Deterrence

Regime change is difficult once a tyrant has taken power. So as an anti-tyranny tool, widespread citizen arms ownership works most effectively when it functions as a deterrent. "The power of the people is not when they strike, but when they keep in awe: it is when they can overthrow every thing, that they never need to move." J.L. de Lolme, *The Constitution of England* 219 (John MacGregor ed., J. Cuthell 1853) (1775). As detailed in Chapters 2.G.2 and 22.G.2, the very existence of a well-armed population deterred England's despotically inclined Henry VIII from pushing things so far as to cause a national uprising. During World War II, one reason there was no Holocaust in Switzerland was because the Swiss people were heavily armed in a very well-regulated militia. *See* Section C.2. Most importantly, the very strong deterrent effect of armed victims is demonstrated by the consistent behavior of tyrants in waiting to start mass murder until the victims have been disarmed.

Incipient tyrants can sometimes solve the problem of deterrence by disarming the public in gradual stages, so that people do not recognize tyranny until their chains have been fettered. In England in the late seventeenth century, by the time it became clear to many people that the Stuart kings intended to impose French-style absolutism, the disarmament program was already well advanced. Whether the English people could ever have liberated themselves is uncertain. They had the good fortune to be saved in 1688 by an invasion from the Netherlands, which provided the occasion for General John Churchill to lead half the British army in switching sides. Chs. 2.H.3.b, 22.H.3.b.

A key reason that the American Revolution began in April 1775, when the British started forcible gun confiscation, was the American fear that waiting longer would leave them disarmed and unable to resist. As Patrick Henry put it, "They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house?" Ch. 4.A.6. As a 1789 history of the American Revolution explained, Americans "commenced an opposition to Great-Britain, and ultimately engaged in a defensive war, on speculation. They were not so much moved by oppression actually felt, as by

a conviction that a foundation was laid, and a precedent about to be established for future oppressions.” 1 David Ramsay, *A History of the American Revolution* 105-06 (Lester H. Cohen ed., Liberty Fund, 1990) (1789). It is dangerous to start a revolution based on speculation. But as modern Venezuela illustrates, it may also be dangerous not to.

h. Rebels Often Lose

Once a tyrant has established power, armed rebels will not necessarily be able to change the regime. The essay on China, *infra* Section D.3, discusses some large armed uprisings against Mao, none of which removed the communists.

In Nazi Germany, Jews constituted less than 1 percent of the population. Even if every Jew had been armed, they had no chance to remove the Hitler regime unless a significant number of other Germans were willing to join them in fighting. A mass German armed revolt against Hitler might have had a chance in 1933-34, but by 1936, it was too late. Hitler’s program of “forcing into line” had brought almost all of civil society under the National Socialist jackboot.

History is full of examples of fighters who had a just cause and who were destroyed by a superior army. The American revolutionaries started with an unusual advantage: functioning state governments to organize and lead the rebels, and the best-armed population in the world. Even so, the Revolution repeatedly came close to being crushed.

Geography also helped the American rebels. Although the British could seize any city they chose, the American interior was so vast that it could not be controlled by Britain’s finite manpower. Rebels and defenders have better odds when the terrain is favorable. During World War II, the marshes and forests of eastern Poland provided hiding places for Jewish resistance fighters, whereas the plains of western Poland did not. Likewise in Czechoslovakia, the mountainous regions of Slovakia helped make possible a scale of resistance that was impossible in the plains and urban areas of the Czech region, to the west. Online Ch. 18.B.4.a.

Anti-tyranny rebels may fail without outside support. The American Revolution depended on arms imports from the French, Dutch, and Spanish, and then on the assistance of the French navy and army. Albania was the only nation in World War II that expelled Italian and German occupiers without any need for Allied boots on the ground, but even the Albanians needed arms supplies from the Allies.

Sometimes, democides are terminated because the democidal regime makes itself so obnoxious to its neighbors and to other nations that they invade and depose the regime. That is what happened to Idi Amin in Uganda, when his murder of hundreds of thousands of Ugandans of East Asian descent was finally stopped by an invasion from Tanzania. See David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *Human Rights and Gun Confiscation*, 26 *Quinnipiac L. Rev.* 383 (2008) (examining human rights abuses in gun control programs in Kenya, Uganda, and South Africa). The same happened to the genocidal Khmer Rouge in Cambodia; four years into the largest per capita democide in the history of nations, Vietnam invaded Cambodia and dethroned the Khmer Rouge.

Counting on foreign rescue is foolish. The international community undertook extensive handwringing after its failures to stop the mass murders in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s. Examining conditions since then, Professor Deborah

Mayersen considers whether there would be effective international action if a new genocide, similar to the one in Cambodia, were found to be taking place at present. She concludes that it is “highly likely” that there would be no effective international response. Deborah Mayersen, “*Never Again*” or *Again and Again, in Genocide and Mass Atrocities in Asia: Legacies and Prevention* 190 (Deborah Mayersen & Annie Pohlman eds. 2013).

Historically, foreign military intervention has been the most common reason that mass killings by government end, although the foreign interventions sometimes have their own negative consequences. Surveying several nations, each with multiple episodes of mass murder, scholars have pointed out the diversity of why mass killings end. Sometimes, the regime stops because it has accomplished its objectives. Other times, a regime may desist because of internal political or practical considerations: military resources might be stretched too thin; the domestic political situation might have changed. There is, as yet, no particular set of policy approaches by other nations, such as sanctions, that appear to reliably lead to better outcomes. See Bridget Conley-Zilkic, *Introduction, in How Mass Atrocities End: Studies from Guatemala, Burundi, Indonesia, the Sudans, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Iraq* 1 (Bridget Conley-Zilkic ed. 2016).

Although rebels usually lose, on occasion they prevail even under desperate circumstances. The Sudanese government’s genocide campaign in the Nuba Mountains failed because well-trained defenders were better fighters than the government’s militias. “Throughout the early 1990s, the Nuba SPLA [Sudan People’s Liberation Army] was cut off from the world. There was no resupply: they had no vehicles, had no heavy weapons, and sometimes only had a handful of bullets each. There was no humanitarian presence in the SPLA-held areas at all. There was no news coverage. Facing collective annihilation and with nothing but themselves to rely on, the Nubu people found the necessary determination and reserves of energy.” Although they lost territory, “a mountainous base area remained impregnable.” Alex de Waal, *Sudan: Patterns of Violence and Imperfect Endings, in id.* at 121, 129-32.

i. Advantages and Limits of Nonviolent Resistance

Unpopular, nondemocratic governments can sometimes be removed by nonviolent means. Recent examples include the overthrow of the Tunisian and Egyptian dictatorships in the Arab Spring of 2011, where huge street protests eventually prompted dictators to abdicate. Mohandas Gandhi’s decades-long nonviolent protests and boycotts against British colonial rule of India eventually resulted in the British granting independence in 1948. In the Philippines, dictator Ferdinand Marcos imposed gun prohibition as soon as he seized power in 1972. [Proclamation No. 1081](#) (Sept. 21, 1972); [General Order No. 6](#) (Sept. 22, 1972) (banning keeping or carrying firearms; providing for capital punishment for some violations). The Philippines was under his dictatorship for the next 14 years. Although Philippine gun control was (and still is) widely ignored by the Filipinos, Marcos peacefully surrendered power in 1986 after he lost an election that he was forced to call because of massive peaceful demonstrations.

Peaceful resistance can succeed when a government’s willingness or ability to use its arms monopoly to eliminate resistance is constrained. The Philippines under Marcos was an American client state, and Marcos could not go too far without

risking loss of American support. Indeed, when he decided to hold an election, he made the announcement on a Sunday morning American television political interview show, rather than in a speech to the Filipino people.

Thanks to freedom of the press, public opinion in Great Britain made it politically unfeasible for the British imperial government in India to kill Gandhi and his supporters. The British government may also have been constrained by its own scruples.

Dictators who consider using the standing army to mass murder citizen protesters must consider the risk that the standing army might not obey and might even switch sides. That is one reason why today's Venezuelan army and secret police are run by Cubans who do not have scruples about killing Venezuelans.

Peaceful, unarmed mass protesters can be murdered *en masse* if the government has the nerve and a compliant military. The Chinese Communist Party so demonstrated in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989 and 1976. *See* Sections D.3.i-j. Venezuela's communist regime has been demonstrating the same point for years, using its armed forces—including the government-armed *collectivo* gangsters—to suppress and kill demonstrators. Section C.5.

Prudence dictates that peaceful rather than armed resistance be used when possible, but peaceful resistance is not always possible. Both violent and nonviolent resistance sometimes succeed and sometimes fail, depending on the circumstances. That is one reason why the Resistance Clauses of many national constitutions, discussed in Part A.3, sometimes include explicit instructions for the citizenry to use force against usurpers.

j. Saving Lives Without Changing the Regime

The most effective form of arms use to stop mass murder by government is deterrence. But sometimes people find themselves in a position where the possibility of deterrence is long past.

Even after genocides and other mass murders have already begun, when victims obtain arms, they can save lives. Overthrowing a democidal tyranny is not the only means to resist democide. As noted the Nazi extermination camps of Sobibor and Treblinka were shut down forever because Jewish prisoners stole guns from the guards and led mass revolts. How many lives were saved because the revolts disrupted the functioning of the Nazi machinery of death? Persons who use arms against concentration camp guards or secret police are unlikely to survive, but they may save others—sometimes many others.

This essay concludes with two case studies of armed resistance under worst-case scenarios: a detailed description of Armenian and other Christian resistance to Turkish mass murder in World War I, and a summary of Jewish resistance to German mass murder in World War II.

k. Armed Armenians and Other Christians

This section examines Turkish governmental genocide against minority groups in the first decades of the twentieth century, especially against Armenians during World War I. It begins with an explanation of the political background in Turkey in the late nineteenth century, including disarmament and mass murder.

Disarmament for Dhimmis

Modern Turkey was once the center of the Ottoman Empire. It was also the center of the Muslim world, because the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire was the Caliph of all Muslims. The Ottoman Empire was established by Turks who in 1453 conquered the Byzantine Empire, which had been the eastern Mediterranean successor of the Roman Empire. The Byzantine capital, Constantinople, was renamed Istanbul. The Ottoman Empire at its peak (and including vassal states) encompassed almost all of the North African coast, almost all the Balkans, much of the Arabian Peninsula, the Black Sea coast, part of Persia, plus Syria, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon.

The empire's system for treating non-Muslim subjects was based on Islamic law (*shariah*). In the centuries after Muhammed, Islamic jihad had rapidly conquered vast territories and so the conquerors had to decide how to treat their many non-Islamic subjects, who were the large majority. The new subjects were allowed to retain their religions, provided that they accepted a subordinate status as *dhimmis*. In theory, dhimmitude was only available for "people of the book"—that is, Jews and Christians; according to Islam, the Jewish and Christian faiths were based on authentic revelations from the one God who had made his final revelation in Islam. In practice, conquered Buddhists and Hindus were sometime also allowed to be dhimmis, since forcible religious conversion of the vast majority of a conquered nation was impractical.

The Ottomans followed the standard rules for dhimmis: "Christians were not allowed to serve in the army, but had to pay a special tax for that exemption. They were not allowed to bear arms, so they could not defend their farms, property, or families when attacked by predatory nomads. If a Christian on horseback encountered a Muslim on horseback, the Christian must dismount until the Muslim passed by. The testimony of a Christian against a Muslim in court was not valid." George N. Shirinian, *The Background to the Late Ottoman Genocides, in Genocide in the Ottoman Empire: Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks, 1913-1923*, at 20 (George N. Shirinian ed. 2017). Socially and legally inferior to Muslims, dhimmis were not allowed to defend themselves if attacked by Muslims. Christian churches could exist, but their bells could not be rung, and no new churches could be built.

The dhimmi system worked brilliantly for gradual Islamic assimilation of conquered populations. Subjects who truly cared about their old religion could keep it. Over the course of generations, some people who did not have strong feelings about religion would convert to Islam, in order to escape the taxes and dhimmi disabilities. Because Islam does not allow apostasy, once a family converted, their descendants would have to be Muslims forever. Over time, conquered regions became majority Muslim, *See* David B. Kopel, *Dhimmis*, in *Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (2014); David B. Kopel, *Dhimmitude and Disarmament*, 18 *Geo. Mason U. Civ. Rts. L.J.* 305 (2008).

In many cases, the dhimmi system kept its promise of providing non-Muslims with protected status. For example, in the late fifteenth century, Jews in the growing Ottoman Empire were usually tolerated, whereas in the Spanish empire they were viciously persecuted. The practice of Judaism in Spain was illegal, and the penalty for a second offense could be burning at the stake.

Unfortunately, as non-Muslims shrank from majorities to minorities, prejudice against them increased, as they were increasingly seen as deviants who undermined society. Contrary to the promise of dhimmitude, the government often refused to

protect them, making them easy prey for thugs and extortionists. For example, Armenian Christians in the nineteenth century had to pay the Muslim Kurds not to attack their villages and pillage their monasteries.

Mass Murders in 1894-96

Since the late 1870s, the Turks who ran the Ottoman Empire had seen the Armenian population as “an existential threat,” but had been constrained from action by fear of European reaction. Deborah Meyersen, *On the Path to Genocide: Armenia and Rwanda Reexamined 194* (2014). The Ottoman Empire was a declining power, and the Christian empires of England, France, and Russia were sometimes able to use their clout to restrain persecution of Christians in Ottoman territory. Ottoman Jews, meanwhile, were often left to fend for themselves.

Many of the inhabitants of eastern Turkey are Kurds; although they are Muslim, their ethnicity is Iranian, not Turkic. Starting in 1891, the Turkish government began providing the Kurds with arms and encouraging them to form militias. The militias were for national defense on the frontiers and oppression of Armenians in the interior. The Kurdish armament project was partially successful for both purposes, although there were some Kurds who refused to participate in attacks on Armenians.

Arming the Kurds had unexpected consequences in the long term, however, as Kurds gained greater self-confidence and increased their own demands for autonomy or independence. The conflict continues today in what many Kurds consider the incipient nation of Kurdistan, comprising parts of eastern Turkey, northern Syria and Iraq, and northwestern Iran. *See* Janet Klein, *The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone* (2011).

From 1894 to 1896, the Ottoman Caliphate perpetrated mass murder against Christian minorities. “Armenians would be burned alive in their own churches, shot or cut down in the streets as they fled Turkish mobs or troops, or dumped into harbors to drown. These were the lucky ones. Many were tortured, raped, or otherwise brutalized before being killed. Probably between 100,000 to over 300,000 Armenians were massacred.” Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 61; Shirinian, at 29.

Some massacres resulted from Armenian demands that the Turkish government protect them from Muslim attacks. The government would insist that the Armenians must first surrender their weapons. The Armenians would do so—sometimes fully, sometimes only partially. (Armenians had been smuggling in arms from Russia and Persia, and at least some Armenians had high-quality modern [Martini rifles](#).³²) After the Armenians were disarmed, the Turkish authorities sometimes pushed back the mobs that were trying to attack the Armenians, and other times stood aside. Usually, when protection was provided, it was temporary. Benny Morris & Dror Ze’evi, *The Thirty-Year Genocide* 41, 55-56, 58, 66-67, 80, 86-89, 94, 96, 99-104, 108 (2019).

32. The single-shot Martini-Henry rifle was introduced as the United Kingdom’s main service rifle in 1871; although later displaced from its leading role, the Martini was still used by some British forces through World War I, and by other forces thereafter. The Martinis purchased by the Ottoman Empire came from the Providence Tool Company, in Rhode Island. *See generally* Stephen Manning, *The Martini-Henry Rifle* (2013).

For example, at Gurun (Sivas province, east-central Turkey) in November 1895, “[r]eplay[ing] a standard pattern, the Armenians there were duped into defenselessness by official lies. The Armenians handed over their guns to the vali [governor] in exchange for a promise of state protection. When the mob attacked, its members had no trouble breaking into homes, where reports indicate that they killed the men ‘and outraged the young women and girls; they cut open mothers with child, and tossed little children from knife to knife.’ Then they torched the houses, burning to death anyone hiding inside. Estimates of the death toll range from 400 to as many as 2,000.” *Id.* at 96; *cf.* Ch. 4.A.2-5 (describing Britain’s broken promises to American colonists after they surrendered their arms).

Some Armenians, after learning of massacres in other villages, joined Armenian revolutionary movements and endeavored to arm themselves. As a local British consul reported, “The argument that, unless they armed, their wives and children would be butchered was used with great effect.” So the “men would part with everything they had in order to obtain money enough to buy shot-guns and revolvers.” Morris & Ze’evi, at 66.

The Christian empires protested ineffectually against the massacres in 1894, which led to another series of massacres in 1895-96. At that point, foreign pressure forced the Ottomans to stop the killing and to grant the Armenians increased autonomy in the regions where Armenians were a majority. Some scholars view 1894-96 as an attempted genocide that was thwarted from completion only by foreign pressure.³³ A differing view is that the Sultan wanted to amputate the Armenian social body, but not to eliminate it entirely. Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* 807 (2011) (1st pub. 2006 as *Le Génocide des Arméniens*).

Professor Rummel estimates cumulative Ottoman democides before the twentieth century as 2 million Armenians, Bulgars, Serbs, Greeks, Turks, and others.³⁴

Changes in Government

In 1908, a group known as the Young Turks, which called itself the “Committee for Union and Progress,” overthrew the government, but allowed the Sultan to stay. They forced him to turn the Ottoman Empire into a liberal constitutional democracy, with an elected legislature and strong guarantees of religious and civil liberty.³⁵

But in 1909, a failed attempt at a coup led the Young Turks to establish a state of siege, suspend rights, and rule despotically.³⁶ That year, in the southeastern region of Cilicia, Muslim mobs and soldiers killed about 30,000 Armenians. Some Armenians defended themselves with firearms.³⁷ A government commission looked into the matter, and some of the leaders of the attacks on the Armenians were executed.³⁸

33. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 209-10; Morris & Ze’evi, at 66-67.

34. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 61.

35. *Id.* at 210.

36. *Id.* at 211.

37. *Id.* at 210-11; Kévorkian, at 71-76.

38. *Id.* at 98-107.

Besides Armenians, there were a variety of other Christians in Turkey. Some of them were Greeks, adherents to the Greek Orthodox Church. Most of the rest fell under the broad heading of “Syriac,” so named because their original writings and rites were in the Syriac language. The term “Syriac” includes several denominations, including Nestorians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans. (The Syriac denominational and ethnic groupings are complex but not relevant here; they were attacked because they were Christians.)

The Young Turks were “practically all atheists,” so they had no religious quarrel per se with Christian minority groups. But when the time came, the Young Turks were happy to use Islam pretextually to incite destruction of the Christian minorities and homogenization of Turkey.³⁹

An obstacle for the Young Turks was that some of the minorities had nearby friends. Greece was an independent nation, and it kept a careful eye on treatment of Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁰ At the time, there was no independent nation of Armenia, but there were lots of Armenians in the Caucasus Mountain region of the Russian Empire; the Russian Empire frequently applied pressure to protect fellow Armenian Christians in the Ottoman Empire—as in 1913-14 when the Turks were forced to grant Armenian provinces greater autonomy—widely seen as a stepping stone to outright independence. Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire xvii-xviii* (2013); Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 226-27.

One cause of anti-Armenian sentiment in Turkey was that Armenians were like the Jews or overseas Chinese in some other nations: they were resented because they were hardworking and entrepreneurial. “They were the main businessmen, tradesmen, and intellectuals—the middle-class—in Turkey. . . . In some areas, Armenians were the only carpenters, tentmakers, masons, smiths, weavers, shoemakers, potters, jewelers, lawyers, pharmacists, and doctors. Furthermore, they were a distinctive religious, cultural, and political group, as Jews had been in Germany when the Nazis came to power. This superimposition of ethnicity, culture, religion, historical experiences, occupations, economic success, and minority status would be a dangerous brew in any country.” *Id.* at 227.

Starting in 1908, Armenian Christian soldiers were permitted to serve in the military. Although Armenian civilians were not supposed to have firearms, they acquired them anyway. For example, after the Balkan War of 1912, many Armenian civilians bought firearms from returning Turkish soldiers. Weapons and ammunition were secreted in the walls of homes.

Mass Murders in 1915-16

World War I began in July-August 1914, and the Ottoman Empire entered the war in October, under strong German influence. The Ottomans joined the Central Powers (led by Germany and Austro-Hungary) against the Allies (led by Britain, France, and Russia). Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in*

39. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 213-26.

40. *Id.* at 213.

the Middle East (2016). Since the Allied powers were the ones whose pressure had forced the Turks to ease up on persecution of Armenians, the war presented the perfect opportunity for the Ottoman government to impose a final solution to its Armenian problem.

According to some arguments, the Turkish government did not have specific intent to perpetrate genocide. Instead, the Ottomans realized that at least a substantial fraction of the Christian minorities would rise up in support of the Russian army, if the opportunity presented itself. In fact, Armenian revolutionary forces, some of them armed by the Russians, had been in existence for decades. The April 1915 Armenian uprising in the far eastern province of Van showed how effective they could be; the uprising tied down so many Ottoman forces that it directly caused the defeat of the Ottoman invasion of Persia and harmed the war effort in the east. Justin McCarthy, Esat Arslan, Cemalettin Taşkıran & Ömer Turan, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van 212-19* (2006). There was no practical means to separate the loyal from the disloyal, and so mass deportation was a military necessity. Although the deaths on the deportation marches cannot be justified by military necessity, the deportations were a classic counterinsurgency tactic to deprive the guerillas of a friendly population in which they could hide. *See* Edward J. Erickson, *Ottomans and Armenians: A Study in Counterinsurgency* (2013). Moreover, Armenian guerillas perpetrated mass killings, plunder, and rape against the Muslim population. *See* McCarthy et al.

Other scholars discern genocidal intent from the government's actions:

The most compelling evidence for prior top-down planning and for the true genocidal intentions of the CUP [Committee for Union and Progress, the formal name for the dictatorship] leadership is the way the deportation and mass murder actually unfolded. The initial moves were perfectly designed to soften up the broader civilian population. First came the disarming of the soldiers, then the beheading of the Armenian communities via the April mass arrests of notables. Most of the notables and soldiers were soon murdered. By removing the prominent Armenians and disarming the soldiers, the government rendered the community unable effectively to resist.

Morris & Ze'evi, at 252. "In what appears as meticulous planning, the genocide first involved the conscription of able-bodied men, the disarming of the civilian population and the removal of community leaders followed by the separation of men from families." Mayersen, at 75.

In the view of Professor Raymond Kévorkian, genocidal intent was most clearly shown in 1916, with the massacres of women and children in the deportation camps—acts that could not possibly be justified by military necessity.⁴¹

Without needing to make a determination about the specific intent of the Ottoman government, two patterns are clear: first, the government began a program that directly and indirectly killed very large numbers of Christians; and second, a significant number of Christians forcibly resisted. This essay will first detail the patterns and scope of the killings, and then describe some examples of resistance.

41. Kévorkian, at 808-09.

Disarming Soldiers to Kill Them

Conveniently, much of the able-bodied Armenian male population had already been conscripted into the Ottoman army. On February 19, 1915, Ottoman commanders received new secret orders:

1. All Ottoman subjects over the age of five years bearing the name Armenian and residing in the country should be taken out of the city and killed.
2. All Armenians serving in the Imperial armies should be separated from their divisions, without creating incidents, taken into solitary places, away from the public eyes, and shot.
3. All Armenian officers in the army should be imprisoned in their respective military camps until further notice.

Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 216 (citing Dickran H. Boyajian, *Armenia: The Case for a Forgotten Genocide* 333-34 (1972)). Armenian conscripts were disarmed and put into “labour battalions,” under miserable conditions such that many died.⁴² Others were simply marched to secluded locations and shot. Some were bound and force-marched on isolated roads, where they were attacked and slaughtered by Kurds. At least 200,000 Armenian soldiers were killed in total.⁴³ Whatever the numbers of soldiers who were disarmed and then killed, there were some Armenian soldiers who escaped and warned civilians.

The Armenian civilians included “many males who could fight and might have the weapons to do so. Moreover, the Armenian leadership still could organize a rebellion.”⁴⁴ As U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau later reported, “If this plan of murdering a race were to succeed, two preliminary steps would therefore have to be taken: it would be necessary to render all Armenian soldiers powerless and to deprive of their arms the Armenians in every city and town. Before Armenia could be slaughtered, Armenia must be made defenseless.” Henry Morgenthau, [Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story: A Personal Account of the Armenian Genocide](#) 301-02 (1919).

So the next stage was to get the civilian Armenian guns. On April 22, 1915, and again on May 6, the government ordered the requisitioning of all arms for the civilian population, ostensibly for their use by the army. The requisition provided a pretext for massive efforts to round up Armenian arms. The universal terms of the requisition were to deceive the Armenian victims. Kévorkian, at 259, 435 (In Sivas, “Armenians and Turks handed over their weapons (for the sake of appearances, the decree applied to the entire population).”)

Under the guise of wartime necessity and to protect against possible sabotage and rebellion by Armenians, the first stage was to demand throughout all towns and villages that Armenians turn in their arms or face severe penalties. Turk soldiers and police ransacked Armenian homes, and many suspected of having weapons

42. Mayersen, at 79.

43. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 216-17. *But see* Kévorkian, at 241 (suggesting that only a few thousand were disarmed, and pointing out that some armed Armenians remained in the army though 1918, in areas not close to Armenia).

44. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 217.

were shot or horribly tortured. This created such terror that Armenians bought or begged from Turkish friends weapons that they could turn in to authorities. The terroristic searches provided the government a cover for softening up the Armenians and for beginning the series of civilian massacres that led to the final stage. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 216-17; Akçam, at 187-88 (April 1915 government instructions to search for and confiscate weapons possessed by Christians); Morgenthau, at 305, 307 (the Turks studied and copied torture methods from the Spanish Inquisition).

Turkish troops were quartered in Armenian homes, “and rape and robbery were common.” Mayersen, at 79. Throughout the Ottoman Empire, “[a]ll weapons belonging to Armenians were confiscated. In this way, the preparation for genocide were quietly completed.” *Id.* Turkish propaganda incited fears of hidden Armenian weapons stockpiles. *Id.* at 82.

The democide entered a new phase in April 1915. *Id.* at 78. The Turkish army went from town to town, ordering all Armenian males over 15 (or sometimes younger) to appear at a particular location. The males would be imprisoned, and a few days later, marched out of town and then slaughtered.⁴⁵

Deportations

With all the males over 15 dead, the remaining population comprised only women and children. They were ordered to get ready to be deported. Women could be exempted from deportation if they converted to Islam and immediately married a Turkish husband. Their children had to be surrendered to government orphanages, where they would be raised as Muslims.⁴⁶

Under armed Turkish guard, the deportees began to trudge off to unknown locations. Many died from hunger, thirst, or exposure—aggravated by guards who refused to let them drink from water sources they passed. Stragglers were shot, and sometimes impatient guards just killed everyone. As the deportees passed through Muslim villages, they were plundered, raped, and killed. In the mountains, they were similarly attacked by Kurdish tribes. Some of the Kurdish attacks were voluntary and others were coerced by the government. Other attacks were perpetrated by Muslim prisoners whom the Turks had released so they could kill Armenians. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 218; Kévorkian, at 409 (German pastor writing that he was “initially surprised that all these people were immediately given arms, although they were robbers and murderers”).

According to Professor Kévorkian, most the Kurdish attacks on Armenians were committed by nomadic tribes. Sedentary Kurdish villagers participated, for the most part, only when incited by Turkish authorities who promised them plunder. *Id.* at 810.

Only a minority of deportees survived long enough to be imprisoned in concentration camps in the Mesopotamian desert, where many died from starvation, dehydration, or disease. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 219-22 (estimating 10

45. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 217-18.

46. *Id.* at 218.

to 15 percent survival rate from the marches); Mayersen, at 76 (estimating one-third survival rate). “For those who insisted on surviving, the government ordered three large massacres at the deportation camps.” *Id.* at 77.

Although simply killing everyone in a town (which happened often) might seem a more efficient form of democide, deportations had some countervailing advantages. First, they allowed maintenance of the pretext that the deportations were just relocations due to wartime necessity. Second, as one Turk explained, “If we had killed these women and children in the towns, we would not have known where their riches were, whether buried in the ground or otherwise hidden. That is why we allowed precious items such as jewelry to be taken. But after we had proceeded for about four hours, we came into a valley. With us were some thirty Turkish women who began to go through the clothing of the Armenian women and girls and took away the money and jewelry. It took them four days.”⁴⁷

Back in Istanbul, the government realized that some of the dead Armenians had American-issued life insurance policies. A Turkish diplomat asked American ambassador Morgenthau to tell the American insurers to send the Turks “a complete list of their Armenian policy holders. They are practically all dead now and have left no heirs to collect the money. It of course all escheats to the State.”⁴⁸

During the war, the Ottoman army invaded Caucasian Russia and northern Persia. There, they exterminated tens of thousands of Armenians and Syriac Christians. In Syria and Lebanon, they killed another hundred thousand Christians by creating a famine.⁴⁹

Greek and Syriac Christians

At about the same time the Armenian genocide began, the Syriac Christians were targeted with the same methods: disarmament, massacre of males over 15, followed by deportation death marches or quick massacres for everyone else. *See* David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia During World War I* (2006); Anahit Khosroeva, *Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire and the Official Turkish Policy of Their Extermination, 1890s-1918*, in *Genocide in the Ottoman Empire*, at 116-22.

Until Greece entered the war on the side of the Allies in 1917, the Greek population was relatively better off. In 1913-14, some of them had been ethnically cleansed and deported to Greece. Others had been put into army labor battalions and worked to death. Akçam, at xvii; Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 229-30 (estimating about 84,000 Greek deaths in this period). Once Greece joined the Allies, the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire got treatment similar to the other Christians, somewhat mitigated by their living mainly in far western Turkey, where many diplomats from countries not at war with Turkey could observe. *See* Gevorg Vardanyan, *The Greek Genocide in the Ottoman Empire: Parallels with the Armenian Genocide*, in *Genocide in the Ottoman Empire*, at 275-80.

47. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 228.

48. Morgenthau, at 339.

49. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 228-29.

Post–World War I

The Ottoman Empire surrendered on October 30, 1918; Austro-Hungary and Germany followed suit shortly thereafter. The CUP dictatorship attempted to accommodate to new realities, but it was overthrown in 1919 by Kemal Atatürk (also known as Mustapha Kemal Pasha). The former Ottoman Empire was divided up by the winners. (The Russian Empire was not among the winners; Russia had exited the war after a communist coup, followed by the communists signing a [peace treaty](#) very favorable to the Central Powers in March 1918.)

Much of Turkey itself was carved into military occupation zones for the winning powers, and short-lived nation of Armenia was created. But Atatürk and his Nationalists refused to accept national dismemberment, and fought on. In the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the Allies recognized the new government, whose territory encompassed the modern state of Turkey.⁵⁰ During the post-1918 fighting, the Turkish governments kept on killing Christians, including in Persian or Russian territories that the Turkish army sometimes occupied.

Observing a local battle in the one of the post-war wars, American missionary Alice Keep Clark explained why Armenians rejected a purported Turkish peace offer: “They cannot accept the terms because they have known too many cases in the past when the giving up of arms has been the signal for a massacre.” Based on experience, surrendering arms was “most ominous sign,” namely “a sure forerunner of an imminent massacre.” Alice Keep Clark, *Letters from Cilicia* 158-59 (1924).

Death Toll

The Turkish government admitted that about 800,000 Armenians died from deportation, while scholars put the death toll at 1.2 to 1.5 million, partly by taking into account the killings that continued through 1922.⁵¹ About half the Armenian population of Turkey had died.⁵² When the Young Turks ruled, they killed 9 percent of Turkey’s population.⁵³

Rummel estimates the total democide by the Young Turks (1909-18) at 1,889,000. The victims were mainly Armenians, and also included 84,000 Greeks and 107,000 other Christians. For democide by the Nationalists (1918-23), he estimates 878,000 murdered, consisting of 440,000 domestic Armenians, 175,000 foreign Armenians, and 264,000 domestic Greeks.⁵⁴ Total democide by Turkish governments in 1900-23 is therefore 2,767,000. There were also reprisal democides against Turks and Kurds, perpetrated by the Greek army or by Armenians, especially by Armenian irregulars who lived in Russia and whose actions were, at the least, tolerated by the Russian Empire.

Resistance

The Turkish governments’ democides were efficiently structured: the victim populations had been forbidden for centuries to possess arms or engage in

50. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 230-31.

51. Mayersen, at 77.

52. *Id.* at 77.

53. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 235.

54. *Id.* at 224 tbl. 10.1.

self-defense. Thanks to military conscription, most of the able-bodied males had been removed from the population. Town by town, the Turks first apprehended and killed the leading men, and then all the other men. After that, the women and children could be slaughtered on the spot or sent on death marches.

As the persecution intensified, contemporaneous Armenian writings lamented that if civilians had taken a more proactive approach sooner, more Armenians would have survived. But initially, many Armenians felt their best chance for survival lay in keeping a low profile and remaining passive.

Essential to the destruction of the Armenians was the destruction of communications—so that people in one village would not know what had happened in other villages. “The maintenance of a kind of cordon sanitaire that blocked all communication between regions, together with a strategy centered on concealing the CUP’s true objectives, were the two indispensable conditions for the success of the plan to liquidate the Armenians without provoking resistance.”⁵⁵ Kévorkian, at 240, 435 (“early in April 1915 the authorities took all the measures required to completely cut off relations and correspondence between Sivas and the neighboring villages: ‘no one knew what was going on, even in a village just an hour away’”); Morgenthau, at 311 (Armenians were told that they would be allowed to return home after the war was over).

Thus, in a given village, the people would not know that each successive Turkish demand—give us your weapons and we will not harm you; assemble your men in the town square; let us march you off to new location—was not a bargain to save one’s life but was instead a step toward being murdered.

A key reason for the successful resistance at Musa Dagh, *infra*, was that the villagers “were among the rare Armenians who had no doubt about the authorities’ real intentions toward them, which is what brought them to fight at all costs.” Kévorkian, at 612.

The Jews in Europe during World War II faced a similar problem due to lack of communications. As detailed in Section D.2.e, when the Nazis took formerly Soviet territory in 1941-42, they would machine-gun all the Jews and Gypsies (Roma) in a village. The remaining villagers would not dare trying to travel to another village to warn about what was coming.

In other areas, such as Poland, the Jews were herded into urban ghettos. Later, some of them would be shipped out by train, ostensibly to labor camps. Eventually, the ghetto would be depopulated. As far as the isolated urban Jews could tell, (1) being put in a ghetto was a return to medieval conditions, when Jews had also been required to live in ghettos; and (2) the deportations were for slave labor, and not for immediate extermination. The urban Jews only learned what was really going on after some Jews in Vilna, Lithuania, discovered mass killing sites that were indiscreetly close to town. Starting on New Year’s Day 1942, the Vilna Jews wrote down the truth and began to smuggle the message to other ghettos. David B. Kopel, *The Morality of Self-Defense and Military Action: The Judeo-Christian Tradition* 111-16 (2017). Only then did many Jews realize that certain death awaited if they failed to

55. *Cordon sanitaire* is French for “sanitary cordon”—a movement barrier to prevent the spread of infectious disease—similar to a quarantine. The term later became used in geopolitics, in the sense of buffer states, starting with the French-built *cordon sanitaire* in Eastern Europe to try to contain the Soviet Union after World War I.

resist, and even if they died resisting, that was better than passively allowing themselves to be slaughtered.

The problem for the Turks was that their controls of guns and communication, while severe, were not airtight. Some people did escape and warn others. Moreover, the mass murders of 1894-96 and 1909 had made some Ottoman Christians skeptical about allowing themselves to be disarmed. So in some areas, there was substantial armed resistance.

Before describing some notable instances of resistance, it is important to acknowledge that the success of any given resistance is not measured solely by how many people from a resisting town survived. Even when all the resisters were killed, they still helped to save other persons. Soldiers fighting for a just cause—such as Americans in World War II—are not necessarily fighting mainly to save their own lives. Rather, they are risking and sacrificing their lives to save others. Because many Armenians and other Christians did the same, many other people survived. Giving one's life to save others is perhaps the best possible use of one's life. *Cf. John 15:13* (“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.”).

The more Ottoman soldiers, militia, and free-range murderers whom the resisters killed or seriously wounded, the fewer people who were available to kill other Christians. If resisters in a town managed to hold out for one day or one week, every minute that they kept up the fight provided more time for people in other towns to learn what was happening, to prepare, or to flee.

Unlike some other democidal regimes, the Ottomans faced a serious multi-front war. In the west, Australian, British, and New Zealand forces had landed at Gallipoli, not far from Istanbul. To the south, the allies sent forces into Arabia and Syria, while inciting and arming Arabs to revolt. Forces from British India attacked Mesopotamia. In the east, the Ottomans and the Russians invaded each others' lands, and their forces also warred in formally neutral Persia. Frontline forces could not readily be pulled out of combat to make up for losses suffered by the murder units within Turkey. The multiple demands on the Ottoman army helps explain why so many of the armed attacks on the Christians were left up to the Kurds.

In the resistance descriptions below, the village or provincial names were those in use at the time. Parentheticals indicate alternative names, including newer ones.

Musa Dag

The best-known resistance occurred at Musa Dag (Mount Moses) in south-central Turkey, on the Mediterranean coast. The story is told in Franz Werfel's 1933 two-volume historical novel *Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dag*; a shorter version, in English, was *The Forty Days of Musa Dag*. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer began work on a movie adaptation starring Clark Gable, but abandoned the project due to pressure from the Turkish government. Werfel's 1933 novel was an indirect warning about Hitler, whose government banned and burned the book in February 1934. During World War II, the book was [read by Jews](#) as an inspiration and instruction manual for resistance. More recently, an unabridged English version has been published, and the 2016 movie *The Promise*, starring Christian Bale, is based on the same source material.

Today, the Musa Dag story is well known to scholars of the Turkish demicides, *e.g.*, Morris & Ze'evi, at 209-11, but not to the general public. The ignorance aids denialists who falsely contend that the Turkish government did not perpetrate

mass murders, and other denialists who contend that armed resistance to mass murder is futile.

The Musa Dagh resistance lasted for 53 days; the “forty days” of Werfel’s title was literary license, evoking the 40 days that Moses spent on Mount Sinai before receiving the Ten Commandments, and also the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert after his baptism and before beginning his ministry, as well as the 40 days between the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension. *Exodus* 32; *Deuteronomy* 9-10; *Luke* 4:1-13; *Acts* 1.

The first eyewitness account of Musa Dagh was written in 1915 by the pastor Dikran Andreasian, who led the resistance. Dikran Andreasian, *A Red Cross Flag that Saved Four Thousand* (reprinted in *Outlook*, Dec. 1, 1915) (Stephen Trowbridge trans.). Rev. Andreasian was the pastor of the Armenian Protestant Church in Zeitoun. In the spring of 1915, six thousand Turkish soldiers were sent to the city. They attempted to seize the monastery but were driven back by armed young men. Once the Turks brought in artillery, they were able to take their objective.

The Turks summoned 50 of the leading men of Zeitoun to a “conference with the commander” at the army barracks. The men were imprisoned, and then the Turks demanded the men’s families present themselves. Then more families were summoned. All of them were then taken out to march by foot, with no supplies, to destinations unknown. “Day by day we saw the various quarters of the city stripped of inhabitants, until at last a single neighborhood remained.” *Id.* at 2. Rev. Andreasian was among the final group of seven thousand who were marched out of Zeitoun. Thanks to the intercession of American missionaries, the pastor and his wife were allowed to proceed to his home town, near Antioch (which is near Musa Dagh).

Twelve days after the pastor arrived at his father’s home, orders were received for the six villages of Musa Dagh to prepare for deportation eight days hence. By this point, communication with the outside world had been severed. Opinion was divided, and some families accepted the advice of another minister who argued that resistance was impossible, and so they accepted their fate and were marched away. Rev. Andreasian and a group of over four thousand decided to abandon the villages in the foothills. They would stand and fight in the mountain heights.

They brought all the food they could carry, and their flocks of sheep and goats. They also brought all their weapons: 120 modern rifles and shotguns, and about 360 old flintlocks and horse-pistols.⁵⁶ With fewer than five hundred guns total, over half the men were left unarmed.

56. Flintlocks were state of the art in the 1620s when Captain Myles Standish obtained one for the Pilgrims at Plymouth. They were the standard arms of the American Revolution, and for the American military and militia through the 1820s. As of 1915 in the United States, they had long been displaced by modern firearms. Horse-pistols were large handguns suitable for men on horseback; the term horse-pistol can include a flintlock, or a handgun with a more advanced firing mechanism. Since the 1880s, modern firearms have used primers and smokeless gunpowder that are too chemically sophisticated for home manufacture by an average person. Flintlocks used old-fashioned blackpowder, which can be made at home if one has the right ingredients, including saltpeter, which is a product of the decay of animal waste. For either flintlocks or newer arms, bullets can be made by casting molten lead in molds. *See* Chs. 2.H.1.d, 2.I.1, 3.E, 5.E, 6.C.

Encamping in the upper crags of Mount Moses, the Armenians were drenched by rain; they had no tents or waterproof clothing. The men managed to keep the gunpowder dry. To defend each mountain pass and approach to the camp, trenches were dug and rocks were rolled to create barricades. Scouts, messengers, and a central reserve of sharpshooters took their positions.

When Turks attacked with 200 men on July 21, 1915, they were driven back. The Turks returned with a field-gun (mobile artillery) and bombarded the camp. A brave sniper crept toward the artillery, and with five shots dispatched four artillery gunners, forcing the field-gun to be withdrawn.

The Turks then amassed a force of three thousand regulars, plus four thousand local Muslims who were given army rifles. They advanced on the Armenian camp from all directions, and the Armenians dispersed to meet each column. All but one of the Turkish advances was a feint, designed to draw Armenians away from the main force. That force broke through the outnumbered defenders; by nightfall, the army was bivouacked in the woods within four hundred yards of the Armenian camp. Although there was a deep ravine in between, the Turkish rifles could hit the Armenians, but the older Armenian guns did not have the range to hit the Turks.

On the brink of annihilation, the Armenians devised a desperate plan. Under cover of darkness, they would surround the Turkish camp, close in suddenly with a fusillade of gunfire, and then attack hand to hand. “It was here that our familiarity with these crags and thickets made it possible to do what the invaders could not attempt.” *Id.* at 9. The surprise attack threw the Turks into confusion and forced them to withdraw. Over 200 soldiers were killed, and the Armenians captured seven **Mauser** rifles, 2,500 rounds of ammunition, and a mule.

The Ottomans then armed more Muslims, and fifteen thousand Muslims, plus the Turkish regulars, were sufficient to lay a siege on all of the landward side of the mountain. The plan was to starve out the Armenians, who even on short rations had only two weeks of food left. Forty days after the Ottomans had announced the deportation order, Rev. Andreasian wrote three copies of an appeal for rescue. Three strong swimmers were dispatched to the coast to look for any ship that might provide rescue, and then to swim to the ship with the message. The Armenians kept up their prayers. “Gregorians and Protestants were fused into one faith and fellowship by this baptism of suffering.”⁵⁷ *Id.* at 10.

The women sewed two immense flags. One said, in English, “CHRISTIANS IN DISTRESS—RESCUE.” The other flag was white, with a large red cross. Because of the war, there was little shipping on the coast. Rain and fog often made the flags impossible to see from a distance. Meanwhile, Turkish attacks continued, and were repulsed as the Armenians rolled boulders down onto the army. Gunpowder and ammunition were running low. *Id.* at 13.

On a Sunday 53 days after the Armenians had ascended Mount Moses, the French cruiser Guichen waved signal flags to the Armenians. French and Armenian delegates quickly met, and soon the Armenians were embarked by four French

57. “Gregorian” is a short name for the Armenian Orthodox Church.

and one English war vessels. Two days later they were provided refuge in Port Said, Egypt, a British protectorate. About 4,200 people had gone up Mount Moses and 4,049 came down: 413 children aged 0-3; 505 girls and 606 boys aged 4-14; 1,449 women; and 1,076 men. *Id.* at 795; Kévorkian, at 611. “We do not forget that our Saviour was brought in his infancy to Egypt for safety and shelter,” Rev. Andreasian wrote. Andreasian, at 15.

The resisters at Musa Dagh had advantages that many resisters do not: highly defensible terrain with which the defenders were intimately familiar; a nearby outlet for rescue; time to prepare a defense; and, as it turned out, just enough ammunition to survive. Importantly, they acted before it was too late.

Azakh

The little of village of Azakh (Azekh, İdil) lies near the modern border of Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, far from any coast. Azakh was one of five villages in the area that defended itself against Kurdish attacks. Although the Kurds were repulsed, the villagers were unable to leave the defended villages to tend their flocks and crops, so they obtained food by night-time raids on Kurdish villages. Because of surviving documentation, the rest of the story is best known about Azakh.

The town had a population of about a thousand Syriac Catholics and Syriac Orthodox. Its population grew with the influx of refugees from other towns, as well as Armenians who had escaped the death marches. They perhaps chose to come to Azakh because it “was a traditional fortification famous for its defensive walls and aggressive inhabitants.”⁵⁸ There, the people swore a traditional oath, “We all have to die sometime, do not die in shame and humiliation.”⁵⁹

In June and July 1915, emissaries tried to convince the people of Azakh to leave, in exchange for guarantees of safety, but the entreaties were rejected. The people spent the time constructing platforms for snipers and a secret tunnel out of the city.⁶⁰ A Kurdish attack from mid-August through September 9 was repulsed, and night-time attacks from Azakh captured Kurdish strategic positions. For the time being, the Kurds attacked other towns instead.⁶¹ The Ottoman army arrived in early November, and unsuccessfully demanded that people surrender their arms and accept deportation.⁶² A Turkish attack was repulsed, with heavy casualties among the attackers.⁶³

The Turks augmented their forces and, in combination with the Kurds, had about eight thousand men at arms. The elite of the Azakh defenders were the Jesus *fedai*—the latter word (in Arabic, *fedayeen*) signifying fighters willing to die for a cause. On the night of November 13-14, they snuck through the secret tunnel and surprised the sleeping Turkish soldiers. The *fedai* killed several hundred soldiers

58. Gaunt, at 276-77.

59. *Id.* at 277.

60. *Id.* at 278-79.

61. *Id.* at 279-80.

62. *Id.* at 282-83.

63. *Id.* at 285.

and captured semi-automatic rifles and ammunition—a big upgrade from their old flintlocks and homemade blackpowder (made from tree roots, charcoal, and boiled excrement).⁶⁴

The fighting at Azakh, a town with no strategic military value, was slowing the Ottoman buildup for operations in Persia (Iran), much to the annoyance of the Ottomans' German military advisors. *Id.* at 288-89. Finally, the Ottoman commander gave up, lifted the siege, and Azakh was spared, to the great embarrassment of the government in Istanbul.⁶⁵

Van

The largest military action of Armenian resistance took place in the far northeastern province of Van, bordering Persia and the Armenian part of Russia. Although some pro-Armenian sources deny that any resistance had been taking place before the democide began, there is substantial evidence that Armenian guerillas in Van province (but not the city) were perpetrating atrocities against Muslims, and working in support of an expected Russian invasion.⁶⁶

The Armenian guerillas hoped to establish an independent Armenian state under the protection of a Russian big brother. Whether the Russians would have gone along is questionable. They were certainly eager to sweep south and west into Ottoman territory, inciting Christian revolts as they went—just as the Ottomans hoped to do in Russian territory, inciting Muslim revolts. But whether the Russians would have acquiesced to an independent Armenia, rather than outright annexation, is doubtful.

According to the most ardent pro-Armenian sources, Ottoman actions at Van were just another attempted massacre. According to the pro-Ottoman sources, the Ottoman offensive against Van was counterinsurgency to suppress an Armenian revolt that was having disastrous effects on Ottoman operations in the east, including in Persia. As noted, this essay does not aim to parcel out blame for the actions of the combatants in World War I; there is plenty to go around. Rather, the question addressed here is the efficacy of armed resistance to government forces intent on mass killing of civilians.

Thousands of Turkish soldiers converged on Van, a large city whose Armenian and Muslim populations each had their own neighborhoods. The Turks demanded the Armenians give up their arms. The Armenians “knew that they were doomed if they obeyed; yet, if they failed to, they would provide the vali [governor] with the pretext he needed to attack the city’s Christian quarters and the rural areas.”⁶⁷

The Armenians had 90 [Mauser C96](#) semi-automatic pistols, 120 small revolvers, 101 rifles, and over 30,000 rounds of ammunition.⁶⁸ Some Armenians in Van used bombs, grenades, or dynamite.⁶⁹

64. *Id.* at 288.

65. *Id.* at 289-94.

66. McCarthy et al., at 176-221.

67. Kévorkian, at 319.

68. McCarthy et al., at 209.

69. *Id.* at 203.

“Van’s defenders, albeit heavily outnumbered and poorly armed, had an advantage—they found themselves in a densely urban environment—and a disadvantage: their positions communicated directly with all the government buildings in the city. . . .”⁷⁰ A Turkish commander remembered “the resistance of the Armenians was terrific. . . . Each house was a fortress that had to be conquered separately.”⁷¹

A battle raged for weeks. As ammunition began to run low, the Armenians “improvised a cartridge factory, a gunpowder factory (directed by a chemist), and an arms factory. A smithy was even converted into a cannon foundry. Although this project was of merely symbolic value, it seems to have sustained the morale of the populace, which was invited to donate its copper pots and pans; they were melted down to make an ‘Armenian cannon’ that was used to shell the Hacibekir barracks on 4 May, albeit to no great effect.”⁷²

Although the Armenians were “[o]utnumbered, outgunned and with dwindling supplies of food and ammunition,” they fought the Turks’ siege for four weeks until Russian troops came to the rescue. About 210,000 Armenians then fled to Russia, one of the two large groups of Turkish Armenians who escaped.⁷³ On the road to Russia, they were attacked by Turks and Kurds, suffering losses of 1,600. They were also joined by other refugees.⁷⁴

The 1912 population of Van province had included 130,000 Armenians plus 62,000 Syrian, Chaldean, or Nestorian Christians.⁷⁵ So the figure of 210,000 refugees from Van must also include a substantial number of Christians from other provinces.

Hakkari

Resisting ethnic cleansing, tens of thousands of Assyrians took to the Hakkari Mountains, armed only with flintlocks and other antiquated rifles. For weeks they defeated Turkish and Kurdish attacks until they began to run out of ammunition. They then began to make their way to Persia, fighting and defeating Kurdish attacks along the way. About fifteen to twenty thousand of them reached their destination. Gaunt, at 121-49.

More Syriac Resistance

A village-by-village account of the massacres, and, sometimes, of resistance, is provided in David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia During World War I* (2006) (covering Syriacs in the eastern Ottoman provinces of Van, Diyarbekir, and Bitlis, plus the Persian province of Azerbaijan during the Ottoman invasion). While details vary, the general

70. *Id.* at 326.

71. *Id.* at 328.

72. *Id.*

73. Mayersen, at 80; Kévorkian, at 334-35.

74. *Id.* at 335.

75. McCarthy et al., at 10.

pattern is familiar: disarmament, sometimes accomplished by torture in order to reveal where arms were hidden; decapitation of village leadership; removal/killing of males over a certain age; removal/killing of all the rest. Most of these accounts do not involve resistance.

Gaunt presents “A Catalogue of Massacres”—an alphabetical list of about 180 villages where Syriacs were massacred. For some villages, the only surviving records merely provide a sentence or short paragraph describing the location and the number of families that were killed. For others, there are more details. *Id.* at 200-72.

Except as otherwise noted, all of the villages below are (were) within about 40 miles of the town of Midyat, the center of the Assyrian community in Turkey. Midyat is in southeastern Turkey, close to the Syrian border, and not far from Iraq.

Anhel (Enhil). This was a large Syriac village, and also the site of a concentration camp for persons who survived the death marches. The inhabitants expected that they would eventually be attacked. They never were, because the attackers first wanted to massacre ‘Ayn-Wardo, and since ‘Ayn-Wardo never fell, Anhel was never attacked. The Anhel villagers smuggled supplies and weapons to ‘Ayn-Wardo. *Id.* at 200-01.

‘Ayn-Wardo (Gülgöze). During the summer of 1915, over six thousand refugees of various denominations and ethnicities fled to ‘Ayn-Wardo. Turkish officials assembled and armed thirteen thousand Kurdish tribesmen. Despite two months of attacks and siege, the Kurds failed to take ‘Ayn-Wardo. A local Kurdish sheik (shaykh), Fathullah, whom the Syriacs trusted, brokered a ceasefire. The Syriacs gave up their arms; the Turks ordered the attackers away; the sheik ordered the Muslims not to harm Christians, and he placed ‘Ayn-Wardo under his personal protection. The village was not molested again. “Since the mass attack on ‘Ayn-Wardo failed, it made possible the survival on Anhel, which never had to face a storming.” *Id.* at 202-05.

Basibrin. Taking in refugees from other villages, the Syriacs created a force of two thousand well-armed defenders. One reason they were well armed was that they had preemptively seized the rifles from the 40-man Turkish army garrison in town. In the fall of 1915, the Syriacs inflicted heavy casualties on attacking Kurds, and drove them off. But the Kurds returned in the summer of 1917 and killed about 90 percent of the Syriacs. *Id.* at 206-07.

Beth-Debe. Located on a mountaintop, the village of 40 families was doubled in size by incoming refugees. Their forces were augmented by a hundred armed men sent from a nearby monastery, and a friendly Kurdish leader who gave them arms and ammunitions. Other Kurds attacked for 15 days in August 1915, but after taking more casualties than the Syriacs, departed. *Id.* at 211.

Dayro da Şliabo (Çatalçam). This village was located further west than the above villages—straight north of the easternmost point of the Mediterranean Sea, and well inland. The 70 Syriac families fled to the nearby walled monastery. Over three months, a force of fifteen thousand Kurds could not breach the monastery walls, and eventually left. After things seemed to have returned to normal, the people returned to the village. A surprise night-time attack by a local tribe captured the monastery, forced the villagers into the town square, and burned them alive. *Id.* at 216-17.

Hah (Anitli). After the village headman learned about the Armenian massacres to the north, the Syriacs of Hah began strengthening the village walls, building

barricades, and stockpiling food and water. Including refugees from other villages, the population rose to about two thousand, including 200 armed men. The local Kurdish chief warned the Syrians that the Turks would prevent him from protecting them. After other Kurds and Turks besieged Hah for 45 days, the same Kurdish sheik who had negotiated the 'Ayn-Wardo ceasefire negotiated a similar one of Hah. *Id.* at 223.

Kfar-Boran (Kerburan). In a town with about two thousand Christians of diverse denominations, refugees in the summer of 1915 informed the people about what was going on elsewhere. Many in the town favored reliance on Ottoman promises of protection. The area was flat, with few natural defenses, so when the Kurds attacked, the people retreated to the seven large building complexes in town. The Turks promised that if the people came out, they would be safe; those who did come out were promptly killed. The remainder of the people fought for about a week, but they had not had time to obtain or make reserves of ammunition. The army captured one building at a time and then killed everyone inside. *Id.* at 232-33.

Kfarze. After initially relying on promises of protection, the villagers discovered Kurdish plans for a massacre. They asked 'Ayn-Wardo for help, and that village sent an armed escort that led the people to 'Ayn-Wardo, fighting off Kurds along the way. Other villagers fled to Muslim villages, where they were taken hostage; a detachment of 300 armed men from 'Ayn-Wardo liberated some of them and arranged for prisoner exchanges to free the rest. *Id.* at 234.

Mor Malke Qluzmoyo. This monastery near Midyat was a very defensible stone fortress. In the summer of 1915, nearby villagers and refugees from other areas took shelter there. The local Kurds did not even attempt to take it, and the monastery was a base for Christian raiding parties taking reprisals against Kurds who had attacked other villages. In mid-September, the people began to return to their villages, but then went back to the monastery after the Turkish government told them to surrender their weapons in exchange for protection. They spent the winter there, under sniper fire, and close to starvation. *Id.* at 240-41.

Saleh. "On July 3, 1915, soldiers and Turkish clans instigated by Midyat's new kaymakam [provincial governor], Bashar Bey, surrounded the village. The Christians fought back in defense but were overpowered and killed in their homes." *Id.* at 256.

Yardo. The local Kurds deceitfully made a non-aggression pact with the Syrians. One night, the Kurds cried out for help, saying that their cattle were being stolen. After the Syriac armed men had been lured outside the village, the Kurds moved in, took the villagers hostage, and prepared to ambush the returning Syrians. Realizing the trick, the Syriac men went to the ruins of an old fortress, and told the Kurds to release the hostages. After the hostages were released, the Syrians began trekking to 'Ayn-Wardo; on the way, they were ambushed by Kurds. All were killed, except for 40 who were sold as slaves. *Id.* at 269.

Za'faran. After nearby massacres, seven hundred armed Syrians took refuge in a monastery, joined by hundreds of refugees. A Turkish and Kurdish assault on July 4, 1915, was repulsed. Although the Kurds departed, the Syrians had to pay continuing bribes to local Turkish officials for protection. In October, they felt safe enough to return to their homes. While in the monastery, about half the refugees died from epidemics. *Id.* at 269-70.

Zaz. This village was the home of about 200 Syriac families. The local church and nearby building complexes had high, thick walls. Although the people held off a siege for 20 days, they ran out of food and water. At that point, many came out in exchange for promises of protection, but they were soon killed. Attacking the remaining defenders, the Kurds fought their way into the churchyard, but were driven off from the church after a three-day battle. Then, a Turkish officer, backed by soldiers and artillery, arrived. The officer negotiated with the Syriacs inside the church, and he realized the falsity of Kurdish claims that the Syriacs were receiving foreign help and had a huge arms stockpile. He put the Syriacs under his protection and led them to another church, and after that they were moved to another town. Under the harsh conditions of their new homes, many died from disease or starvation. About a hundred survived. *Id.* at 270-71.

More Armenian Resistance

Like Gaunt for the Syriacs, Kévorkian for the Armenians provides a long list of particular massacres, and of instances of resistance. While Gaunt's list was organized by village, Kévorkian's is organized by province (*vilayet*), since the victim Armenian population was much larger and more dispersed than the Syriacs. Within a given *vilayet*, Kévorkian describes activities in individual villages in 1915.⁷⁶ In describing the attackers, Kévorkian sometimes uses the Turkish word *çetes*, meaning "Muslim armed irregular brigands."

Erzerum vilayet. This province was in the northeast, one step closer to the interior than the provinces that bordered Russia or Persia. "The last village to be attacked, Haramig (pop. 898), valiantly withstood the *çetes*' assaults under the command of Hagop Kharpertsı, a *hekim* [doctor] who practiced traditional medicine. The people of Haramig held out for two weeks until their ammunition ran out; they inflicted heavy losses on the Kurds. A few old men and children who had survived these slaughters and been left to wander through the villages were gathered together in Hınıs and deported a few weeks later."⁷⁷

"[W]hen the bands of *çetes* attacked the village of Khups/Çanakci (pop. 1,216) at six o'clock on 7 June 1915, they were met with gunfire from the peasants, organized into six self-defense groups. . . . After two days of uninterrupted fighting, which cost 40 Kurdish *çetes* and one Armenian (Giragos Baghdigian) their lives, the villagers decided to break through the enemy lines. They succeeded, but were all killed somewhat further off in a mill, in which they fought to the last bullet."⁷⁸

Bitlis vilayet. This province was in the southwest, one province away from Persia, and two away from Iraq. In the high mountains of Sasun (Sassoun), about a thousand armed men attempted to defend tens of thousands of refugees. The defenders "had very few modern weapons and a great many hunting rifles." *Id.* at 352. Starting on July 18, they repulsed Turkish-Kurdish assaults. "By 28 July, Sasun was running low on ammunition and famine had begun to claim lives, especially among the refugees." So the defenders on August 2 attempted a breakout, to try to

76. Kévorkian, at 265-621.

77. *Id.* at 304.

78. *Id.* at 305.

bring the entire population to the Russian army. “A few thousand Armenians succeeded in crossing the Kurdish-Turkish lines and making their way to the Russian positions in the northern extremity of the sancak [administrative district] of Mush, but the vast majority were massacred, notably in the valley of Gorshik, after the hand-to-hand fighting of the final battles of 5 August, in which the women, armed with daggers, also took part.”⁷⁹

Harput/Mamuret ul-Aziz vilayet. This province was in east-central Turkey. “An examination of the way events unfolded shows that the local authorities methodically enacted a plan that had probably been hammered out in Istanbul; it was distinguished by the fact [that] each step paved the way for the next. Thus, the hunt for arms justified the arrests, tortures, and house searches. These made the thesis of an Armenian ‘plot’ credible; the existence of the ‘plot’ justified extending the measures taken to all males over the age of ten, followed by the deportation of the whole population. It was an almost perfect mechanism.”⁸⁰

“The sole act of resistance we know of took place at Morenig, where a dozen adolescents barricaded themselves in the church and fought back until they were all killed—but not before inflicting a few casualties on the ‘gendarmes.’”⁸¹ Additionally, an Armenian guerilla attack wiped out a Turkish battalion and thus allowed the slave laborers to escape.⁸²

Shabin Karahissar, Giresun vilayet. After young men were imprisoned and 200 merchants killed, the five thousand townspeople of Shabin Karahissar burned their own homes and took refuge up the mountain in an old Roman fort. Although they were poorly armed, they kept thousands of Ottomans at bay for 26 days. While the fort had water, the defenders began to starve and ran out of ammunition. At the last, they exited the fort and fought hand to hand. Only 47 survived. *See* Aram Haigaz, *The Fall of the Aerie* (1935).

Sivas vilayet. This province was in north-central Turkey. Many Armenians obeyed the bishops’ order to surrender their arms, and the usual results ensued. On June 16, when the Armenians of Şabinkarahisar saw a distant village in flames, they barricaded themselves in their neighborhood, joined by refugees from other towns. There were about 500 males capable of bearing arms, who had among them 200 weapons, including 100 modern Mauser rifles. For water, the Armenians had to make dangerous night-time sorties to the nearby springs. After the Ottomans burned down the Armenian quarter, the Armenians retreated to the town citadel. The Ottomans shelled it with artillery, but without great effect. The Armenians used metal scraps from the spent artillery to manufacture bullets. Direct attacks on the citadel resulted in dead Turks, with Armenians capturing their rifles. A six-thousand-man Turk offensive on July 4 resulted in the deaths of 300 Armenian fighters, and probably a larger number of Turks. But the Armenians were running out of ammunition and now had only 200 fighters, many of them adolescents. An attempted sortie on the night of July 8 was unsuccessful. On July 11, after 27 days of

79. *Id.*

80. *Id.* at 386.

81. *Id.* at 396.

82. *Id.* at 398.

siege, the Armenians surrendered. The males over 15 were executed, and the rest of the people were deported.⁸³

Urfa (Edessa) was an administrative district near the middle of the Turkey-Syria border. At the time, it was in the province of Aleppo, historically home to one of the first Christian congregations outside Israel. It had been the site of massacres in 1895. The townspeople of Urfa and nearby towns first learned of the democide in March 1915, when some escapees from the death marches arrived. People initially disobeyed a June 1915 order to surrender their weapons, until the Armenian bishop told them to comply. Many weapons were handed over, but not all. Then began the arrests and killings of leading men and the deportation of other men. When deportation of everyone was ordered on August 23, the Armenians refused, and fortified their quarter. Because the Turkish attack did not begin until September 29, the Armenians had plenty of time to prepare, including acquiring ammunition that the females smuggled in beneath their chadors. Since 1895, the Armenians had been forbidden to ring their church bells. On the 29th of September, all the bells pealed, announcing the beginning of the insurrection.

Expecting little resistance, since most of the men had already been killed or deported, the Turks and Kurds advanced deep into the Armenian quarter. Then, they were showered with homemade bombs; in a panicked retreat, many of the attackers were trampled to death. So many men being gone, Armenian women and girls fought as combatants.

On October 1, the aggressors focused on the Catholic church, but the Armenians were forewarned and forearmed. Once the enemy was in the church and courtyard, the Armenians hit them with gunfire and explosives.

The Turks brought in six thousand more soldiers, plus German artillery guns and German officers. Beyond the range of Armenian firearms, the artillery systematically destroyed the Armenian quarter. The Armenians fought to the very last, burning their possessions so they could not be plundered, throwing their gold coins into the street and taunting the enemy come and take them; and in the last extremity, committing suicide rather than be captured. The insurrection was finally suppressed on October 25, and the Armenian survivors executed.⁸⁴

Aftermath and Observations

About 339,000 Christian refugees from the Ottoman Empire ended up in southern Russia during World War I.⁸⁵ For the refugees, the death rate from disease and malnutrition was high. For the refugees who remained in southern Russia, things might have been all right if the Russian Empire had remained intact, but the empire was taken over by communists, who were considerably more murderous than their imperial predecessors. After Lenin died, Stalin took over, and used Lenin's systems of mass murder on an even greater scale against all the people of the Soviet Union, with minorities such as Armenians often being specially targeted. *See* Section D.2.e.

83. Kévorkian, at 435, 458.

84. Gaunt, at 264-67; Kévorkian, at 613-21.

85. McCarthy et al., at 374.

As the Ottoman and Russian Empire disintegrated, an independent Armenian republic was briefly established, but it was gobbled up and reincorporated by the imperial successors—Kemal Atatürk’s Nationalists and Lenin’s regime.

The Christian minority resistance to Ottoman mass murder during World War I is consistent with some long-standing observations about armed resistance:

- If the situation has deteriorated to the point that armed deterrence has failed and armed resistance becomes necessary, the odds are that most of the resisters in any given area will eventually be killed.
- One of the most difficult decisions is whether and when to begin armed resistance, because governments intent on mass killing are often able to conceal their intentions.
- Resistance forces are greatly aided by defensible positions, such as mountains, fortified buildings, or dense urban areas. The advantage is magnified when the defenders know the area well and the attackers do not. With some preparation time and a good defensive position, a fairly small group of defenders with firearms may be able to hold off a much larger number of attackers with firearms.
- When escape is impossible, fighting for as long as possible may sometimes convince the attackers to leave.
- Resistance can often save others by depleting and occupying their attackers’ resources, necessarily preventing them from using those resources against others.
- As in sieges throughout history, the besiegers may win by waiting for the defenders to run out of water, food, or ammunition. Ordinary quantities of household reserves for these items are insufficient for a protracted siege, so the more reserves that have been accumulated in advance, the better. Access to a reliable source of fresh water (or of water purification) is essential in the long run.
- If the attackers have sufficient resources, they often can bring in long-range artillery (or today, airplane bombers) that can fire from positions beyond the range of the defenders’ rifles and reduce the defenders’ stronghold to rubble. There is not much the defenders can do about artillery, other than sorties to try to take out the artillery—a difficult operation, since the defenders are presumably far outnumbered.
- The best chance for the defenders to survive is to escape, as at Musa Dagh or Van. But not all defenders have the good fortune of being located near a friendly nation or a coast with friendly ships.
- In some cases, defenders can hold out long enough for others to help them.

In a given situation, the defenders may never know who or how many others they will save, but the odds are good that armed defenders will directly or indirectly save the lives of innocents. In the hands of people resisting mass murder, guns save lives. More guns and more ammunition save more lives.

On August 22, 1939, a few days before Germany would attack Poland and begin World War II, Adolf Hitler spoke to his top generals and announced his plans to exterminate the Polish people. He mocked the importance of world opinion: “Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?” *See* Kevork

B. Bardakjian, *Hitler and the Armenian Genocide* (1985). He was partly correct. Although some American parents urged children to eat their vegetables by telling them “remember the starving Armenians,” what had really happened to the Armenians was mostly forgotten in the West, and children at the dinner table had little clue who the Armenians really were.

Hitler and his generals of course remembered; the murderous Ottomans had been aided by German military advisors. Some Jews remembered too; as noted *infra*, they studied Musa Dagh for tactical lessons in resistance. The next section examines Jewish resistance during the Holocaust—resistance that took place under even less favorable conditions than the Ottoman Christians faced: the Jews started with many fewer arms, rarely had nearby friendly countries to which they could flee, and had no monasteries or other established fortresses where they could make a stand. Moreover, the World War II Nazi army was a juggernaut compared to the Ottoman army of World War I. Under the most difficult circumstances, could armed Jewish resistance make any difference?

I. Armed Jews

Contrary to the myth of Jewish passivity during the Holocaust, about 30,000 Jewish partisans fought in eastern Poland, Belarus, and the northern Ukraine, where thick woods and swamps provided hiding places.⁸⁶ In 1942-43, Jews constituted half of all the partisans in Poland. In other parts of Europe, Jews joined the resistance at much higher rates than the rest of the population. For example, in France, Jews amounted to less than 1 percent of the French population, but made up about 15-20 percent of the French Resistance. When the Allies invaded Vichy France’s colonies in North Africa in November 1942, five-sixths of the Underground that assisted was Jewish. Guerilla resistance by the Jews and other fighters behind Nazi lines forced the Germans to divert manpower from the front lines. In this regard, the resistance hastened the Allied victory, even though the resistance forces never had the ability by themselves to defeat the Nazis.

Although Jews resisted Hitler more so than any other group behind Nazi lines, most Jews did not engage in armed resistance. As one Holocaust survivor from Poland later put it, “In response to the question of why people did not resist, there is a simple answer: there were no arms.” Leib Spiesman, *Ghettos in Revolt* (1944) (original in Yiddish), *reprinted in* 4 Emil Kerenji, *Jewish Responses to Persecution, 1942-43 Doc. 5-12*, at 201 (2015) (quoting an unnamed Jew who had escaped to Israel). Holocaust historian Reuben Ainsztein notes that “some people, especially in the United States, find it difficult to understand why obtaining arms represented such a problem.” Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe* 304 (1974).

In pre-war Poland and in the Soviet Union, “no firearm, not even a shotgun,” could be obtained legally without a government permit. For most people, “such permits were impossible to obtain.” *Id.* at 304; *see also* Chaika Grossman, *The*

86. The section is adapted in part from David B. Kopel, *The Morality of Self-Defense and Military Action: The Judeo-Christian Tradition* (2017), and David B. Kopel, *Armed Resistance to the Holocaust*, 19 J. on Firearms & Pub. Pol’y 143 (2007).

Underground Army: Fighters of Bialystok Ghetto 3 (Schmuel Beeri transl., Holocaust Library, 1987) (1965). “Not to allow the peasants to have arms” had been the policy “from time immemorial.”⁸⁷ Regarding arms, Lenin and Stalin carried on the Russian Czarist tradition, as they did in many other ways. *See generally* Eugene Lyons, *Stalin: Czar of All the Russias* (1940); Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (2004).

In Poland, the main way that firearms got into citizens’ hands was peasant scavenging of rifles that had been left behind from the battles of World War I (1914-18) and the Russo-Polish War (1919-20). Usually the rifle barrels would be sawed short, for concealment.⁸⁸ But thanks to the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact, the Soviet Union invaded and conquered the eastern third of Poland at the beginning of World War II. The Soviet secret police, the NKVD, “took great care to disarm the local population, and was very successful.”⁸⁹ The one big chance to acquire arms was in the chaos immediately after Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. In those first weeks, the Soviet army reeled in retreat, leaving large quantities of weapons behind. But the abandoned arms tended to be in rural areas (where Polish peasants picked up many), whereas most Jews lived in cities or towns.⁹⁰

During the chaotic early weeks on the Eastern Front, the Nazis successfully deterred most Jews from attempting to scavenge arms. As in every nation conquered by the Third Reich, being caught with a firearm meant instant death for oneself and one’s family, and perhaps even for others, in reprisal.⁹¹ This was especially so for Jews. Disarmed, the Jews and Roma (European gypsies) were soon destroyed.

On top of the governmental obstacle there was a cultural one. Except in the Zionist self-defense units that had begun to arise in response to Russian pogroms in the late nineteenth century, there was no gun culture among most of Europe’s Jews. As Holocaust scholar Yehuda Bauer observes, the general Jewish problem was not merely “lack of arms” but also “lack of knowledge about how to use them.” Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* 166 (2001). There were few Jews who were gunsmiths or gun hobbyists and had basic skills at fixing firearms. Very few Jews had the workshop tools, or the knowledge, to manufacture gun components or to produce ammunition at home. Many of the Jews who did acquire arms had no prior experience with using them. Ghetto conditions, and the severe shortage of ammunition, prevented Jews from taking the first steps at practicing shooting before they had to fire arms in combat.

87. Ainsztein, at 304.

88. Ainsztein, at 304.

89. *Id.*

90. *Id.*

91. For examples of such decrees, see Proclamation to the Occupied Yugoslav Territory, Apr. 1941, in Raphaël Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* 591 (2d ed. Lawbook Exchange 2008) (1944) (ordering “[t]he surrender of guns and other implements of war” and also surrender of radio transmitters). *Cf.* Gen. Ion Antonescu [Rumanian fascist dictator and Nazi ally], Decree-Law concerning Ownership of Goods Left by the Retreating Enemy, July 9, 1941, in Lemkin at 365-66 (“Arms of every kind” left by the Soviet army must be surrendered or declared within 24 hours of publication of the decree. For violations, “[t]he trial and execution shall take place within twenty-four hours. In cases of *flagrante delicto*, the culprit shall be executed on the spot.”).

Unlike in Western Europe, where Jews could join the national undergrounds, Jews in Eastern Europe, where most Jews lived, were generally excluded from national undergrounds. The independent Jewish partisans received no weapons from the Allies, unlike all the other undergrounds in Europe. Holocaust scholar Nechama Tec summarizes: “As regards resistance, in practical terms, the Allies had virtually no interest in the Jews. This indifference translated into a rejection of all known Jewish pleas, including those requesting arms and ammunition. It goes without saying that the Jews experienced a chronic arms shortage.” Nechama Tec, *Jewish Resistance: Facts, Omissions, Distortions*, in *Jewish Resistance Against the Nazis*, at 62.

Suppose that every one of the 1 million Jews and Roma who were murdered by the *Einsatzgruppen* in 1941-42 had possessed a good rifle. Could they have driven the *Wehrmacht* out of Russia, Belarus, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia? Definitely not. What they could have done is shoot the *Einsatzgruppen* who were coming to kill them. As the Jewish Talmud puts it, “if one comes to kill you, hasten to kill him first.” [The Babylonian Talmud](#): Tract Sanhedrin 214 (Michael L. Rodkinson trans. 1918). Then, it would not have been so simple for a million people to be slaughtered by a few thousand. Plenty of *Einsatzgruppen* would have been shot and that would at least have slowed down the pace of murders, providing more time for some potential victims to escape, and making it harder for Hitler’s regime to recruit replacements. The armed Jews and Roma who shot at the *Einsatzgruppen* might have eventually been killed anyway, but in dying they would have saved others.

Now imagine that the entire European population was as well armed as the American Founders wanted the American people to be: “The great object is that every man be armed.” Ch. 5.B.5 (Patrick Henry). Imagine no government registrations lists of who has what firearms. Could the tyranny and mass murders of the Nazis and Communists have been accomplished so easily as it was against European populations that were mostly disarmed, and for whom the legally armed population was readily identifiable from government lists?

We know what did happen when Jews got arms. Holocaust historian Abram L. Sachar writes: “The indispensable need, of course, was arms. As soon as some Jews, even in the camps themselves, obtained possession of a weapon, however pathetically inadequate—a rifle, an ax, a sewer cover, a homemade bomb—they used it and often took Nazis with them to death.” Abram L. Sachar, *The Redemption of the Unwanted: From the Liberation of the Death Camps to the Founding of Israel 1944-48* (1983). Thus, writes Sachar, “the difference between resistance and submission depended very largely upon who was in possession of the arms that back up the will to do or die.” *Id.* at 60. “Under the New Order introduced by the Germans, the possession of firearms decided everything.”⁹²

Shepl Borkowski, a butcher, led 120 people from Yanov, Ukraine, into the forest. Starting with five guns, they were able to obtain more by killing seven collaborator policemen. The 12 armed men “were able to defend the women and children against many dangers and ensure their survival.” The 12 armed men saved 120 lives—10 times their number.

92. Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe*, at 305.

The largest Jewish partisan force in Europe started with the three Bielski brothers in the forests of Belarus. They grew to over a hundred armed fighters and carried out dozens of anti-Nazi combat missions, including destroying trains, telegraph poles, and bridges. They also sheltered over a thousand noncombatants. On the day the Bielski unit was disbanded, “Bielski’s Shtetl” comprised 1,140 Jews, of whom 149 were armed combatants. Peter Duffy, *The Bielski Brothers* 259, 265, 282 (2002). So 149 armed men saved 1,140 lives—7.65 times their number. Could 600,000 or 1 million armed Jews have saved the 6 million? They surely could have saved some of them. The same point can be made for the millions of Gypsies, Russians, and other Slavs who were exterminated by the Nazis.

While most of the Jewish resistance was unknown in the West during the war, the most spectacular revolt—the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—changed the world. Shortly after Nazi conquest of an area in Eastern Europe, all the Jews would be herded into walled urban ghettos, as in the Middle Ages. As the National Socialist industrial system of genocide grew, the ghettos would be ordered to supply a certain number of people to be transported to, ostensibly, labor camps. In fact, the transit was to sites where the Jews would be murdered. At first, Jews in the ghettos complied, because they did not know. But by late 1941, the Jews of Vilnius, Lithuania, had learned the truth, and through underground couriers, they alerted other ghettos, with a January 1, 1942 manifesto urging Jews everywhere to fight.

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began on January 18, 1943, in response to a new round of deportations. At first the Jewish Fighting Organization had only 24 handguns and 18 grenades, but they used those weapons to capture more. Always hampered by a severe shortage of ammunition (learning how to make ammunition at home had not been part of Jewish culture in Eastern Europe), the Jews hid in secret fortifications they had been building since 1942. As German Warsaw commander Juergen Stroop later recalled, in urban guerilla combat, the “Jews were much better than we at such warfare.”⁹³ Before being executed as a war criminal in 1952, Stroop explained, “It’s all history now, and the world’s gone topsy-turvy, so why not speak the truth here in our cell? The Jews surprised me and my officers . . . with their determination in battle. And believe me, as veterans of World War I and SS members, we knew what determination in battle was all about. The tenacity of your Warsaw Jews took us completely by surprise. That’s the real reason the Grossaktion [extermination operation] lasted as long as it did.” Kazimierz Moczarski, *Conversations with an Executioner* (1981) (1st pub. Poland as *Rozmowy Z Kate*, 1977).

Finally, the Nazis set the entire ghetto on fire and then used explosives to demolish it. Even so, 20,000 Jews survived and hid, emerging in August 1944 to join the Polish Underground uprising that month. The mostly Christian Poles had postponed their uprising until the Soviet Red Army was nearby; the Polish Jews had not enjoyed the luxury of being able to wait until then. Rather than assisting the 1944 Polish uprising, Stalin ordered the Red Army to halt and give the Germans as much time as necessary to kill the Polish freedom fighters, whom Stalin viewed as a potential obstacle to his plan to turn post-war Poland into a totalitarian satellite of the Soviet Union.

93. Ainsztein, at 655.

The Warsaw Jews, like many other Jewish fighters, knew they had almost no chance of survival. They decided that it would be better to die in collective self-defense against the murderers rather than to passively let themselves be exterminated. As the West learned about the Warsaw Revolt, the Western media began to change its attitude toward Jews. “They concluded that the Jews had earned the right to be regarded not as supplicants, but as allies.”⁹⁴ An article in Harper’s explained, “As the British press was the first to admit, the Jews now have a new and different claim for consideration, a claim not of passive victims, but of active allies and partners who have fought the common enemy.” William Zukerman, *The Revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto*, Harper’s Mag., Sept. 1943. See Kopel, *The Morality of Self-Defense*, at 111-16. There is a direct line from Warsaw and other Jewish resistance to establishment of the State of Israel. Before and after 1948, many people have worked fervently to exterminate Jews. With the Jewish people now having their own military, the exterminationists have not gotten very far since 1948.

In 1967, the International Society for the Prevention of Crime held a Congress in Paris on the prevention of genocide. The Congress concluded that “. . . defensive measures are the most effective means for the prevention of genocide. Not all aggression is criminal. A defense reaction is for the human race what the wind is for navigation—the result depends on the direction. The most moral violence is that used in legitimate self-defense, the most sacred judicial institution.” V.V. Stanciu, *Reflections on the Congress for the Prevention of Genocide*, in *7 Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance 187* (Livia Rothkirchen ed. 1968).

During the Holocaust, perpetrators and resisters agreed that “the possession of firearms decided everything.” Denial of the facts of the Holocaust facilitates future mass murders. Until mankind figures out how to eliminate forever the possibility of governmental mass murder, the short-term risks of a well-armed civilian population are vastly outweighed by the long-term risks of a government that is stronger than the people.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. Numerous comparisons have been made between murder rates in Europe and the United States to prove that the United States has more murders because it has more guns. But these comparisons are limited to murders committed by individuals. Do you agree with Professor Kopel’s point that an accurate comparison must include mass murders perpetrated by governments? Why or why not? What do you think of Professor Kopel’s evidence that when murders by government are counted, murder during the last century has been far more prevalent in Europe and the rest of the world than in the United States? Does this support the idea that armed populations best deter murder?

2. According to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, preventing public “awareness of the real situation” is essential to tyranny or mass murder by government. Can you think of examples of how different governments have perpetrated crimes by keep the people ignorant?

94. Sachar, at 54.

It is often said that the members of the United States military would never turn on their fellow citizens if a tyrant ordered them to. Would an evil government be able to prevent American soldiers from learning the information about whether the orders given to the soldiers to use force against Americans were justified?

James Madison believed that a citizen militia, “officered by men chosen from among themselves, fighting for their common liberties, and united and conducted by [state] governments possessing their affections and confidence” would be at least a partial counterweight to the danger of military rule. ([The Federalist 46](#).) Do you agree?

3. Is Professor Mayersen correct that there probably would not be an international reaction to genocide if it began today? Does it depend on who the perpetrator is? Who the victim is? What perpetrator and victim characteristics should determine an international response? What characteristics actually do determine whether this is an international response?

4. Suppose you were asked for advice by people who worried that their government might initiate mass murder against them. What would you tell them to do? Would you advise them to obtain any tools or supplies? Which ones and in what quantities?

5. **CQ:** Many Armenians and Syrians were disarmed under the pretext that their firearms were being requisitioned for use by the Ottoman army. In the United States during World War II, the [Property Requisition Act of 1941](#) (Ch. 8.F.1.a) forbade the federal government to requisition firearms. The Act was also the first of several federal statutes to outlaw federal gun registration. Congress was well aware of what had already taken place in Europe, where Hitler and Stalin used registration lists to confiscate guns, create gun-free zones, and then perpetrate mass shootings. The 1941 act by its terms applied only to the U.S. military buildup for World War II. Should the United States enact a firearms requisition prohibition today? Should other countries?

6. Registration, confiscation, extermination. Under what conditions does this sequence occur? What are some ways that people have stopped the progression of the sequence?

3. *China Under Mao*

David B. Kopel

The Party Commands the Gun: Mao Zedong’s Arms Policies and Mass Killings

(prepared for this work)

*Feeding on whatever lives,
they don't care if you're noble and wise.
We all nurse our lives into death alone,
nothing to trust among all our fetid words,
songs forced, happiness a sham.*

Meng Chiao, *Laments of the Gorges*, in *The New Directions Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry* 126 (Eliot Weinberg ed., David Hinton trans., 2003).

a. Introduction: Estimating Chinese Communist Democide

The most murderous government of the twentieth century was the 1949-76 Mao Zedong regime in China. It was responsible for the deaths of over 86 million people. This essay examines how Mao's repression of arms and other liberties—particularly, the freedom of speech—helped him retain power for so long and kill so many.

The essay is organized chronologically, with two subsections that are longer than the others because they involve the greatest armed challenges to communist party rule. Section D.3.f covers Tibet, where major guerilla resistance arose in the 1950s and recaptured, for a while, vast amounts of territory. Section D.3.i, on the first years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-68), describes Mao's program to overthrow the communist party bureaucracy by arming the masses; the result nearly toppled Mao's regime.

The estimate of 86 million deaths from the Mao regime is calculated as follows: in 1991 Professor R.J. Rummel estimated that the Chinese communist regime from 1949 to 1987 killed between 5,999,000 and 102,671,000 people. R.J. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (1991). Rummel's best estimate was 35,236,000. *Id.* at 305. Not all of the deaths occurred during Mao's reign. From 1976 through 1987, the post-Mao regime killed 874,000. *Id.* at 267-73.

Rummel's total originally did not include the tens of millions of deaths from the famine caused by the 1958-62 Great Leap Forward. Later, however, Rummel decided that the famine deaths should be included in the Chinese communist death count, because they were, at a minimum, the result of depraved indifference to human life. R.J. Rummel, *Reevaluating China's Democide to 73,000,000*. Rummel's new figure used the then-common estimate of 38 million deaths from the Great Leap Forward. However, as discussed below, more recent scholarship, based on research of Chinese archives that were not available to Rummel, estimates deaths from the Great Leap Forward at 45-55 million. The figure overlaps with the five million deaths in the Chinese slave labor gulags (the *lao gai*) in 1958-62, estimated by Rummel. So if one estimates Great Leap Forward deaths to be about 50 million and then subtracts out the 5 million slave labor camp deaths already counted by Rummel, we add 45 million to Rummel's figure for Mao-era death, indicating 79,362,000 deaths for the Mao period.

Still missing from the above total are the *other* famines during Mao's reign of 1949-76. Although famines were a long-standing problem in China well before the communists took over, it is reasonable to attribute the Mao-era famines to depraved indifference to human life, for reasons detailed *infra*. The number of people starved to death by Mao (not counting the Great Leap Forward starvation) is estimated at about 7.5 million, as described *infra*.

The figure of 86,862,000 understates the number of killings attributable to the Chinese Communist Party. As discussed *infra*, in the years before the party won its revolution in 1949, its democide killed 3,466,000 Chinese in areas the party controlled. Not all of these deaths can be attributed to Mao's rule since he did not become Chairman until 1943. Including the pre-1949 democides brings the Chinese Communist Party's death count to over 90 million. These may be underestimates.

The magnitude of so much homicide can be difficult to grasp. This Chapter consists of about 836,000 characters—that is, every single letter, numeral, or punctuation mark. Each character represents 104 individuals in China who were killed because of the Mao regime in 1949-76.

Background on Names and Chinese Words

In Chinese, the family name comes first. So “Mao” was the family name and “Zedong” was the given name. This essay follows the practice, except that citations to book authors follow the book’s usage.¹

The leading system for translating the sounds of Chinese characters into the Roman alphabet is *pinyin*. For the convenience of readers, especially those conducting research, a parenthetical in pinyin will be supplied for some important nouns or phrases. The romanization system before pinyin was Wade-Giles; it was in widespread use for English translations through the 1970s, including in many sources below.² For places or individual names, the essay usually provides the pinyin in the text, followed by a parenthetical in Wade-Giles. When quoting older sources that used Wades-Giles, the essay uses the spelling from the quote. For example, the current spelling of the ruler of China from 1949-76 is Mao Zedong, but sources from the 1970s and before used Mao Tse-tung.

Because Chinese characters themselves do not indicate the sounds to be used for the word, Chinese children now learn pinyin before they learn Chinese characters.³

1. The number of family names in Chinese is fairly small, as reflected in a saying about “the hundred old names.” Thus, in this essay, there are five cited authors whose family name is Li.

2. Pinyin (literally, “spell sound”) was created by the Chinese government in 1958. However, even in the 1960s the Chinese government’s Foreign Languages Press published its English translations in Wade-Giles (e.g., “Mao Tse-Tung”). Pinyin was adopted by the International Organization for Standardization in 1979.

Pinyin is sometimes written with accent marks, indicating which of five tones is used for the syllable. The tones are high, rising, falling, falling then rising, and flat. The tone changes the meaning of a word. For example, the word for “horse” is pronounced “ma,” with a falling then rising tone. If “ma” is pronounced with an even, high tone, then it means “mother.” So, the meaning of “ma” in pinyin must be discerned from its context.

Even with tone marks, there are vast number of homonyms in Chinese. Mao had wanted to totally replace the Chinese characters with pinyin. He was eventually talked out of the idea because the number of homonyms would make a pinyin-only language unintelligible.

3. While the written characters are understandable to anyone who is literate in “Chinese,” the spoken languages (e.g., Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka) are so different as to often be mutually unintelligible. This is one reason why the written language has been so important in Chinese history. Many ethnic minorities in China have their own language, such as Tibetan or Mongolian.

Today, the official version of Chinese (in both China and Taiwan) is Mandarin, a version native to Beijing. Mandarin is a *lingua franca* in much of Southeast Asia—commonly spoken as a second language to allow communication among people who have different first languages, just as French was in Europe in the eighteenth century, or English is in Europe today.

In the 1950s, Mao replaced traditional written Chinese with a simplified version. For example, the traditional character for “horse” is 馬, and the simplified character is 马. The former looks more like a horse (in profile, facing left, with a flowing mane) while the latter is easier to write. Today, simplified Chinese is standard in China, Indonesia, and Malaysia, while the traditional version predominates in other overseas Chinese communities, as well as in Hong Kong and Macau. In simplifying complex characters. Mao was following the example of his model, the First Emperor, who is discussed *infra*. See Jonathan Clements, *The First Emperor of China* 81-82 (2015).

Pinyin is the standard means to type Chinese on computers. Helen Wang, Chairman Mao Badges, Symbols and Slogans of the Cultural Revolution vii (2008).⁴

Today, Chinese scholarly articles often have a double title: one in Chinese characters, and a second title in pinyin. Knowing the pinyin is important for researchers because English translations of Chinese characters are not necessarily exact. For example, the slogan that launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966 has been accurately translated as “Destroy all monsters and demons” or “Destroy all freaks and monsters.” But the literal translation is “Sweep away all ox-ghosts and snake-spirits”—a widely understood reference to monsters from traditional Chinese folk beliefs. By knowing the pinyin version of the phrase, *hengsao yiqie niuguai sheshen*, the scholar can better find sources that address the usage of this slogan.

Like classical Latin and Greek, Chinese characters are written without spaces between the words. For example, “combat and prevent revisionism” is 打击和防止修正主义. Many Chinese words are compounds. As a result, the romanized versions of any given Chinese phrase sometimes differ in where spaces are inserted. “Hundred Year Tide” can be Bai nian chao, Bainan Chao, or Bainianchao.

Regions, Governments, and Peoples

China’s land mass is slightly larger than the United States. In China today there are 22 provinces, five autonomous regions (similar to a province, and with little real autonomy), four “municipalities under the direct administration of central government,” and “special administrative regions” for Hong Kong and Macau.⁵ The number of provinces has changed over the years. Provinces and autonomous regions are subdivided into counties.

Over 90 percent of the population of China is Han—that is, the ethnic group whose traditional language is Chinese. The rest of the population consists of many different minority groups. Those best known internationally are in the far west autonomous regions: Tibetans are in the southwest; Uyghurs and other Muslims live mainly in the northwestern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. There are also Mongols, mainly in the province of Inner Mongolia (adjacent to the nation of Mongolia, which was once China’s “Outer Mongolia”). There are many other ethnic or tribal groups, especially in border or western areas.

4. This British Museum Research Publication includes excellent full text compendia of Chinese communist songs, slogans, and other cultural material, with full texts in English, pinyin, and Chinese.

5. Hong Kong and Macau had been administered by the British and Portuguese, respectively. In 1999, both cities were reverted to China. Mao or his successors easily could have conquered either city rather than waiting for reversion, but the cities provided the CCP regime with a useful entrée into global financial and commercial trade.

6. Because of Han immigration, [Inner Mongolia is now](#) 17 percent Mongol, 79 percent Han, 2 percent Manchu, with the remainder Hui, Daur, or other.

Manchuria was on the far side of the Great Wall, and not part of China, but in 1644 a Chinese general let a Manchu army pass through; he then joined the Manchus in conquering China, establishing the Manchu Dynasty. In the twentieth century, Han migration to Manchuria and intermarriage with Manchus has mostly ended the Manchus as a distinct group. Only a few hundred people today speak Manchu.

The traditional Han regions are sometimes called “China proper.” Today, Han immigration to Inner Mongolia and Manchuria (named for their respective native groups) has made Han residents the large majority there.⁶ A similar process is underway, with government encouragement, in Tibet and Xinjiang.

Short List of Sources

Because this essay is long, below is a list of some sources that are cited in multiple subsections:

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Ralph A. Thaxton, Jr., *Catastrophe and Contention in Rural China: Mao's Great Leap Forward: Famine and the Origins of Righteous Resistance in Da Fo Village* (2008).
Anne F. Thurston, *Enemies of the People: The Ordeal of the Intellectuals in China's Great Cultural Revolution* (1987).
Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics: Party-Army Relations in Mao's China* (2018).

b. Mass Murder in China 1900-49

Before the twentieth century, China had not been immune from democide. For the 2,500 years before 1900 A.D., Professor Rummel estimates total Chinese democide to be about 34 million, perhaps as high as 90 million; this does not include the many millions killed by the Mongols who conquered China in the

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900*, at 59-60 (2017) (1994).

Killings greatly increased in the first half of the twentieth century. Partly because foreign powers were extracting more and more concessions from China, the decrepit Manchu Dynasty was overthrown in 1911 with relatively little violence.⁷ The Republic of China was proclaimed on January 1, 1912. Within a few years, much of China was in the hands of regional warlords—some of whom treated people decently and many who did not.

By 1928, the government of the Republic had suppressed most of the warlords and reunified China proper. The reunification did not encompass Central Asian regions where the Chinese Empire and the Republic claimed sovereignty, such as Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang (sometimes called Eastern Turkestan).

From 1928 onward, the Republic of China was ruled by General Chiang Kai-Shek (pinyin Jiang Jieshi; also Chiang Chung-cheng, Chiang Chieh-shih). He led the Nationalist Party, the *Kuomintang* (pinyin *Guomindang*).⁸

On August 1, 1927, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP, *Zhongguo Gongchandang*) began a violent effort to overthrow the Republic of China. On August 7, Mao wrote a report explaining why violence was necessary: “From now on, we should pay the greatest attention to military affairs. We must know that political power is obtained from the barrel of the gun.” Jonathan D. Spence, *Mao Zedong: A Life* 75 (2006) (1999). Initially, the CCP revolutionaries had little success.

Japan invaded China in 1931 and set up a puppet state called Manchuko. It comprised Manchuria (an industrialized region in the northeast) and part of Inner Mongolia (bordering the nation of Mongolia). The former boy emperor from the Manchu Dynasty was installed as the nominal ruler of Manchuko.

After disastrous defeats by the Republican government, the communists in 1934-35 retreated in arduous long marches (*chang zheng*) searching for a new base. A hundred thousand communists had begun the retreat, but only eight thousand arrived at the ultimate destination: an isolated plateau in the north-central mountains, Yen’an (Yan’an), Shaanxi province. During the retreat and then while living in caves at Yen’an, they considered the causes of their failures thus far.

At the beginning of the revolution, Mao was a leader in his home province of Hunan, and later in neighboring Jiangxi (both in the southeast). He ascended in party rank and influence during the retreat. By 1936 he was named Chairman of the Communist Military Council.⁹

7. The Manchu Dynasty is also called the Qing Dynasty (pinyin) or Ching Dynasty (Wade-Giles.) The Manchus came from Manchuria and reigned from 1644 to 1911. The Manchu/Qing/Ching Dynasty should not be confused with the Qin/Chin Dynasty, which briefly ruled in the third century B.C., and is discussed *infra*.

8. Taiwan uses Wade-Giles for certain historical names associated with Taiwan, and this essay follows that practice. Chiang Kai-Shek ruled Taiwan from 1945 until his death in 1975. Today, the Kuomintang (KMT) is one of the two major political parties in Taiwan.

9. Spence, *Mao Zedong*, at 89.

In Yen-an, the communists “introduced a major cause of mortality by banning firearms. Wolves sauntered into people’s front yards, and leopards roamed freely in the hills.” To keep livestock safe, people had to bring them into their homes, which was unhygienic and spread disease. “Access to game as food was also strangled by the firearms ban.” Under the communists in Yen-an, “[c]ontrol of guns was watertight.” Jung Chang & Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* 278 & n.* (2005).¹⁰

Maoist Arms Philosophy

Mao elaborated his arms policy in a 1938 speech:

Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party. Yet, having guns, we can create Party organizations, as witness the powerful Party organizations which the Eighth Route Army has created in northern China.¹¹ We can also create cadres, create schools, create culture, create mass movements. Everything in Yen-an has been created by having guns. All things grow out of the barrel of a gun. (*Qiangganzi limian chu zhengquan.*) According to the Marxist theory of the state, the army is the chief component of state power. Whoever wants to seize and retain state power must have a strong army. Some people ridicule us as advocates of the “omnipotence of war.” Yes, we are advocates of the omnipotence of revolutionary war; that is good, not bad, it is Marxist. The guns of the Russian Communist Party created socialism. We shall create a democratic republic. Experience in the class struggle in the era of imperialism teaches us that it is only by the power of the gun that the working class and the labouring masses can defeat the armed bourgeoisie and landlords; in this sense we may say that only with guns

10. The Chang and Halliday book is critiqued by some scholars who argue that it is too one-sided in its portrayal of Mao. See *Was Mao Really a Monster?: The Academic Response to Chang and Halliday’s “Mao: The Unknown Story”* (Gregor Benton & Lin Chun eds. 2013) (reprinting book reviews). Nothing in the Benton and Chun book casts doubt on any facts from Chang and Halliday that are presented in this essay. The essays in *Was Mao Really a Monster?* are of uneven quality. Some persuasively show that certain incidents described in Chang and Halliday have weak documentation or involve shortened quotes for which the longer quote provides a less-damning context. Some essays accurately point out that Chang and Halliday’s relentlessly hostile treatment of Mao’s personality and abilities make it difficult for the reader to understand how Mao was so effective in accumulating so much power. Other essays are weak defenses by Mao apologists—such as arguments that comparing Hitler to Mao is unfair because, although Mao’s regime was even more lethal than Hitler’s, Mao’s foreign policy was much less militarily aggressive. According to the editors, “it is also unacceptable to put Mao at the top of a league of modern atrocities without due regard for historical perspective, given that the twentieth century is littered with such tragedies and evils.” Gregor Benton & Lin Chun, *Introduction*, in *Id.* at 9. The editors are correct in pointing out that Mao was hardly the only person in the twentieth century who murdered millions. See online Ch. 18.D; Section D.2.

11. [When the Communists and Nationalists formed a unified front to fight the Japanese in 1937, the communists’ Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army was renamed the Eighth Route Army.—Eds]

can the whole world be transformed. We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun.

Problems of War and Strategy (Nov. 6, 1938) (*Zhanzheng he zhanlü wenti*). In 1943, Mao was named Chairman of the CCP.

According to the CCP's arms philosophy, communists should not be content with winning elections and participating in parliamentary government. Communists should use guns to "break" and "smash" parliament and the existing state. The new communist state should be a "dictatorship of the proletariat" or "democratic dictatorship." This was defined as absolute rule by the top leadership of the communist party. As Mao and Marx had said, the army is the chief component of communist state power. So the dictatorship would rely on "a people's army armed with Marxist-Leninist ideology." The army could "deal with any complicated situation," foreign or domestic, and safeguard the state. Editorial Departments of People's Daily, Red Flag, and Liberation Army Daily, [Long Live the Victory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—In Commemoration of the Centenary of the Paris Commune](#) (1971).

Throughout Mao's regime, from 1949 to 1976, command of the gun would be at the center of politics—sometimes in complex and surprising ways.

The Sino-Japanese War

In 1937, Japan attacked the rest of China, eventually conquering most of the Pacific Coast and a considerable amount of inland territory. The Republicans and communists agreed to a unified front in fighting Japan. Accordingly, the communist armed forces were legitimated.

During the 1937-45 Sino-Japanese War and then in the 1945-49 revolution, Mao was a brilliant strategist of guerilla warfare. He synthesized classic Chinese military works such as Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, Chinese history, and literature, and applied them to modern conditions. He was willing to retreat and give up substantial territory rather than directly confront a stronger enemy. The communists avoided battle except in circumstances where they had concentrated superior forces. Lin Biao, [Long Live the Victory of People's War: In Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of Victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japan](#) 33-34 (1965). In Mao's words, "we fight when we can win and move away when we can't." *Id.* at 36.

When the Japanese or the Nationalists were too strong to confront head on, the communist guerrillas used "sparrow warfare"—sudden hit-and-run raids by three or five guerillas. *See id.* at 33 n.1.

For arms, the communists relied mainly on captured arms from the enemy, and to a lesser degree on making their own. *Id.* at 40-41. *See also* Li Ting, *Militia of Communist China 49-79* (1954) (describing militia tactics in the Sino-Japanese War and noting the communists' nonchalance about vast numbers of militia deaths from poorly planned projects, such as underground tunnels).¹²

12. In the early years of the Sino-Japanese war, the communist militia had only "native-made" guns, cannons, and "red tassel" spears. A few had grenades or crude rifles provided by the communist army. Later, the militia began to manufacture its own single-shot muskets ("one-horn bulls"), ammunition, and explosives. The muskets had a very short range; the ammunition often did not work; and the mines, manufactured from pig iron, had little effect. Li, *Militia*, at 52-54.

Mao knew how to use temporary truces and promises of conciliation to stop the fighting when conditions were unfavorable. He employed the lull in combat to build strength for the next offensive. As he put it, “Talk talk, fight fight, talk talk, fight fight” (*ta ta, tan tan, ta ta, tan tan*). Valentin Chu, *Ta Ta, Tan Tan: The Inside Story of Communist China* 15 (1963).¹³ Mao adroitly used similar tactics in politics.

For eight years the Nationalist government and the CCP cooperated, somewhat, in fighting the Japanese. After Nazi Germany surrendered in May 1945, ending World War II in Europe, the Soviet Army expelled the Japanese from Manchuria. The Soviet Red Army gave the Japanese arms to the Chinese Communists. Manchuria’s industry was dismantled and shipped to the Soviet Union. Civil war resumed between the Communists and Nationalists. The revolutionaries triumphed in 1949, bringing Mao Zedong to power.

According to the official CCP version of history, revolutionaries “with only their bare hands at the outset . . . beginning with only primitive swords, spears, rifles and hand-grenades” had defeated the ruling classes who were “armed to the teeth. The poorly armed have defeated the better armed.” The self-taught amateurs had vanquished the graduates of the military academies. Lin, at 59.

Democide Totals in China 1900-49

Rummel estimates 8,963,000 battlefield deaths from the various wars. The figure includes civilians killed during the course of battle, such as artillery shelling of a city occupied by enemy troops. The battle deaths for China in 1900-49 were about equal to all the battle deaths in World War I. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 12 tbl. 1.1.

Rummel does not count battlefield deaths in his definition of democide. As discussed in Section D.2.b, genocide is one type of democide. The Genocide Convention covers mass murder because of religion, race, or ethnicity, but does not cover mass murder based on economic class, politics, and so on. Rummel coined the word *democide* to cover all noncombat mass murders by government, regardless of motive.

For pre-1949 Chinese democide by the various forces, Rummel counts 3,949,000 by the Japanese; 3,466,000 by the Communists (in areas they controlled); and 10,215,000 by the Nationalists. Adding in the smaller number of mass killings by the warlords and the pre-1928 central governments produces a democide total of 18,645,000 from 1900 to Oct. 1, 1949. *Id.*

The democide in China in the first half of the twentieth century was enormous; the 18.6 million victims were nearly as many as the 21 million victims of Hitler’s European democide. (Again, battle deaths are not included either total.) *Id.* at 10.

During the first half of the twentieth century, no single group had absolute power throughout China. After 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) did

13. Likewise, “[t]he enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue.” Mao Tse-Tung, *A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire*, 1 Mao Tse-Tung, *Selected Works* 124 (1965) (letter by Mao of Jan. 5, 1930) (*Xingxing shi huo keyi liaoyuan*).

hold absolute power, personified by party Chairman Mao Zedong. In the 27 years of Mao's reign, mass murder skyrocketed, resulting in the deaths of 86 million. Mao in a quarter-century murdered nearly five times as many people as had all the governments of the previous half-century combined.

c. The Communists Seize Power

In 1949, the communists defeated the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-Shek, which fled to Taiwan.¹⁴ The communists "promised each disaffected group what it wanted most: land for the farmers, independence for all minorities, freedom for intellectuals, protection of private property for businessmen, higher living standards for the workers." Frank Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962-1976*, at 119 (2016). The People's Republic of China was proclaimed on October 1, 1949. Although the Nationalists still held substantial territory, by the end of the year, they had been defeated everywhere but the far south.

Mao had proclaimed the People's Republic while standing at a rostrum on Tiananmen (Heavenly Peace) Gate, the northern entrance to the old imperial government complexes in Beijing. The Tiananmen area was large enough for a crowd of tens of thousands, and earlier in the century had been a site of several historic protests. The symbolism of Tiananmen was so powerful that on September 30, 1949, the day before the proclamation of the new government, the CCP leadership spent its time giving final approval to major renovation of the Tiananmen area. Buildings around the gate area would be razed, so that much larger crowds could gather to hear speeches by the CCP leadership. In an open area, at the opposite side from Tiananmen gate, there would be a huge obelisk monument of China's revolutionary martyrs. Tiananmen Gate and Mao became the leading symbols of the "New China." Wu Huh, *Tiananmen Square: A Political History of Monuments*, 35 *Representations* 84 (1991).

One of the new regime's "first acts" was "to confiscate weapons." Chang & Halliday, at 424. Homes were inspected to "search for forbidden items, from weapons to radios." Frank Dikötter, *The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution 1945-1957*, at 45-46 (2013); *see also id.* at 49, 118, 188, 239. Nongovernment newspapers were closed, and religious organizations suppressed or brought under state control. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 27; Chang & Halliday, at 327, 454-57.

Other restrictions were imposed more gradually. Starting in 1955-56, freedom of movement and of domicile were eliminated, via a household registration system (*hukou*). People were required to stay where they were registered, travel only when

14. For several decades, the Chiang regime (Republic of China) and the Mao regime (People's Republic of China) mutually purported that China and Taiwan were part of the same polity, with the only dispute being who was the legitimate ruler of both. The claims were historically and legally dubious in light of Taiwan's separation from China during all but four years of the twentieth century, during most of the long history of previous centuries, and Taiwan's current independence under modern standards of international law. *See* Pasha L. Hsieh, *An Unrecognized State in Foreign and International Courts: The Case of the Republic of China on Taiwan*, 28 *Mich. J. Int'l L.* 765 (2007); Parris Chang & Kok-ui Lim, *Taiwan's Case for United Nations Membership*, 1 *UCLA J. Int'l L. & Foreign Aff.* 393 (1996).

issued a permit, register when staying somewhere else overnight, register house guests and report on the content of conversations with the guests, allow home inspections at any time, purchase food only with government issued food coupons, and purchase anything only from government authorized stores. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 233.

Peasants and their children had to remain in their villages forever. A starving peasant was forbidden to leave his or her village and try to find work in a city. Mao was following the feudal example of Stalin, who the 1930s had de facto reimposed the old Russian system of serfdom, by tying peasants and their children to land they did not own.¹⁵ "Everything that stood between the state and the individual had been eliminated. . . ." Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 119.

The Mao regime was not based on formal law. Mao told the very sympathetic American journalist Edgar Snow, "We don't really know what is meant by law, because we have never paid any attention to it!" Li Cheng-Chung, *The Question of Human Rights on China Mainland* 12 (1979) (statement to Edgar Snow 1961).¹⁶

In contrast to the Hitler regime, which issued many statutes and regulations, the Mao system relied mainly on edicts from the communist leadership, the Party Center. There were many exhortative propaganda campaigns based on slogans. See Yang Su, *Collective Killings in Rural China During the Cultural Revolution* 156-87 (2011) (showing how Mao followed Marxist-Leninist precepts for abolishing a neutral system of law);¹⁷ Jay Simkin, Aaron Zelman & Alan M. Rice, *Lethal Laws: Gun Control Is the Key to Genocide* 55 (1994) (on an annual basis, the Nazis issued

15. Russian serfdom had been abolished by Czar Alexander II in 1861.

16. According to legend, Lenin once said that Western intellectuals who supported communism were "useful idiots." However, there is no evidence that Lenin said such a thing. See William Safire, *On Language: Useful Idiots of the West*, N.Y. Times, Apr. 12, 1987. Nevertheless, useful idiots do exist. Perhaps the most useful idiot of the twentieth century was Edgar Snow, an American journalist who traveled to Mao's guerilla headquarters in the 1930s, and penned a hagiography, *Red Star Over China* (1938). He portrayed Mao as a democratic agrarian reformer who was "quite free from symptoms of megalomania." *Id.* at 74. Snow's book drastically distorted Western understanding of Mao and his aims. Jonathan D. Spence, *Portrait of a Monster*, N.Y. Rev. Books (Nov. 3, 2005). The Chinese language translation of Snow's book had a similar effect in China.

For examination of the phenomenon of useful idiots for tyrants, see Paul Hollander, *From Benito Mussolini to Hugo Chavez: Intellectuals and a Century of Political Hero Worship* (2016).

17. In Leninist theory, a communist state would be a "dictatorship of the proletariat" led by a "vanguard" of communist intellectuals. "The scientific concept of dictatorship means nothing else but this: power without limit, resting directly upon force, restrained by no laws, absolutely unrestricted by rules." George Leggett, *The Cheka: Lenin's Political Police* 186 (1981) (citing 41 V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [Collected Works] 383 (1958-66) (58 vols.) (from Oct. 1920)). Lenin and his party purported to be acting on behalf of proletarians, and especially of the Soviets (democratically elected worker's councils). But as Lenin and his minions well knew, the workers and Soviets overwhelmingly opposed his totalitarian dictatorship. Under Leninism, totalitarianism is called "democratic" because it supposedly benefits noncommunist workers who do not realize their true interests in being communized. See generally, V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1917); V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?* (1901-02); Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (1990).

laws and regulations at 2.5 times the rate of the preceding democratic Weimar government).¹⁸

As legal knowledge was destroyed, the courts devolved to administrative processing units for predetermined sentences. Courts ceased to exist as finders of fact. Entirely under the thumb of the CCP, judges merely pronounced the severe sentences that CCP cadres had already decided. (A “cadre” is a government or communist party employee.) In cases where the law was not clear, judges were required to follow the Central Party line. Chou Ching-Wen, *Ten Years of Storm: The True Story of the Communist Regime in China 139-44* (1973) (Lai Ming ed. & trans., 1960).¹⁹ According to the CCP official newspaper, *People’s Daily*, the accused were “presumed to be guilty. . . . Giving the accused the benefit of the doubt is a bourgeois weakness.” Chu, at 160.

The *People’s Daily* (*Renmin ribao*, *Jen Min Jih Pao*) was distributed nationally and read to peasants and workers in frequent, mandatory political instruction meetings, which often consumed the rest of the day after work. In effect, the latest article in the *People’s Daily* was the official source for people to learn how to behave without getting in trouble with the authorities. Chang & Halliday, at 525.

As for what was forbidden or mandatory, “[a]t the top, thirty to forty men made all the major decisions. Their power was personal, fluid, and dependent on their relations with Mao.” Andrew J. Nathan, *Foreword*, in Li Zhushui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao xi* (Tai Hung-Chao trans. 1994).

18. During the 1950s, there were some efforts to create normal legal codes, but these were abandoned once the Great Leap Forward into full communism began in 1958. An Act of February 20, 1951, outlawed counterrevolutionary activities; article 6 of the Act prohibited “[s]upplying domestic or foreign enemies with weapons, ammunition, or other war material.” An Act of October 22, 1957, article 7(1) declared hunting or fishing in prohibited places to be “disrupting public order.” See Simkin et al., at 193-227 (reproducing full Chinese text and English translation of the 1951 and 1957 statutes).

The 1951 act was first passed by the Committee on Political and Legal Affairs, and then by the full Government Administrative Council. Thereafter, Mao announced his approval. One member of the committee later regretted his support: “I never dreamed that the Regulations would bring about atrocities. . . .” Chow Ching-Wen, *Ten Years of Storm: The True Story of the Communist Regime in China* 107 (1973) (1960). The law was *ex post facto*, applying to actions from decades ago. *Id.* at 114-15.

19. The author was formerly President of Northeastern University, in Manchuria. Chow was appointed a member of the Committee on Political and Legal Affairs of the Government Administration Council—a high-ranking body. He eventually escaped to Hong Kong.

His political party was the China Democratic League, one of eight non-communist parties that had supported the revolution. After the revolution, they were nominally allowed to exist, although forbidden to enroll new members or to question what the communists were doing. Even the most submissive were persecuted during the Anti-Rightist movements of the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution. Li, *Human Rights*, at 19.

Noncommunists who collaborate with communists are known as “fellow travelers.” Once communists obtain power, fellow travelers are tolerated to the extent that communists consider them convenient.

d. The Great Terror

The new regime set out to exterminate political enemies, real and imaginary. There were plenty of real enemies. Nationalist insurgents were active for years after 1949. Su, at 216. In January through October 1950, there were 816 counterrevolutionary uprisings. Elizabeth J. Perry, *Patrolling the Revolution: Worker Militias, Citizenship, and the Modern Chinese State* 183 n.127 (2007) (citing public security statistics). In early 1951, Minister of Public Security Luo Ruiqing (Lo Jui-ching) reported that there had been over four hundred thousand organized revolts. Party cadres sent to work in the countryside were being killed—in some provinces by the thousands.²⁰

The possibility of an American or Nationalist invasion of China was heightened by the Korean War. The communist regime in North Korea had invaded South Korea in June 1950. By November, the North Korean regime was on the brink of defeat by the South Korean, U.S., and other armies that had responded to the United Nations' resolution authorizing use of force against North Korea. Then Mao invaded North Korea with an army of hundreds of thousands, in the greatest surprise attack on U.S. forces in history. The front see-sawed back and forth, and then stalemated near the South Korea/North Korea border, the 38th parallel. An armistice was signed in 1953, with the border slightly adjusted in South Korea's favor for better defensibility.

During the Korean War, Chinese military strength was built up in northeast China, as a staging area for Korea, and for defense against a possible United Nations invasion. Military strength was correspondingly reduced elsewhere in China, and therefore many people took the opportunity to revolt, hoping that Chiang Kai-Shek might use Korean War as an occasion to invade. Shih Ch'eng-chih, *People's Resistance in Mainland China, 1950-1955*, at 5-6 (1956). As of 1950, the Pentagon estimated that there were at most 600,000 guerillas in China, with about half of them loyal to Chiang Kai-Shek. William M. Leary, *Perilous Missions: Civil Air Transport and Covert Operations in Asia* 132-33 (2002).

Guangdong (Kwantung) province, on the southeast coast, had a rebel force of 40,000, divided into several hundred bands. Although the communists had confiscated tens of thousands of rifles, people apparently still had more. "Since it is so much easier to resist with arms than bare-handed, people in this part of the country were naturally more 'rebellious.'" Shih, at 15-17. Rebellion was also strong in Guanxi (Kwangsi) province, bordering Vietnam. The "self-defense organizations" were "sound and efficient"; 16 months of fighting left the rebels still in control of 9 border counties. *Id.* at 18-19. There were also 1951 revolts in Fujian (Fukian), the Chinese province nearest Taiwan, directly across the Taiwan Strait.²¹ In far-western Qinghai (Chinghai) province, which borders Tibet and Xinjiang, two underground armies were active. *Id.* at 21.

20. Chow, at 303-04. *See also* Li, *Militia*, at 35-37 (1954) (describing some early revolts).

21. According to the government, in early 1951, there was a 2,000-member counterrevolutionary force in Fujian. The army killed most of them, but 300 were able to hide in the forests and mountains. Shih, at 14-15.

The resistance through 1951 was defeated for five reasons: (1) lack of communication and command, thus preventing cooperation and making resistance groups vulnerable to being defeated by the army one at a time; (2) focus on sabotage to the exclusion of building relationships with the masses; (3) selection of targets not necessarily in the best interests of the people; (4) “[t]he anti-Communists could not carry out a long period of armed resistance because they were technically backward and short of modern weapons. Their materials[,] supplies and means of communication were poor and inefficient”; and (5) “[d]uring the ‘agrarian reform,’ most of the arms possessed by the people for self-defence were confiscated. Foodstuffs were severely controlled and movements of the peasants were closely watched.” *Id.* at 24-25.

Land Reform

Besides the resistance, there were many other people the new regime wanted to kill. In rural areas, “[t]he communists armed the poor, sometimes with guns, more often with pikes, sticks and hoes.” Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 66. Armed militia sealed off the towns. (The Maoist select militia is described *infra.*) Then the landlords and other class enemies were tortured and killed, mostly by being beaten to death, while some were shot. *Id.* at 66-67, 204; Chow, at 102 (listing “homicidal-maniac devices” of torturing victims to death); Li, *Militia*, at 111 (in Kiangsi province, militia captured five thousand landlords who had escaped) (citing Chiang Ji Pao, July 31, 1951). “By implicating a majority in the murder of a carefully designated minority, Mao managed to permanently link the people to the party.” Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 4.

The 1947-52 land reform murdered at least 1.5 million to 2 million people. Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 83. According to a report covering one of China’s seven administrative districts, 10 percent of peasants were classified as “rich peasants” or “landlords.” Of those, 15 percent were killed, 25 percent sent to slave labor camps, and the remainder put into local slave labor. This was consistent with Mao’s 1948 instruction that “one-tenth of the peasants would have to be destroyed.” Extrapolating the execution rate nationwide to China’s 500 million peasants implies 7,500,000 murders in the land reform. Professor Rummel suggests that “a reasonably conservative figure seems to be about 4,500,000 landlords, and relatively rich and better-off peasants killed.” Of the millions who were put into slave labor, many would not survive. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 223.

The land reform killings and persecutions served an additional purpose: the “gentry and relatively rich land owners . . . were a largely independent power base, historically moderating between peasants and the power of local governments.” *Id.* at 221. The organizing principle of Mao’s reign was eliminating everything impeding direct imposition of Mao’s will on the people.

Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries

Besides land reform, the other major killing campaign was “Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries.” During the Great Terror of 1950-51, communist party officials had orders to kill about one person per thousand population. Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 86, 97. Data from six provinces where records are available show that

from October 1950 to November 1951, the number of executions per thousand population ranged from a low of 1.24 to a high of 2.56. *Id.* at 99.

“Across the country people were tortured or beaten to death. A few were bayoneted and decapitated. But for the most part they were shot.”²² The communist executioners discovered that all the shootings created a lot of splatter, so they developed the technique of making the victim kneel, and then shooting him or her in the back of the head, making cleanup easier.²³ “The countryside echoed to the crack of the executioner’s bullet, as real and imaginary enemies were forced to kneel on makeshift platforms and executed from behind before the assembled villagers.” *Id.* at 92. In Zhejiang province (Chekiang, central coast), a quarter-million militia guarded roads to prevent escape from the terror.²⁴

Mass executions were often held in large venues with crowds ordered to attend and cheer. For example, in Beijing in a single year, there were 30,000 sentencing and execution rallies, with a cumulative audience in the millions.²⁵ “Mao made sure that much violence and humiliation was carried out in public, and he vastly increased the number of persecutors by getting his victims tormented and tortured by their own direct subordinates.” Chang & Halliday, at 523. According to a government official who later defected to Hong Kong, “The masses had no quarrel with those who were executed, yet they shouted and applauded the Government-sponsored massacre. I think in their hearts they must have been frightened.” Chow, at 113.

The mass hate and murder rallies made Mao “an innovative contributor to modern terrorism.” Rather than kidnapping political enemies and making them silently disappear, as Hitler often did, Mao used violence “in public humiliations, public interrogation under duress, public executions.”²⁶ Lowell Dittmer, *Pitfalls of Charisma, in Was Mao Really a Monster?*, at 72.

“The campaign of terror was over by the end of 1951, but the killings never really stopped.” Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 92. Overall, about 2 million people were executed in 1950-52. *Id.* at 100. Rummel estimates 3 million deaths for 1949-55. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 225. Another source reports that the communist militia alone killed 2.4 million alleged bandits (the regime’s euphemism for resistance forces) or secret agents in the regime’s first three years. Perry, at 183 n.129. Whatever the exact number, the fatalities more than doubled the previous record for mass shootings: the 1 million Jews and Roma (gypsies) machine-gunned by Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* in former Soviet areas in 1941-42. Section D.2.e.

22. *Id.* at 91.

23. *Id.* at 91-92.

24. *Id.* at 92.

25. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 224-25.

26. *Nacht und Nebel* (Night and Fog) was Hitler’s system that political opponents should be kidnapped and disappeared, so that their families would not know what happened to them. Such procedures were sometimes used by Mao. At the secret Qincheng prison outside Beijing, senior officials who had gotten on Mao’s wrong side were held in isolation, known only as a number, tortured, driven insane, and sometimes killed. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 255-56; Spence, *Mao Zedong*, at 162.

By comparison, the CCP's takeover of businesses during the 1950s was relatively peaceful, as business owners complied by pretending that they were gladly and voluntarily handing over their assets. For businessmen, executions were outnumbered by suicides—of which there were 5,000 just in Shanghai in the first half of 1952.²⁷

Family Destruction

The leading cause of suicide may have been the 1950 Fulfillment of New Marriage Law. It prohibited arranged marriages, which had been common in China. Such marriages were voided, regardless of whether the couple wished to stay together. Husbands and wives were coerced to denounce each other at public meetings. Rummel estimates half a million suicides and homicides, predominantly female, from the first four years of the marriage law.²⁸

Any new marriage by anyone required CCP consent. CCP officials forbade marriages between classes or between partners “attracted by each other’s good looks and not labor productivity.” Chu, at 128. (The new class system created by the CCP is described *infra*.) Marriage was harder, unilateral divorce very easy, and adultery legalized—all for the purpose of weakening the family as a social institution. *Id.* at 127-29. Romantic love and maternal love were denounced as selfish bourgeois egotism. The CCP’s first ambassador to Indonesia, Pa Jen, was purged for writing that love, the pursuit of happiness, and admiration for gallantry were “all things common to mankind.” To the contrary, the CCP informed him that “[t]here is fundamentally no such thing as sentiment common to mankind, nor as common human nature. . . . There is no such thing as ‘human love.’” *Id.* at 134.

The marriage law “brought virtually every person under party control, while severely weakening the traditional Chinese family as an independent source of power. All individuals stood alone, with nothing between them and the party.” Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 227 (internal quotation marks omitted).²⁹

Highly publicized persecutions of persons for writing private letters critical of the regime frightened people not to write down their thoughts. Punishment for expressing thoughts was one of many ways the regime “undermined people’s ability to form their own independent judgment.” Chang & Halliday, at 395-96; *see also*

27. Li, *Human Rights*, at 72 (citing *Tsingtao Weekly* (Hong Kong), July 2, 1952).

28. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 226-27.

29. Mao’s family destruction program was later emulated and exceeded by the Maoist Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia (1975-79). There, individuals’ names were replaced with numbers. Children were taken from their families to be raised by the state. Affection between husbands and wives was forbidden. For example, one escapee recounted that the government told him “the *chhlop* [spies] say that you call your wife ‘sweet.’ We have no ‘sweethearts’ here. That is forbidden.” R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900*, at 187 (2017) (1994). He was then imprisoned, tortured nearly to death, and one of his fingers was cut off. Haing Ngor, *A Cambodian Odyssey* 216-25 (1987); *see also* Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*, at 456-65 (3d ed. 2008); Pin Yathay, *Stay Alive, My Son* (1987); Martin Stuart-Fox with Bunheang Ung, *The Murderous Revolution: Life and Death in Pol Pot’s Kampuchea* (1985).

Chu, at 159 (describing government surveillance of private letters, to accumulate material for use against the writers later). The government kept a file on everyone, and no one knew the contents of one's file, or what might be used against one someday. People "burned the greater part of their privately-owned books for fear of being incriminated." Chow, at 271.

From October 1, 1949, through 1953, "the totalization of Chinese politics and society cost from 843,000 to 27,616,000 Chinese lives," not including battle deaths and famines; the best estimate is 8,427,000, or "fifteen people per every thousand." Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 233. On an annualized basis, the rate was 353 persons per 100,000 population. In the United States since 1900, the peak annual homicide rates in the worst years have been about 11 persons per 100,000.

Resistance in 1952

Land was given to the peasants, as Mao and the revolution had promised. But the government began to establish a monopsony on farm produce, requisitioning everything for itself. "[F]amished villagers turned against the party." Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 77. On top of that, many in the militia were tired of being forced to work relentlessly for the government. With immense casualties, they had fought the Sino-Japanese war and the 1945-49 revolution. Once land reform was accomplished, they wanted to enjoy their new land, instead of being forced into one mass labor project after another. *See* Li, *Militia*, at 112-27. There were thousands of incidents in which small groups of militia rebelled, sometimes fleeing into the mountains.³⁰ The government began programs to impose more political supervision on the militia, to root out those who were not subservient to the demands of the Party Center.³¹

A 1952 government report covering southwest China stated that in the previous three years, government forces had killed 120,000 "bandits" (i.e., rebels) and seized over 210,000 rifles.³²

Religion caused an April-June revolt that year in the far western Gansu (Kansu) province, Pingliang district. It was precipitated by confiscation of a mosque's land pursuant to land reform. The rebellion united the Hui (natives) and Han (Chinese settlers). It began with three dozen axes and swords made by a local blacksmith. Given the time it takes to manufacture such weapons, and the lack of privacy in communist China, the blacksmith's big order likely came to the attention of local communist cadres. Perhaps the cadres sympathized with the rebels and did not stop them from acquiring arms. The rebels captured Siki, the most important town in the area, notwithstanding the presence of several hundred police and security officials with firearms. The outcome indicates that some of the armed government employees stayed neutral or joined the rebels. The rebellion was ended with government promises of aid, and restoration of Muslim sites.³³

30. *Id.* at 136-37.

31. *Id.* at 121-41.

32. Shih, at 47-48.

33. Shih, at 40-45; Chu, at 200; Chow, at 304.

Fujian, the province nearest Taiwan, remained a trouble spot. In Guankou (Kwankow, a town within Xiamen City), 280 unarmed peasants, including some dismissed cadres, attacked several local government headquarters, killed cadres, and captured two rifles. Eventually confronted by the militia, the rebels resisted with “swords and spears; others were bare-handed, chanting liturgy and drawing spells and incantations.” Shih, at 26-36. For more on armed and unarmed rebellions in the first half of the 1950s, see Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 76-78, 85-86.

Most of the rebels of 1952 “were forced by poverty and starvation, and very few of them had any political idea.” Shih, at 51. “In 1952, after the open resisters were suppressed,” new movements were initiated to purge or intimidate potential allies of revolutionaries: Three Anti (against impure party cadres), Five Anti (against industrialists and merchants), and Thought Reform (against intellectuals, “to isolate the masses of people from their social leaders”). Shih, at 52.

The Anti campaigns were nominally to fight corruption, but in practice they intensified persecution of anyone who had even a trivial connection with the pre-1949 government.³⁴ Previously, such persons had been told that if they registered, they would not be persecuted. About 200,000 suicides resulted.³⁵

Thought Reform was aimed at intellectuals and others whose thoughts did not conform to the party line. Persons who had ever expressed non-communist thoughts, even decades ago, were forced to confess their errors and grovel for survival.³⁶ For example, according to the government, 6,188 university professors in Beijing (Peking) and Tianjin (Tientsin) accepted being ideologically remolded. As Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou (Canton), a hundred professors wrote confession letters of their errors and expressed their willingness to be reformed. Li, *Human Rights*, at 73.

At the same time “judicial reform” purged judicial officers and ensured that a puppet judiciary would never err on the side of lenience against dissidents.³⁷ “Under these adverse conditions, activities and resistance in 1952, though rampant indeed, could still not strike any fatal blow to the Red regime.” Shih, at 52.

e. The Socialist High Tide

Food Policy

In 1953, the government imposed a full monopsony on grain, initiating what Mao called the Socialist High Tide. A key purpose was to export grain to other

34. The Three Antis were “against corruption,” “against extravagance and waste,” and “against bureaucracy.” When the campaigns uncovered endemic corruption within the communist party (a typical condition of communist regimes), the regime pivoted to shift blame to the private enterprise that had been allowed to exist until then. Private business was targeted by the Five Anti campaign, against “bribery,” “tax evasion,” “theft of state property,” “malpractices and jerry-building,” and “theft of state economic information.” The Five Anti campaign was used to extort money from businesses, and thereafter, to coerce businesses to “voluntarily” surrender their property to the state. The process of converting major “state-private” enterprises into purely “state” was completed in 1956. Li, *Human Rights*, at 70-71, 75.

35. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 228; Chu, at 158-59.

36. Chow, at 124-39.

37. Shih, at 52.

nations, especially to pay the Soviet Union for military production technology.³⁸ Additionally, huge exports of food were sent to other communist nations, such as Poland, East Germany, and Albania, as Mao aimed to build his global influence. None of the recipient nations were prosperous, but all were much better off than China, where food shortages led to famine.

Farmers had to meet production quotas, which often were impossible based on the quality of their land. Peasants were put on a starvation diet, allowed only about half the calories necessary for basic health for persons engaged in relentless manual labor. The cities were where Mao was building heavy military industry and they were given priority for food. The state industry workers had their “iron rice bowl,” with enough food to at least stay productive on the job.³⁹

Within the CCP, there was a food chain for quantity and quality. The high ranks had personal cooks; the very highest had fine chefs and unlimited quantities of delicacies. Chow, at 181-83. “Except for the privileged class and its parasites, the people do not have enough to eat,” reported a high-ranking official who had defected to Hong Kong. *Id.* at xvii.

The highest priority for food was for the portly Chairman Mao himself.⁴⁰ The special Giant Mountain (*Jushan*) farm supplied fine foods daily to Mao and the others at the CCP apex. When Mao was away from Beijing, which was most of the time, daily airplanes delivered food from Jushan. The elite CCP leadership in the provinces had similar arrangements for special food, while the masses starved.⁴¹ Several years later, in the worst of the Great Leap Forward famine, even the top staff in the CCP’s Beijing headquarters, such as Mao’s personal doctor, were cut back to short rations and malnourished. As a gesture of solidarity, Mao gave up meat for the time being, which was a sacrifice considering his lifelong love of fatty pork.⁴² Like others in the Party Center, Mao, a heavy smoker, also enjoyed imported cigarettes.⁴³

As explained by a former vice-president of communist Yugoslavia, all communist governments eventually replace the old wealthy class with a new class of reactionary despots. Property that was nationalized in the name of “the people” becomes the property of the most privileged at the top of the inner party, the “all-powerful exploiters and masters.” See Milovan Djilas, *New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* 47 (1957); see also George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (1945).

Under Mao, the Gini coefficient (a measure of income equality) was excellent. Dittmer, at 72. The vast majority of Chinese lived in extreme poverty; those who were better off, such as urban factory workers, were still quite poor. Thus, extreme equality.

38. Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 216.

39. Spence, *Mao Zedong*, at 120.

40. As of 1956, aged 62, Mao was 5 feet, 10 inches, and weighed a little over 190 pounds. Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 81-82. This is considered “overweight,” about halfway between “normal weight” and “obese” according to the World Health Organization standards for the body mass index. He [grew fatter](#) in succeeding years.

41. Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 78-79, 128, 134-36.

42. *Id.* at 82, 339-40.

43. *Id.* at 67-68, 79.

Slave Labor

Incarceration of alleged ideological enemies had built a large prison population, most of which was put to work at slave labor. The slave labor camps, which are still in operation, were known as *laogai* camps. The word is short for *laodong gaizo*, reform through labor. The *laogai* camps past and present are based on the *gulags* of the Soviet Union and were set up with advice from Soviet experts. The theory is that hard and miserable labor would lead the prisoner to reform his or her thoughts, and thereby become willing to serve the state.⁴⁴ Every one of China's more than 2,000 counties had at least one *laogai* camp. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 229; cf. Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation* (Thomas P. Whitney & Harry Willetts trans. 1973-78) (multivolume description of the Soviet gulags under Lenin and Stalin, written by a former prisoner).

Under Mao, the *laogai* camp population stabilized at about 10 million. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 231-32. New slaves were sent to the camps to replace the dead ones. People could be sent to the *laogai* camps because of class background, political dissent, any sign of disrespect, "or for no reason at all. . . . [T]hey were exploited, worked, and treated as no slave master would treat his slaves (who were valuable personal property); to the Marxists . . . these forced laborers were only expendable, easily replaceable worker ants for the making of a utopia. Millions were worked to death . . . or succumbed to exposure, disease, malnutrition, or hunger." *Id.* at 214, 229.

Whereas the annual death rate in the Soviet *gulags* was 10 percent, the *laogai* camp death rate only reached that figure in 1959-62. Rummel estimates a 2 percent death rate for 1950-53, and 1 percent for 1954-58 and 1963-70. He suggests 2,125,000 *laogai* camp deaths in 1949-53. The total deaths in the *laogai* camps from 1949 to 1987 were 15,720,000. This includes 720,000 in the post-Mao period of 1976-87. *Id.* at 214, 231-32.

As detailed by the [Laogai Research Foundation](#), the slave labor system remains active in China to the present day, although with a lower death rate than under Mao, and with a new name since 1994 ("prisons"), due to international scrutiny. Many *laogai* camps produce slave labor goods for export.

Separately, a locally managed system of slave labor encompassed about 1 or 2 million more people who had gotten in trouble with the authorities, such as by talking back to a party cadre.⁴⁵ On top of that, peasants who had never gotten in trouble were also conscripted to labor on construction projects under savage conditions, including beatings for spending more than three minutes in the toilet.⁴⁶

Resistance in 1953-55

Many Chinese recognized that they were being enslaved, and there was massive resistance in many forms, including strikes, riots, and destruction of government property.⁴⁷

44. Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 242-48.

45. Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 248-49.

46. *Id.* at 249-53.

47. Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 218-19, 279-81.

Chinese newspapers in 1955 collectively reported on 26 counterrevolutionary groups operating in eight provinces. At least 12 of these must have been engaged in forcible resistance, since their names include military terms such as “battalion,” “army,” or “guerilla force.”⁴⁸

For armed resistance, many of the rebels’ arms and radios were supplied by airdrops from Taiwan. Suzanne Labin, *The Anthill: The Human Condition in Communist China* 358-59 (Edward Fitzgerald trans., Praeger 1960) (1st pub. in France as *La Condition Humaine en Chine Communiste* (1959)) (French journalist interviews with Chinese refugees in Hong Kong). One resistance leader said that 85 percent of their arms and radios came from Taiwan, the rest from raids on the communists.⁴⁹ In the early years of Taiwan aid to the Chinese resistance, the aircraft for supply deliveries were provided by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Kenneth Conboy & James Morrison, *The CIA’s Secret War in Tibet* 37-38 (2002). As of mid-1953, the U.S. National Security Council estimated that there were 70,000 guerillas loyal to Chiang operating in the PRC. *The Chargé in the Republic of China (Jones) to the Department of State*, June 18, 1953, in *14 Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1952-1954 China and Japan (Part 1)* 205, 209. The CCP, of course, worked vigorously to seize the contraband.⁵⁰

Even without modern arms, many people revolted. On the fourth anniversary of the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, October 1, 1953, over six thousand peasants rioted in Teng Xian county, Guangxi province (Tenghsien, Kwangsi, southeast coast, bordering Vietnam). They “fought bitterly with sickles and axes against communist troops for a whole week.” Shih, at 54-55 (quoting *People’s Resistance in Mainland China During the Past Year*, China Weekly (Hong Kong), Jan. 1954). There was similar uprising in Pingnan county, Fujian province. Shih, at 55. Farmers and miners rioted sporadically the summer of 1953 in Guangdong province. In Hubei (Hupeh, central China) province, many peasants abandoned their farms and joined guerillas in the mountains. Meanwhile in the northwest, the government reported killing three thousand rebels in Qinghai and Gansu (Kansu) from February to June. *Id.*

The revolting peasants were “practically unarmed (at most a part of them were carrying knives or wooden sticks).” *Id.* at 68. Their short-term successes indicate the local militia and cadres were sympathetic to their cause. *Id.* The 1953 uprisings were caused mainly by increased pace of collectivization. *Id.* at 70. In pastoral areas

48. Shih, at 98-99.

49. *Id.* at 350.

50. At a November 1955 Communist conference in Heilongjiang (Heilungkiang, northeast) province, the government reported the seizure in the last year from counterrevolutionaries of 2 light machine guns, 208 rifles and pistols, 9,105 round of ammunition, 13 grenades, 22 cattles of explosives, 9 radio transmitting and receiving sets, 97 Republic of China flags, and large quantities of anti-communist documents. Shih at 97-98. One Chinese catty equals about 1.3 pounds, although conversion rates vary.

In Hankou (Hankow, a large inland port, later merged into the city of Wuhan), the authorities put on an exhibition regarding “Counter-Revolutionary Activities.” On display were 172,769 anti-communist documents; 10,837 light arms; 525,402 rounds of ammunition; and 57 radio transmitters. Labin, at 359.

at least, the resistance forced the communists to back off from collectivization and allow private enterprise. *Id.* at 72-73.

People tried to manufacture arms for resistance. In 1954, the CCP discovered a secret “China Civil Administration Party” within the Penki Iron & Steel Company (today, Benxi Steel Group). At the time, not all private industry had been nationalized. The covert party was found in possession of tools and chemicals for manufacturing explosives and small pistols. They had already manufactured 200 grams of gunpowder and had blueprints for making radios. *Id.* at 79-81.

In 1954 there were revolts in Jiangsu (Kiangsu, east-central coast), with 51 leaders in more than 60 cities. Mainly engaged in robbery of government property, “[t]hey disguised themselves as jugglers, pedlars, fishermen, and menders of kitchen utensils, . . . seized pistols from Communist cadres and PLA [army] men who walked alone . . . and even attempted to sabotage railway communications and organized armed revolts.” *Id.* at 81-82 (quoting *People’s Daily*, Nov. 18, 1954). In the major city of Xuzhou (Hsuchow, northern Jiangsu), ten thousand peasants nearly “raided the Government granary, but were surrounded by troops and disarmed, and leaders subsequently executed.” Chow, at 304.⁵¹ Similar revolts were taking place elsewhere. *Id.*

Again, the CCP’s response to widespread discontent was further effort to prevent politically incorrect thinking. In 1955, a new campaign was launched to root out dissident thinkers: the Anti-Hu Feng Movement. Hu Feng was a Marxist literary intellectual who criticized the sterility of the literature that was allowed to be published under Mao. The campaign was expanded into a reign of terror against intellectuals. *Id.* at 147-58, 304-05; *Hu Feng*, in *Chinese Posters: Propaganda, Politics, History, Art*, chinese posters.net.

Xinjiang Resistance

In the far northwest, on the northern border of Tibet, is Xinjiang (Sinkiang). The Chinese name was coined in 1885 and means “new territory.” Xinjiang comprises a sixth of China’s land mass, but only 1 percent of its population. The native people are Muslim and Turkic, with ties to similar peoples in adjacent Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan. Among these Turks, the majority group are the Uyghurs (a/k/a Uighers). Independence advocates call Xinjiang “Eastern Turkestan.”

China’s Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) conquered Xinjiang in the first century A.D. and held it until the dynasty collapsed. China’s Tang Dynasty ruled Xinjiang in the first half of the seventh century. Xinjiang became part of the Mongol empire of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which also ruled China. In the mid-eighteenth century, the Manchu Dynasty (from Manchuria), which had previously conquered China, also conquered Xinjiang. There were several revolts,

51. Also in 1954, a rebel band operated in 17 counties in Hebei province (surrounding Beijing). Shih, at 74-76. A 1954 newspaper article admitted that since 1948 a rebel band had been operating in 19 counties in the northeast. The group likely included disillusioned cadres. *Id.* at 77-79.

including a 1865-77 interruption of Chinese rule. After the Manchus fell, Xinjiang was among the many areas that spun away from central control. *See* Christian Tyler, *Wild West China: The Untold Story of a Frontier Land* 24-87, 268-69 (2003).

During the chaotic 1940s, while the Chinese were busy fighting the Japanese and each other, the Russians made a play for influence in Xinjiang, helping to build up a local Nationalities Army. Seven of the ten districts of Xinjiang were ruled by a warlord who initially sided with the communists, and then switched in 1942 to support the Nationalists. The other three districts, adjacent to the Soviet Union, aligned with Stalin and declared themselves the independent East Turkestan Republic. *See* Allen S. Whiting & Sheng Shti-ts'ai, *Sinkiang: Pawn or Pivot* (1958) (containing analysis by Whiting, and autobiography by the former warlord); David D. Wang, *Clouds over Tianshan: Essays on Social Disturbance in Xinjiang in the 1940s* (1999).

When the communist People's Liberation Army (PLA, *zhongguo renmin jiefangjun*) showed up in 1949 and announced that it would take over the Nationalities Army, many people in Xinjiang were resentful. Whiting & Sheng, at 143. The Kazakh peoples were soon in rebellion against central control from China; they kept up the fighting until 1953, and in the meantime, many Kazakhs escaped to India, Afghanistan, or Turkey. *Id.* at 143-44.

In 1951, the Uyghurs joined forces with a cavalry division that had once been part of the Republic of China army. Eventually, the Chinese "People's Liberation Army" crushed them, but for a while they managed to establish a clandestine government. Chow, at 304; Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 239. In 1956, a revolt by 110,000 nomads in the west (not only Xinjiang) killed 800 communists. Chu, at 200. Within Xinjiang that year there were rebel attacks in ten counties. *Id.* The next year, a thousand western Muslims initiated a revolt that grew to thirty thousand; they captured 250 square miles of land, killed a thousand communists, and fought against two full divisions of the PLA that needed armored support. Then, many "evaporated into the deserts." *Id.*

When news of the 1959 Tibetan uprising, *infra*, reached Xinjiang, slave laborers revolted, with Chinese (Han), Hui, and Uyghur slaves joining together. "Many were massacred but a large number escaped into the wilderness." *Id.* As of 1960, guerillas in Xinjiang were said to be sixty thousand strong. A third of them had spontaneously revolted against the CCP; the rest were from the Russian-trained national minorities army. Although they were communists, their leaders were liquidated by the triumphant CCP, and so they fought back. Chow, at 306-07.

In 1990, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics broke up. The Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic became the independent nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Many people in Xinjiang believe that they too should be independent. The current conflict between imperialism and self-determination has led to continuing unrest, as briefly discussed in the final subsection of this essay.

f. Tibetan Resistance

During the 1950s, the greatest armed resistance to Mao's rule was in Tibet. "The Tibetan Revolt was a major international embarrassment for the Chinese and for Mao; it must be considered one of the factors in Mao's eclipse and in the

retrenchment policies of the early 1960s.” Warren W. Smith, *The Nationalities Policy of the Chinese Communist Party and the Socialist Transformation of Tibet, in Resistance and Reform in Tibet* 53, 67-68 (Robert Barnett & Shirin Akiner eds. 1994).

Section D.2.k presented a case study of Armenian and other Christian resistance to genocide in Turkey during World War I; the next section discussed Jewish resistance to the Holocaust during World War II. This section on Tibet provides the chapter’s third and final study of ethnic and religious groups’ armed resistance to genocide. Unlike the Ottoman Christians or the European Jews, Tibetans had a very strong and longstanding gun culture. They immediately recognized that orders to register or surrender their guns were orders to submit to imminent enslavement. Like the Christians and Jews, Tibet’s Buddhists and Muslims drew courage from faith to battle a great imperial worldly power. As you read this section, consider the differences and similarities of the challenges faced by twentieth-century genocide resisters—and the diverse strategies and tactics adopted by the resisters.

The Tibetan Section is lengthy, so if you wish to immediately continue with the history of China, skip to Section D.3.g.

Historically, Tibet comprised three large provinces: Kham (southeast), Amdo (northeast), and U-Tsang (west). Over half the Tibetan population lived in the two eastern provinces. The national capital is Lhasa, in U-Tsang.⁵² Kham and Amdo are often referred to as Eastern Tibet, while the U-Tsang area comprises most of Central Tibet. Central Tibet also includes Chamdo, the westernmost province of Kham. Resistance by the Khampos of Chamdo would help draw the rest of Central Tibet into the armed revolt against Chinese invaders.

Tibet had long exercised autonomy while acknowledging the suzerainty of another empire, either Mongol or Chinese. “Suzreainty” was a deliberately vague term. To the extent the meaning can be pinned down, it means nominal sovereignty over an internally autonomous or semi-independent state. Hugh Richardson, *High Peaks, Pure Earth: Collected Writings on Tibetan History and Culture* 625-30 (Michael Aris ed. 1998).

In the Tibetan view, this was a reciprocal priest-patron relationship. The Tibetans Buddhists, as priests, provided religious leadership, and the patrons helped to protect Tibet. The priest-patron model was reasonably accurate for Tibetan relations with the Mongols, who embraced the Buddhism they learned from the Tibetans. Notwithstanding Tibetan pride, priest-patron was not how the Chinese treated Sino-Tibetan relations, as the Chinese were disinclined to think they had anything to learn from mountain barbarians. All of Tibet was beyond China proper and the Great Wall. Supplying a foreign military presence in Central Tibet was especially difficult, resulting in de facto independence for long periods.⁵³

In the mid-eighteenth century, China’s Manchu Dynasty wrested much of Kham and Amdo from Tibet and held onto them until the dynasty fell in 1911. Melvyn C. Goldstein, *Change, Conflict and Continuity Among a Community of Nomadic*

52. The western-most part of Tibet is part of U-Tsang. It is less populous and more desolate than the rest of the Tibet. Lhasa is to the South and East of geographic center of U-Tsang.

53. Conboy & Morrison, at 2-3.

Pastoralists: A Case Study from Western Tibet, 1950-1990, in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, at 76, 77. After a failed 1905 uprising of Tibetans in China's Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, the Manchu Dynasty began a campaign to eradicate the Buddhist clergy, and to populate Tibetan areas with poor peasants from Sichuan. Heather Stoddard, *Tibetan Publications and National History*, in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, at 121, 124. In 1910, a bloodthirsty Chinese army led by Zhao Erfeng took over Lhasa and drove the thirteenth Dalai Lama into exile.

Whatever nominal allegiance Tibet thought it might owe to the Manchu Dynasty in Beijing, Tibet felt no obligation to the brand-new Republic of China.⁵⁴ On August 12, 1912, the Tibetans rose up and expelled the Chinese army.

During 1917-18, Tibet repelled an attack by the Republic of China, and then advanced into Tibetan ethnic areas formerly under Chinese control, reacquiring them in the 1918 Treaty of Rongbatsa. But in 1931-32, the Republic of China pushed the Tibet army back to the Yangtze (Tibetan *Drichu*) River. Premen Addy, *British and Indian Strategic Perceptions of Tibet*, in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, at 15, 28-29; Goldstein, at 85-88; Carole McGranahan, *From Simla to Rongbatsa: The British and the "Modern" Boundaries of Tibet*, 28 *Tibet J.* 39 (2003).

The most thorough attempt to delineate the Tibet-China-India borders based on historical practice was the 1914 [Simla Accord](#). In the three-way negotiations between Tibet, China, and British India, the Tibetans produced extensive documentary evidence for their claims, while the Chinese had bare assertion. *Id.* at 42. The Simla Accord divided Tibet into "Outer Tibet" (Central Tibet plus some of Eastern Tibet) and "Inner Tibet" (the rest of Eastern Tibet).⁵⁵ The parties recognized "the suzerainty of China" and also "autonomy" and "territorial integrity" of the "country" of Outer Tibet. Simla Accord, art. 2. China would not convert Tibet into a Chinese province, and Great Britain would not annex any portion of Tibet. *Id.* Neither China nor Great Britain would send troops into Tibet (with some small specified exceptions); neither would interfere with the civil administration of Outer Tibet by the "Tibetan Government in Lhasa." *Id.* arts. 3-4. As for Inner Tibet, "[n]othing in the present Convention shall be held to prejudice the existing rights of the Tibetan Government in Inner Tibet, which include the power to select and appoint the high priests of monasteries and to retain full control in all matters affecting religious institutions." *Id.* art. 9. A map attached to the treaty delineated the borders of Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. *Id.*

Although the three negotiating parties had agreed to the Simla Accord, the Chinese central government ultimately refused to ratify it because it wanted a different boundary, even though Simla had attempted to placate China by assigning to Inner Tibet many areas where Outer Tibet had the better claim. Tibet and Great Britain mutually agreed to adhere to the accord; they stated that China was debarred from enjoyment of the accord's benefits until China ratified it. McGranahan, *From Simla to Rongbatsa*, at 45-46.

54. Conboy & Morrison, at 3-4.

55. The terms "Inner Tibet" and "Outer Tibet" assume that China is the center. Indeed, the Chinese word for China, *Zhongguo* 中国, is literally "central state." Tibetans, however, thought their own land "the centre of the sphere of the gods." Samten G. Karmay, *Mountain Cults and National Identity in Tibet*, in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, at 112, 112.

Whatever the legal effects of the Simla Accord, the reality on the ground remained the same: “there was no modern boundary between Tibet and China; instead there were overlapping zones, open zones, and locally governed territories, both lay and monastic.” *Id.* at 40. Kham was “mostly under the local control of hereditary kings, chiefs, and lamas. . . .” *Id.* Tibetans and China did not think of the contested regions in the sense that European nation-states had defined their own borders—as exact lines where a nation enjoyed 100 percent sovereignty on its side, and no sovereignty on the other. The situation remained unchanged until the Chinese invasion that would come in 1949. *Id.* at 54.

Starting in 1931, the Japanese invasion distracted the Republic of China. “By the mid-1930s, most of Tibet was again enjoying de facto independence.” Conboy & Morrison, at 5.

As a practical matter, the Eastern Tibetans who lived within areas claimed by China or Tibet mostly governed themselves. Many were pastoralists or nomads. To the extent that they felt any allegiance to a faraway capital, it was to Lhasa, with whom they shared language and religion, and not to the more distant Beijing or Nanjing.⁵⁶ While always respectful of the Dalai Lama, Kham’s leaders did not necessarily feel responsible to the government in Lhasa. Carole McGranahan, *Tibet’s Cold War: The CIA and the Chushi Gangdrug Resistance 1956-1974*, 8 *J. Cold War Stud.* 102, 115-16 (2006); Jianglin Li, *Tibet in Agony: Lhasa 1959*, at 26-27 (2016).⁵⁷ Likewise, before communism was imposed, the Amdowas comprised hundreds of nomadic tribes, each with “its own army, temples, and laws.” *Id.* at 45. The Eastern Tibetans would contribute the greatest armed resistance to Maoist imperialism.

Today, the “[Tibet Autonomous Region](#),” formally created in 1965 by the People’s Republic of China, does not include vast areas of historic or ethnic Tibet. Most of Amdo has been transferred to China’s Qinghai province, plus a smaller part to Gansu.⁵⁸ While the Chamdo region of Kham is in the Tibet Autonomous Region, most of Kham is presently divided between China’s Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces. Tibetan ethnic areas constitute a quarter of the territory of the People’s Republic of China. Wang Xiaoqiang, *The Dispute Between Tibetans and the Han: When Will It Be Solved?*, in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, at 290, 292.⁵⁹

56. Beijing means “northern capital” and Nanjing (Nanking) means “southern capital.” Nanjing was the capital of the Republic of China from 1927-37 and 1945-49. Nanjing also had a long history as a capital during the various regional or national dynasties of the previous 2,500 years, most notably the Ming Dynasty of 1368-1644.

57. Kham consisted of 30 districts (*phayul*), governed by local kings, chiefs, or lamas. A few were governed by appointees from Lhasa or from the Chinese government in next-door Sichuan province. There was lots of banditry and feuding. Unlike much of Central Tibet, Kham’s land was not divided into large estates based around monasteries. McGranahan, *Tibet’s Cold War*, at 115-16.

58. Qinghai province was on the outer side of the Great Wall of China. The province consists of territories of Tibetans (almost all of Amdo, and some Kham) and of other minorities, including as Mongols and Kazakhs. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 45. The Eastern Tibet regions were assigned to Chinese provinces in 1956. McGranahan, *Simla to Rongbatsa*, at 51.

59. In the view of the Tibetan government in exile, Tibet consists of what the Chinese call the Tibet Autonomous Region, most of Qinghai province (including areas where Tibetans are mixed with other minorities); about half of Sichuan province; and part of Yunnan and Gansu provinces. Wang, at 292; Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 45 (also noting that the majority population in Qinghai as of 1950 was Han, concentrated in cities).

Tibetan identity has long been closely tied to Tibetan Buddhism (Vajrayana), which is distinct from the Hinyana (a/k/a Theravāda), Mahayana, or Zen sects of other nations.⁶⁰ While Buddhist scriptures are predominantly pacifist, they are not exclusively so. The martial arts were created by Buddhist teachers. Buddhist nations have employed armed force for self-defense as much as other nations. The core principle of Buddhism is *ahimsa*, compassion for the suffering of others. In the views of many Buddhists, including the present Dalai Lama,⁶¹ *ahimsa* permits the choice to reduce the suffering of others by using violence, including deadly force, against the persons causing the suffering. See David B. Kopel, *Self-defense in Asian Religions*, 2 Liberty L. Rev. 79 (2007).

Tibetan Buddhists were familiar with the martial example **Manjushri** (Manjushree, Manjusri), Bodhisattva of Wisdom. He had transformed himself in a successful mission to kill Death. Paintings depicted him with a holy book in one hand and a flaming sword in the other. Manjusri, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* 330 (Edward A. Irons ed. 2008).⁶² The sword cut through the roots of ignorance. Another bodhisattva, **Vajrapani**, pugnaciously defended embattled guardians of the Buddhist faith. Mikel Dunham, *Buddha's Warriors: The Story of the CIA-Backed Tibetan Freedom Fighters, the Chinese Invasion, and the Ultimate Fall of Tibet* 149 (2004); Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* (1962). The *Epic of King Gesar* told the historical (according to Tibetans) story of the great warrior king from days of yore who fought enemies of *dharma* (Buddhist teachings and the natural order of existence). *Dharma*, in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, at 156-57. "Tibetan history was littered with examples of monks taking up arms when Buddhism was perceived as being threatened. . . . [W]hen defending the faith, monks could be the most magnificent of soldiers," with a stamina and rigor fortified by the monastic lifestyle. Dunham, at 149.

Tibet is not exclusively Buddhist. There had long been a Muslim minority that was respected and religiously free. There were four mosques in Lhasa alone. The Bon religion arose around the tenth century and was persecuted as a rival to Buddhism. By the twentieth century, it existed mainly in eastern Tibet, well beyond Lhasa's control. *Bon religion*, in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, at 54-55.

The Dalai Lama's Proposal for Collective Defense

While Tibet was independent, the then-Dalai Lama, Thupten Gyatso (birth-name Choekyi Gyaltsen), proposed a Tibet-Nepal-Bhutan defense alliance, with

60. Unlike some other Buddhists, Tibetan Buddhists consider meat eating acceptable. Vegetarianism, in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* 543, 544 (Edward A. Irons ed. 2008).

61. "Dalai" is a Mongolian word for "oceanwide," and is used in the sense of "vast wisdom." "Lama" is Tibetan for "the superior one." "The word lama is equivalent to the Sanskrit/Indian title *guru*. Strictly speaking a *lama* has completed a three-year period of cultivation and need not necessarily be a monk who has taken the precepts. As is *guru*, the title *lama* is often used simply as a sign of respect." Titles and terms of address, Buddhist, in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, at 515.

62. A bodhisattva is an advanced being who chooses not to attain nirvana, but instead to stay in the material world to help other beings reach enlightenment. See Bodhisattva, in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, at 52.

military training for young men.⁶³ Although the Dalai Lama was head of state, much of the political power in Tibet's quasi-feudal theocracy was held by three large monasteries in Lhasa. Their armed monks, *dob-dobs*, outnumbered Tibet's tiny army and police. As military buildup would have required substantial taxes on the monasteries, the monasteries squashed the plan. Dunham, at 48-49. Nepal and Bhutan rejected the alliance proposal.

In a "Political Last Testament" in August 1932, the thirteenth Dalai Lama wrote:

Efficient and well-equipped troops must be stationed even on the minor frontiers bordering hostile forces. Such an army must be well-trained in warfare as a sure deterrent against any adversaries.

Furthermore, the present era is rampant with the [five forms of degeneration](#),⁶⁴ in particular the "red" ideology. [He then summarized communist abuses of Buddhism in Outer Mongolia.] In the future, this system will certainly be forced either from within or without on this land. . . . If, in such an event, we fail to defend our land, the holy lamas . . . will be eliminated without a trace of their names remaining. . . . Moreover, our political system . . . will be reduced to an empty name; my officials . . . will be subjugated like slaves to the enemy; and my people, subjected to fear and miseries, will be unable to endure day or night. Such an era will certainly come.

Roger E. McCarthy, *Tears of the Lotus: Accounts of Tibetan Resistance to the Chinese Invasion, 1950-1962*, at 37-38 (1997).⁶⁵

Would the defense system have saved Tibet? "I'm convinced it would have," said the current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso. Dalai Lama with Jean-Claude Carrière, *Violence and Compassion: Dialogues on Life Today* 149 (1996) (originally published in France as *La Fource du Bouddhisme* (1994)).

In the Tibetan Buddhist system, after the death of the Dalai Lama or the Panchen Lama (second-ranking), the people would wait until his reincarnated soul was discovered in a young boy.⁶⁶ The thirteenth Dalai Lama died in 1933; Lhamo

63. Most Tibetans do not employ family names.

64. [Degeneration of life-span (e.g., from homicide); degeneration of time (the quality of things such as grain); degeneration of disturbing emotions (less virtue); degeneration of views (decline of good views and increase of bad ones); degeneration of experience (health, intellect, etc.). See *Guru Yoga*, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche 50 (1999).—Eds.]

65. McCarthy was the creator of the CIA Tibetan Task Force. Dunham, at 193 n.7.

66. The current, fourteenth, Dalai Lama has stated that he may decide not to be reincarnated. His primary motivation seems to be the avoidance of communist interference in the selection process. The communist rulers of today's China, although officially atheist, have asserted authority over the "control and recognition of reincarnations." The Dalai Lama notes that the communist Chinese "are waiting for my death and will recognize a Fifteenth Dalai Lama of their choice." The Dalai Lama, [Reincarnation](#) (Sept. 24, 2011). After China declared that the next Dalai Lama's selection process "must comply with Chinese law," the current Dalai Lama replied, "In future, in case you see two Dalai Lamas come, one from here, in free country, one chosen by Chinese, then nobody will trust, nobody will respect [the one chosen by China]." Sophia Yan, [China Says Dalai Lama Reincarnation "Must Comply" with Chinese Laws](#), *The Telegraph*, Mar. 21, 2019.

Thondup was born in 1935. Identified as a possible Dalai Lama when he was a small child in a small Amdo village, he was enthroned in 1940, taking the religious name Tenzin Gyatso. Since Dalai Lamas were chosen in early childhood, there would always be a number of years before the child reached maturity and could assume leadership. In the interim, Tibet would be governed by a regency. As history demonstrates, regencies can be dangerous, because the government is often weak and subject to intrigues. After the death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, “the Tibetan Government, such as it was, appeared oblivious to the need for national reform to prepare for the challenges ahead.” Addy, at 35. The regent “allowed the military to decline, while lining his pockets at the expense of Tibetan economic surpluses.” Dunham, at 49.

Tibetan Arms Culture

Tibetans had a long tradition of being armed, but many of their firearms were flintlocks or matchlocks, which had long been obsolete. McCarthy, at 38; *Introduction, in Genocide in Tibet: A Study in Communist Aggression 3-4* (Rodney Gilbert ed. 1959).

Matchlocks are impossible to keep always-ready, ill-suited for long distance, poor for maintaining the user’s concealment, and quite slow to reload after the single shot. *See* Ch. 2.I (describing matchlocks, and their replacement by improved guns starting in the early seventeenth century). Flintlocks were better in all respects, but still far inferior to firearms invented since the mid-nineteenth century, which used metallic cartridges, and which were much faster to reload and more powerful. Chs. 3.E.2 (flintlocks), 5.E (mid-nineteenth century), 23.C.4.b. Tibet was economically backwards and had no firearms manufacturing industry. Tibetans could and did make their own swords and knives.

During World War II, Tibet stayed neutral, and did not authorize Allied arms shipments to the Republic of China’s army that was battling Japanese invasion. John Kenneth Knaus, *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival 5* (1999) (by former CIA Tibetan Task Force political officer). Nevertheless, wartime conditions tend to increase the gun supply, and Tibetans, especially in Kham, seem to have taken the opportunity to acquire a wide variety of modern firearms, some of them purchased in Burma and then imported.

Tibet’s formally organized military forces were small. As of the mid-1930s, Eastern Tibet had about ten thousand regulars and militia; half of them had modern British [Lee-Enfield](#) .303 bolt action rifles. In Lhasa there were under a thousand soldiers plus 300 armed police. In most of the nation, defense was provided only by militia armed with matchlocks. Military training in general was desultory.⁶⁷ On the eve of the communist invasion, “Tibet’s army—if you could call it that—was at most ten thousand troops with nineteenth century weapons.” Dunham, at 56.

Although many Tibetan firearms were inferior, Tibet’s arms culture was strong. High proficiency at riding, shooting, and swordsmanship were part of Tibetan identity, and the skills were learned early in childhood. Such skills had

67. McCarthy, at 38.

always been necessary for survival—whether for protection against bandits, or for hunting in an environment where neither game nor ammunition were abundant.⁶⁸

“Khampas were heavily armed,” skilled at brigandage, and “incomparable horsemen, hunters, and trackers.” Dunham, at 7. “Every self-respecting male owned at least one silver embellished pistol or rifle, even if it was nothing more than a flintlock. The poorest of beggars carried a sword or oversized knife hitched at his waist, and he knew how to use it.” *Id.* at 17. Wealthy families had arsenals. So did the monasteries, with their warrior monks, the *dob-dobs*. *Id.* at 146.

Man for man, the Tibetans were far superior to the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The Tibetans often inflicted casualties on the Chinese at about ten times the rate that the Chinese did on them.⁶⁹ Unlike the Tibetans, the Chinese were poor marksmen. While the PLA demanded unthinking obedience, the Tibetans knew how to think for themselves, to improvise and survive.⁷⁰ In combat, PLA officers did not lead their men, but instead stayed in the rear, to shoot those who tried to escape.⁷¹

According to a captured Chinese army document, PLA soldiers fired 20 bullets per Tibetan guerilla killed, whereas for Tibetans shooting at the PLA, the norm was one shot, one kill.⁷²

Moreover, the **average altitude** of Kham and Amdo is over 3,000 meters (about 10,000 feet), and even higher in Central Tibet. Tibetan physiology has evolved such that Tibetans breathe easily in very thin air, whereas invading lowlanders have a much more difficult time. See Conboy & Morrison, at 2; S.C. Erzurum, S. Ghosh, A.J. Janocha, W. Xu, S. Bauer, N.S. Bryan et al., *Higher Blood Flow and Circulating NO Products Offset High-Altitude Hypoxia Among Tibetans*, 104 Proc. Nat’l Acad. Sci. 17593 (2007); Cynthia M. Beall, *Two Routes to Functional Adaptation: Tibetan and Andean High-Altitude Natives*, 104 (supp. 1) Proc. Nat’l Acad. Sci. 8655 (2007).

Supported and sheltered by the Tibetan people, Tibet’s guerillas could hit, run, and disappear. “Many people think it impossible for guerrillas to exist for long in the enemy’s rear. Such a belief reveals lack of comprehension of the relationship that should exist between the people and the troops. The former may be likened to water the latter to the fish who inhabit it. How may it be said that these two cannot exist together? It is only undisciplined troops who make the people their enemies and who, like the fish out of its native element cannot live.” Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, ch. 6 (1937).

The Chinese Occupation of Eastern Tibet

In February 1949, Mao explained his Tibet policy to a leading Soviet official. Tibet, said Mao, would be easy to solve, but could not be rushed. “First transportation is poor in the region, making it difficult to move in large numbers of troops

68. McCarthy, at 248-49.

69. McCarthy, at 247.

70. *Id.* at 248-49.

71. *Id.* at 147.

72. Knaus, at 234.

and keep them supplied. Second, it takes longer to solve the ethnic questions in regions where religion holds sway. . . .” Li, *Tibet in Agony* at 23.⁷³

As the communists were winning the civil war in 1949, they began to enter Tibetan areas, some of which resisted immediately. In far southeastern Kham (China’s Yunnan province), the Tibetans of Gyalthang drove back a PLA attempt to enter their territory, although the PLA did move in later. Jamyang Norbu, *The Tibetan Resistance Movement and the Role of the C.I.A., in Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, at 186, 190.⁷⁴

Chinese troops entered Amdo (the Chinese province of Qinghai) in the summer of 1949. “Tibetan resistance was immediately aroused,” with “armed revolts in Choni, Nangra, and Trika.” Smith, at 63. By 1950, Chinese reinforcements had overwhelmed the rebels, so they left home to pursue guerilla warfare from the mountains. They were wiped out by even more reinforcements in 1953. Norbu, *The Tibetan Resistance Movement*, at 190-91. The early instances of resistance were exceptional. Most of Kham and Amdo initially accepted the arrival of the PLA. *Id.* at 191-92.

The first PLA had arrived in Kham in 1949 and a much larger number entered in March 1950.⁷⁵ They explained that they were just there temporarily to help the Tibetans and would leave thereafter. The troops were very polite, friendly, and helpful, and spent generously to boost local economies. They also worked on building roads. Even so, “[m]any people were buying British-made rifles from Datsedo [in Amdo] for their protection; in the Lithang area [in southeastern Kham] alone, about 1,500 were purchased.” Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang, *Four Rivers, Six Ranges: Reminiscences of the Resistance Movement in Tibet* 11-12 (1973).

Invasion of Central Tibet

Having peacefully built a road network in Eastern Tibet, Mao used it to invade Central Tibet in October 1950. The Tibetan defending commander had previously torn down defensive positions. He fecklessly forced the Tibetan army and the Kham militia into a chaotic retreat. Soon he deserted, after giving orders that an ammunition depot be destroyed, thereby crippling the fighters he left behind. He later became a public traitor, and perhaps was treasonous from the beginning. Three radio reports about the invasion were sent to Lhasa, but the central government did not respond, being busy with a five-day festival and picnic. The war was over

73. One reason Tibet did not have much of a road network was that the government opposed the use of motor vehicles, which were seen “as modern and anti-Tibetan.” Knaus, at 10 (quoting U.S. envoy to Tibet during World War II). The traditional lack of good roads ultimately helped the resistance. If Tibetans had grown accustomed to motor transport, they would have been reliant on imported fuel, and the Chinese could easily have cut off resistance access to fueling stations. Because the Tibetan resistance used horses rather than motor vehicles, their transport has ready access to local fuel derived from solar power—namely grass.

74. [Jamyang Norbu](#) was resistance fighter who later became a writer and historian.

75. Addy, at 40-41; Dunham, at 54.

in 11 days, with barely any resistance.⁷⁶ The Chinese army was now across Yangtze River, inside Central Tibet, in a Kham ethnic area known as Chamdo.⁷⁷

A better-prepared Tibet might have been able to turn back the 1950 invasion. The mountainous terrain and thin oxygen greatly favored the defenders. The Tibetans had very high motivation, especially compared to the PLA, who were de facto slaves. Tibetans were much better fighters, and far superior with firearms and swords. The Tibetans could have put up powerful and perhaps victorious resistance to the Chinese invasion in 1950, if only the government had put enough Tibetans in the field under a strong and unified command—and not a mere nine regiments led by an incipient traitor. The objective would have been to block the Chinese at mountain passes, rather than allowing the PLA to penetrate into the interior.⁷⁸

At the urging of the people and an oracle, the 15-year-old fourteenth Dalai Lama ended his regency and reluctantly took the reins of state in November 1950.⁷⁹ While he had an excellent religious education, he had been taught little about worldly affairs.⁸⁰

With Chamdo taken, the way to Lhasa was open for the PLA, but winter was coming, and so the PLA concentrated on more roadbuilding.⁸¹ According to Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang, a resistance leader later in the 1950s, *infra*, if the Khampas and Amdowas had united and if they had been given outside support, Tibetans could have prevented the completion of the PLA's road network and defeated the PLA.

But as usual, the government in Lhasa failed to take measures for national defense, for fear of provoking the Chinese. With the realities on the ground having changed since 1949, the Chinese coerced the Tibetan government into accepting the dictates of a “[Seventeen Point Agreement](#),” which the Tibetan National Assembly ratified in October 1951.

The agreement did nothing to protect Eastern Tibet. As for Central Tibet, the agreement promised “no compulsion” in changing the social, religious, or economic systems. On paper, this was solid protection against the communists’ “democratic reforms.” What the communists meant by “democratic reforms” for Tibet was the same as for China: confiscating all the land, crops, and livestock, and forcing everyone to labor for the government. Whatever the laborers produced belonged to the government, which would give back a portion to the producers. Civil society and religion would be eliminated.

For Central Tibet, the Seventeen Point Agreement promised no “democratic reform” without democratic consent. In return, Central Tibet acknowledged Chinese sovereignty. Many in the Lhasa government favored rejection of the Seventeen

76. *Id.* 68-79.

77. [Chamdo](#) is the easternmost prefecture of Central Tibet. The other Central Tibet prefectures are not mainly inhabited by Khampas. The prefectures are Ngari, Nagqu, Shigatse, Lhasa, Shanan, and Nyingchi.

78. McCarthy, at 249.

79. In Tibet, as in China, the Dalai Lama was considered 16 years old at the time. In both cultures, a newborn baby is said to be one year old.

80. Dunham, at 83.

81. *Id.* at 87-88.

Point Agreement, even though it would mean fighting sooner rather than later. As they knew, communist promises of fair dealing were expedient lies—like “honey spread on a sharp knife,” as a Tibetan saying put it.⁸²

The main proponents of ratifying the agreement were the aristocrats and the most powerful monasteries, because of Chinese promises that the aristocrats could keep their property and privileges. As the aristocrats later found out, their reprieve would only be temporary. To this day, the Chinese communists describe their invasion of Tibet as a liberation of serfs and peasants; to the contrary, the invasion was accomplished by communist collaboration with the most reactionary and selfish elements in Tibet. In both Eastern and Central Tibet, the Chinese quickly put many Tibetans on the Chinese payroll and enriched others with trade, forming a class of local collaborators and spies. Conboy & Morrison, at 24; Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 7, 11 (first Khampas in Derge to ally with the communists were the hereditary ruling class, whom the communists wooed), 123-24 (Lhasa).

Under the Seventeen Point Agreement, the PLA established a large army garrison right outside Lhasa. Loudspeakers were set up all over, so that in Lhasa, as elsewhere in the PRC, there was a relentless blare of communist propaganda.⁸³ Notwithstanding what the Seventeen Point Agreement promised, the Tibetan government was gradually rendered impotent, with only the Dalai Lama retaining some independence.⁸⁴

Initially, the Chinese did govern U-Tsang, and especially Lhasa, with a relatively light hand. The PLA recognized that its long-term occupation would require a strong logistical network. So while the communists rapidly built roads, they did not press their full program on Central Tibet.⁸⁵

Kham and Amdo, meanwhile, felt the full weight of communism: the same famines, slavery, totalitarianism, and destruction of civil society that characterized CCP rule in China proper. For Tibetans, the oppression was aggravated by the Han communists' sense of racial superiority.

Resistance in 1954-55

Next to the Khampas and Amdowas, the largest tribe in Eastern Tibet was the nomadic and fearless Goloks, based in southeast Amdo. Their name means “backwards head,” “rebel,” or “bellicosity.” Over the centuries, the Goloks had defeated Tibetan, Mongol, or Chinese governments that tried to tell them what to do.⁸⁶ After the PLA burned some Golok monasteries in 1954, the Goloks declared guerilla war, which they waged from the mountains, with substantial support from the monasteries. “They waited until the PLA was drawn deep into their traps and then they slaughtered the godless enemy to a man.”⁸⁷ The PLA sent Amdowa emissaries to try

82. Dunham, at 94.

83. Dunham, at 113.

84. *Id.* at 126-27.

85. Conboy & Morrison, at 24.

86. McCarthy, at 218; Dunham, at 141-42.

87. *Id.* at 142.

to convince the Goloks to give up their guns, but the Goloks “would die before they would submit to disarmament.”⁸⁸

In the spring of 1955, the Chinese completed their roads from Kham and Amdo to Lhasa. With a foundation of physical control established, the communists were ready to expand their control, via disarmament.⁸⁹

The “greatest miscalculation perpetrated by the Chinese was their not-so-subtle move for gun control.” Dunham, at 148. The CCP informed the Khampas that all their weapons must be registered. *Id.*

This was the last straw. No Khampa believed it would stop there. Overnight, guns were squirreled away. A Khampa’s gun was the quintessential component of his worth as a protector of his family, home, and religion—no possession was more jealously guarded. If the Chinese wanted the Khampas’ guns, they would have to fight for them. And that was exactly what many Khampas were in the mood for. No action so unified the Tibetans as the threat of disarmament. Tibetans who had seldom, if ever, joined forces with neighboring tribes, now met secretly to find ways to face the Chinese with a united front.

Id. Many monks who had taken vows of nonviolence went through the ceremony to be released from those vows, so they could join the resistance. *Id.*

In a Kham region of China’s Yunnan province, communists came to the Lithang (Litang) Monastery, the biggest monastery in all of Kham. The communists ordered that the monastery’s large arsenal be surrendered. When the lamas refused, they were dragged to the courtyard before the townspeople, who had been forced to watch at PLA gunpoint. The Chinese yelled that they had been trying to civilize the Tibetans for five years, but the Tibetans still acted like animals. So now the choice: White Road or Black Road. The former was peaceful surrender of arms. The latter road would be fighting the PLA and losing.

An elder lama stepped forward: “What is there to decide? Our own families will not give up what is theirs and has always been theirs. You Chinese did not give us our property. Our forefathers gave us our property. Why should we suddenly have to hand it over to you, as if it were yours in the first place?” *Id.* at 150. For the time being, the Chinese backed off.

1956: Kham Explodes

In 1956, the Chinese transferred almost all political power in Central Tibet to a new entity they controlled, the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet. The Central Tibetan national assembly and cabinet (*Kashag*) became nearly powerless. Gompo Tashi Andrugsang, *Four Rivers Six Ranges: Reminisces of the Resistance Movement in Tibet* 39 (1973). In Eastern Tibet, the pace for imposing communism was accelerated.

In the Golok territory, the PLA escalated its manpower to impose forcible disarmament. An 800-man PLA garrison was wiped out by Goloks and Muslims on

88. *Id.* at 142-43.

89. Conboy & Morrison, at 25.

horseback, armed with muzzleloaders and swords. Even more PLA came, and they burned more monasteries, stole the livestock, and slaughtered the women and children. The surviving men had lost everything, and they took to the hills vowing to fight the Chinese for the rest of their lives. The outside world knew nothing of the Golok revolt at the time. *Id.* at 155.

Further south, at the Lithang monastery, the communists attempted to arrest the lamas at the spring religious festival, but thousands of armed people assembled to protect the lamas and the monastery complex. The PLA shelled the monastery with artillery, and then sent in infantry. In fierce combat at close quarters, the PLA prevailed after the defenders ran out of ammunition. Finally, on March 29, the monastery was bombed by *Ilyushin-28 jets*, purchased from the Soviet Union. *Id.* at 160-65. Then the Chathreng monastery was bombed on April 2, and the Bathang monastery on April 7. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 321 n.42.⁹⁰

In the Nyarong region of Kham, the communists were going village to village to confiscate arms. After confiscation, the communists would hold “*struggle sessions*” (Tibetan, *thamzing*). Struggle sessions were pervasive wherever Mao reigned. Individuals would be brought before large group meetings that all locals were required to attend. The locals would be ordered to scream at the victims and denounce them for being counterrevolutionary, and sometimes to physically assault them. The victims would be required to confess to various sins. At the end, victims might be released, imprisoned, sent to a slave labor camp, or executed.

A revolt was planned for eighteenth day of the first moon in 1956. In the Upper Nyarong region of eastern Kham, the local chief and his elder wife had been summoned to a meeting by the Chinese, and so the younger wife, 25-year-old Dorje Yudon, had leadership responsibility for the first time in her life.⁹¹ “Dorje Yudon gathered her men and weapons and dispatched missives all over eastern Tibet, urging the people to rise against the Chinese. Dressed in a man’s robe and with a pistol strapped to her side, she rode before her warriors to do battle with the enemy. She ferociously attacked Chinese columns and outposts everywhere in Nyarong.” McCarthy, at 107; *see also* Norbu, *The Tibetan Resistance Movement*, at 192-93; Dunham, at 158-60. Dorje Yudon’s band of warriors numbered in the hundreds, and nearly four thousand people in the area joined the revolt, about 17 percent of the population, and including participants from the large majority of households. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 12-13.⁹²

Revolts were spreading all over Kham. In Ngaba (northwest Kham), three thousand rose up in 17 townships in March, and by May their numbers had

90. Earlier in the year, in Kham’s far southeastern Changtreng, monks and the people had driven off the Chinese. Dunham, at 155-56.

91. Polygamy (more than one wife) and polyandry (more than one husband) were long-standing customs in Tibet. Poly families in Tibet often consisted of one husband and two sisters, or one wife and two brothers.

92. Eventually, the PLA wore the Dorje Yudon group down to only 200, at which point Dorje Yudon escaped to India. Carole McGranahan, *Narrative Dispossession: Tibet and the Gendered Logics of Historical Possibility*, 52 *Comp. Stud. Soc. & Hist.* 768, 785 (2010) (based on interview with Dorje Yudon).

quadrupled.⁹³ Sixteen thousand rebels were in 18 counties of Garze (west Kham) by the end of March 1956.⁹⁴ “In early 1956, Chamdo, Lithang, Bathang, and Kantzu were temporarily overrun and the Chinese garrisons stationed there completely wiped out.” Six thousand Tibet irregulars “ranged freely from their mountain hide-outs, wreaking widespread havoc and destruction.” Andrugtsang, at 47.

Tibetans were not the only ones revolting. In Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, the Li minority in 1956 began “massive resistance in the form of a several-year guerilla war against the Communist mission.” Thomas Heberer, *Nationalities Conflict and Ethnicity in the People’s Republic of China, with Special Reference to the Yi in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture*, in [Perspectives on the Yi of Southwest China](#) 214, 215 (Stevan Harrell ed. 2001).

By the fall of 1956, tens of thousands of guerillas had arisen in Eastern Tibet. Many fighters had started with no knowledge of guerilla warfare. They were ordinary people who banded together and attacked the communists who were destroying their communities. As the rebellion continued, smaller guerilla groups formed. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 6, 24-25 (all of Chamdo revolting by fall 1956 because of land confiscation program begun in June). Some of the fighters called themselves the Volunteer Army to Defend Buddhism (Tib., *Tensung Dhanglang Magar*). Norbu, at 193.

Based in the mountains, the mounted guerilla Khampas, Amdowas, and Goloks burned Chinese outposts, destroyed Chinese garrisons, and raided western China. The PLA rushed in more soldiers, bringing the total force in Tibet to 150,000.⁹⁵ Guerilla organization was facilitated by Tibet’s six thousand monasteries, which functioned as the resistance’s information network.⁹⁶ The population helped with information, too; for example, when the PLA was nearby, village women warned the guerillas by hanging only red laundry out to dry.⁹⁷

“In thousands of square miles . . . no Han dared set foot without backup. Only the strongest Chinese bases were safe from attack.” PLA who rode more than a day from base were usually ambushed. On the road from Kham to Lhasa, PLA supply convoys had to travel in groups of 40 or 50 trucks, heavily guarded, advancing slowly for fear of ambush around every corner.⁹⁸ “[F]or a few months,” nearly all of Eastern Tibet was cleared of the PLA and CCP. Norbu, *The Tibetan Resistance Movement*, at 193. “By 1956, the PLA had, at best, wobbly control over the eastern province of Kham and, to a lesser extent, Amdo and Golok.” Dunham, at 5.

Tibet had been easy to conquer but was hard to rule.

In Lhasa lived a wealthy businessman, Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang (often called just “Gompo Tashi”).⁹⁹ He came from Lithang, Kham. Like many wealthy

93. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 13.

94. *Id.* at 11-12.

95. McCarthy, at 102-14.

96. Dunham, at 147. Radio communications would have been faster, but as of 1950, there were fewer than ten radios in all of Tibet. “Tibet’s lack of communication within the country and without was one of Mao’s greatest assets.” *Id.* at 60.

97. *Id.* at 168-69.

98. *Id.*

99. Also referred to as Andrug (or Andruk) Gompo Tashi, or Andrug Jindak. Andrugtsang was the family name. Many Tibetans do not use family names. The Andrugtsang family ran one of the four big international trading houses in Kham. Knaus, at 57-58.

Tibetans, he owned a large arsenal. As a teenager, he had served in a posse that captured mountain bandits; the experience made him very interested in firearms, hunting, and shooting. Andrugtsang, at 7-9; *see also id.* at 5 (youthful participation in riding and target shooting contests for the Tibetan New Year). During World War II, Gompo Tashi had purchased many modern firearms via Burma, Laos, and India. Dunham, at 39.

As refugees from Lithang arrived in Lhasa, they urged that more fighters be sent to Lithang. Gompo Tashi disagreed. In his view, it was time for businessmen to liquidate their assets and turn them into weapons and ammunition. People had already lost homes, families, and monasteries. There was nothing left to lose. It was time for Tibetans to unite, to create a central fighting force for the entire nation, not just for their native regions. In October 1956, Gompo Tashi began networking for an all-Tibet army. *Id.* at 173-74, 183. He soon sent emissaries to Eastern Tibet; ostensibly they were on a business trip. In fact, they were carrying his message that “the Tibetans now have no alternative but to take up arms against the Chinese.” Andrugtsang, at 42-43.

The outside world heard very little about the Tibetan resistance. There was no foreign press in Tibet, and very few diplomatic missions in Lhasa. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 32 (only India, Nepal, and Bhutan had diplomatic representatives in Lhasa). Refugees escaping to India sometimes carried firsthand reports, which were published in the Tibetan language newspaper *Tibet Mirror* in Kalimpong, India.¹⁰⁰ But Indian Prime Minister Nehru banned dissemination of Tibet revolt news, calling it “anti-Chinese propaganda.”¹⁰¹ The atrocities, suffering, and resistance in Amdo were even less known in Lhasa or the outside world than those in Kham.¹⁰²

1957: Mao Temporarily Retreats

On February 27, 1957, Mao Zedong gave a speech promising to postpone “Democrat reforms” in Tibet until they were supported by “the great majority of the people.” Mao Zedong, [On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People](#), Speech at the Eleventh Session (Enlarged) of the Supreme State Conference (with additions by Mao before publication in *People’s Daily*, June 19, 1957). Mao did not really like the idea, but it had been forced on him by other party leaders, including CCP Vice-Chairman Liu Shaoqi (Liu Shao-ch’i). Liu’s actions contributed to his later being purged in the Cultural Revolution.¹⁰³

Whatever reduction in hostilities had resulted from the February 1957 announcement were entirely reversed by another announcement not long

100. *E.g.*, 24 *Tibet Mirror*, no. 3, at 3-6 (1957) (witness drawings of bombings of the “Chatrin Samphelling Monastery, Drago Monastery, Ba Chode Gonpa [ecclesiastical fortification], Lithang Monastery”). For the story of the Christian missionary who published *Tibet Mirror*, see Isrun Enghelhardt, *Reflections in The Tibet Mirror: News of the World 1937-1964*, in *Mapping the Modern in Tibet* (Gray Tuttle ed. 2011).

The other major Indian destination for Tibetan refugees was Darjeeling. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 28.

101. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 28, 42; Dunham, at 165-66, 277.

102. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 65.

103. McCarthy, at 124-25.

afterward: all Tibetan arms would be confiscated. As the Dalai Lama later recalled, when he heard about the confiscation order, “I knew without being told that a Khamba would never surrender his rifle — he would use it first.” Roger Hicks & Ngakpa Chogyam, *Great Ocean* 102 (1984) (authorized biography). According to secret PLA documents, the PLA worried there were about 100,000 to 150,000 rifles owned by the Tibetan army and people. Ben Kieler, *The 1959 Tibetan Uprising Documents: The Chinese Army Documents* 32 (2017).

As Gompo Tashi put it, “No Tibetans, and especially the fiercely independent tribes, would voluntarily surrender their weapons to the Chinese. If there was a single act by the Chinese that galvanized the resistance it was probably this plan to seize all weapons from the Tibetans. It could be interpreted by a Tibetan to mean but one thing: total loss of freedom. It was, in effect, the final insult. There would be no more broken promises.” McCarthy, at 129-30. “For hundreds of years our weapons had been more precious than jewels. And now the Red Devils expected us to simply let them take our weapons away from us? We had no choice but to move forward with our plans to fight.” *Id.* at 132.

In June 1957, the CCP reneged on Mao’s promise. The communist “democratic reform” would be imposed within the Tibet Autonomous Region, in a Kham area known as Chamdo.¹⁰⁴ Kham, Amdo, and Golok cavalymen continued to raid PLA convoys and capture their arms.¹⁰⁵

Gompo Tashi kept on working to raise and unite national resistance forces. To provide cover for the necessary nationwide travel and meetings, a plan was created to present the Dalai Lama with a bejeweled golden throne. Gathering the materials for the gift required much networking among potential donors all over Tibet; the kind of people who could donate gold or jewels for the throne were also likely to have plenty of arms and money to contribute to the resistance. The magnificent throne was presented in a ceremony on July 4, 1957.¹⁰⁶ While the Chinese saw the throne as just another example of Tibetan superstition, it was also a political statement understood by Tibetans. The throne was a gift from all three provinces of Tibet (Kham, Amdo, and U-Tsang), united in loyalty to the Dalai Lama and not to Mao Zedong. Jamyang Norbu, *The Political Vision of Andrugtsang Gompo Tashi*, *Shadow Tibet*, Sept. 27, 2014.

Gompo Tashi met with the Dalai Lama, who viewed the planned national resistance army as inspired fighters with a just cause but no hope of success. The Dalai Lama advised Gompo Tashi that if he did choose to lead an army, he must do so with compassion and in full awareness of the consequences; the path might not be easy, but it might be the only one.¹⁰⁷ The rebel leaders then consulted the oracle of Shukden, who told them no longer to remain idle; it was time for Tibetans to rise as one.¹⁰⁸

104. Smith, at 66.

105. *Id.* at 126-28.

106. Dunham, at 195-96; Andrugtsang, at 51-54.

107. Hicks & Chogyam, at 102-03.

108. McCarthy, at 142.

U.S. Central Intelligence Agency

Created in 1947, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency was open to, but cautious in, aiding anti-communist rebels. Earlier in the 1950s, the Agency had been duped into attempted support for planned anti-communist uprisings in Poland and Albania, only to eventually discover that they were actually sting operations run by the communist secret police. In the early 1950s in China, the CIA's airdrops for anti-Mao revolutionaries had come to naught.¹⁰⁹ Although communism in China was increasingly unpopular, many Chinese did not view rebels aligned with Chiang Kai-Shek as a credible alternative. Even many non-communists considered Chiang's rule of China to have been a failure.

Getting information on conditions in Tibet was very difficult. When the people of Hungary revolted against communist dictatorship in October-November 1956, the news was disseminated immediately.¹¹⁰ But the 1956 uprisings in Eastern Tibet were almost unknown to the outside world. By the summer of 1956, the CIA had determined that reports of the Eastern Tibetan uprisings, with impressive initial successes, were genuine, and not mere Chiang Kai-Shek-style bluster. Since the early 1950s, the CIA had been in touch with the Dalai Lama's elder brother, Gyalo Thondup, who quietly became the rebels' principal ambassador and contact with the world.¹¹¹ In the CIA's new program to aid the Tibetans, the Dalai Lama's brother was the principal leader, and Gompo Tashi Andrugsang the head of operations.

In 1957, several Tibetan freedom fighters were exfiltrated and then taken to Saipan for a pilot program of training in guerilla warfare. The program was soon expanded, with a permanent training center established at Camp Hale, Colorado.¹¹² McCarthy, at 139, 238.

The Tibetans and their American trainers got along very well. One instructor remembered, "They really enjoyed blowing things up during demolition class, but when they caught a fly in the mess hall, they would hold it in their cupped palms and let it loose outside." Conboy & Morrison, at 107.

109. Conboy & Morrison, at 38-39.

110. The Hungarian Revolution is briefly discussed in Section D.3.g.

111. McGranahan, *Tibet's Cold War*, at 111, 117.

112. Saipan is part of the Northern Mariana Islands, in the northwest Pacific. Japan had seized it from Germany during World War I. The island was the scene of intense fighting during World War II. As of 1957, the Northern Mariana Islands were a United Nations trust territory administered by the United States. In 1975-76, the voters of the Northern Mariana Islands and U.S. Congress ratified a [Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America](#). Citizens of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are citizens of the United States, similar to citizens of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. See Ch. 11.C.3 (Second Amendment litigation in the CNMI).

Camp Hale was in the high Rocky Mountains, near Leadville, Colorado. The camp had been the training facility for the U.S. Tenth Mountain Division during World War II. See Maurice Isserman, *The Winter Army* (2019) (the men of the Tenth Mountain Division in war, and later in the Olympics, and in creating the ski industry).

Besides training, the United States also began airdrops of supplies to the resistance fighters, eventually making about three dozen airdrops through 1965.¹¹³ An airdrop in the fall of 1958 included Lee Enfield .303 bolt action rifles, 60mm mortars, 2.36 inch bazookas, 57mm recoilless rifles, .30 caliber light machine guns, and grenades.¹¹⁴ The equipment had been chosen for plausible deniability; it was the type of material that had been used in Asia in preceding decades by many different forces. By 1959, the CIA grew less considered about deniability, and began supplying the M-1 Garand, the outstanding American semi-automatic rifle from World War II. Knaus, at 220-21; Conboy & Morrison, at 107; Ch. 7.C.2.b, 7.F.1.d (Garand). But the quantity of arms and ammunition was not sufficient to supply all of the freedom fighters.¹¹⁵

Unfortunately, by the time the assistance program was up to speed, it was too late to make a great difference. If it had begun earlier in the 1950s, its effect could have been dramatic.¹¹⁶ Aid could have come sooner if the Dalai Lama had renounced the Seventeen Point Agreement (which he finally did in March 1959) and had requested aid. He was, after all, head of state, and his blessing would have made the Americans more confident about intervening earlier. Carole McGranahan, *Arrested History, Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War* 46 (2010); McCarthy, at 244. The program was also hindered by lack of express support from the government of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who, at least in public, was playing a game of supporting China's claims to Tibet.¹¹⁷

1958: The Chushi Gangdruk Unify the Resistance

The Chinese repeated their arms surrender order in April 1958.¹¹⁸ In the summer of 1958, all agriculture and pasturage in Kham and Amdo were fully communized. This was part of the Great Leap Forward, *infra*, that was enforced in all of the PRC (except Central Tibet) starting in 1958.

The Khampas were already in revolt, and now more Amdowas joined them.¹¹⁹ So did the Muslim Salars of Xunhua county (Qinghai province), fighting alongside the Tibetans. Their April 1958 interfaith revolt spread to eight townships and

113. McCarthy, at 240-44.

114. Dunham, at 254. The measurements for the weapons are the muzzle bore diameters. The diameter of the projectiles fired by the weapons would be very slightly smaller.

115. Knaus, at 154.

116. McCarthy, at 244-45.

117. In Nehru's optimistic imagination, China and India were jointly leading a pan-Asian nonaligned movement. Nehru's appeasement policy ended in 1962 when China invaded India and seized disputed territory. *See* Bertil Lintner, *China's India War: Collision Course on the Roof of the World* (2018) (arguing that the Chinese invasion had been planned since 1959); S. Mahmud Ali, *Cold War in the High Himalayas: The USA, China, and South Asia in the 1950s* (1999) (suggesting that Nehru was more active in trying to contain China behind the scenes than he acted in public); Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (1970) (assigning the majority of the blame for the Sino-Indian War to Nehru's intransigence on border issues).

118. McCarthy at 136.

119. Smith, at 67.

lasted one week. The rebellion was joined by 68 percent of local CCP members and 69 percent of the Communist Youth League.¹²⁰

A subsequent CCP investigation on Xunhau events found that 78 percent of the communists who had joined the rebellion did so because of “extremely confused ideas about religion . . . preferring to forsake the Party rather than forsake their religion, or even preferring death to forsaking their religion.”¹²¹ When Mao and the Dalai Lama had met in Beijing in 1954, Mao told him, “I understand you well. But of course, religion is poison. It has two great defects: It undermines the race, and secondly it retards the progress of the country. Tibet and Mongolia have both been poisoned by it.” Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People* 117-18 (2006).

Another Amdo rebellion took place in Tsikorthang county, Qinghai. There were 10,840 fighters, including 1,020 monks and nuns. A PLA infantry regiment was deployed in July, fought the rebel nomads for five months, claimed victory, and withdrew. The rest of the population took the opportunity to escape to the hills. As a PLA commander indignantly reported to his superiors, the masses supported the rebels, feeding them, sheltering them, and concealing them.¹²²

According to the Qinghai province Party Committee’s June 1958 report to Mao, there were a hundred thousand Amdo rebels from 240 tribes revolting. The fighters constituted one-fifth of Qinghai’s Tibetan population. The uprisings involved 24 counties, six prefectures, and 307 monasteries.¹²³

Meanwhile, Lhasa and environs were becoming crowded with refugees. About ten to fifteen thousand were Chinese who had fled Maoism in China and were contentedly making a living running small shops. The CCP deported them back to China. Then the communists announced a program to register the refugees from Kham and Amdo who were living around Lhasa. They too would be deported unless they had written permission from the CCP to live in Lhasa. Some of them disappeared, including those who left to join the resistance forces; many already had arms and combat experience from the earlier revolts in Eastern Tibet. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 78; Andrugtsang, at 58-59.

Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang decided that it was time to publicly proclaim the all-Tibet resistance army. He sold all his wealth to purchase ammunition and arms—including rifles and handguns from Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Czechoslovakia. His 46 employees were “armed to the teeth and provided with horses” to join the resistance. *Id.* at 59-60. In Tibetan Buddhism, being born with wealth, power, or intelligence “automatically came with the moral responsibility of helping other sentient beings less fortunate.” Dunham, at 250.¹²⁴

The new national resistance army was named the Chushi Gangdruk (Gandrug, Gangrug). It was proclaimed on June 16, 1958, in the Triguthang valley of the

120. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 46-49.

121. *Id.* at 57.

122. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 50-55

123. *Id.* at 56.

124. In Buddhism, the *ahimsa* imperative for sentient beings includes nonhuman animals.

Lhoka area, fewer than a hundred miles south of Lhasa.¹²⁵ Lhoka was fully under the control of the twenty to thirty thousand Chushi Gangdruk there. “They were farmers, nomads, peddlers, and monks. They carried their own rifles, flintlocks, hunting guns, and swords, and wore their everyday clothes: leather or felt boots, assorted caps, and the traditional Tibetan robes, known as *chupas*. . . .” Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 69. While most of the Chushi Gangdruk came from Kham, the fighters also included volunteers from Amdo and Central Tibet.¹²⁶ By one estimate, over half the resistance fighters were monks.¹²⁷

The Chushi Gangdruk unfurled their **flag**: crossed swords on a yellow background. Yellow was the color of Buddhism, which the Chushi Gangdruk defended from communism. The flaming sword belonged to Manjusri, the bodhisattva who sliced through ignorance, which was the root cause of communism. The other sword, a symbol of bravery, was a weapon that Tibetans made themselves.¹²⁸

In a sense, the Chushi Gangdruk was carrying out the letter of the Seventeen Point Agreement: “The Tibetan people shall unite and drive out imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet.” Seventeen Point Agreement, § 1.¹²⁹

To the extent possible, Chushi Gangdruk guerilla units comprised fighters from the same native place or district. Officers were the leading men from their home area; they were not necessarily the most expert in military matters, but they had the confidence and loyalty of their troops, which was essential.¹³⁰ Twenty-eight resistance groups joined the Chushi Gangdruk.¹³¹

The Chushi Gangdruk were acquiring arms from all over. The Tibetan government did not try very hard to prevent them from “stealing” arms from the Tibetan army arsenals.¹³² The PLA did try to thwart raids on its own arsenals, but often not successfully.¹³³ Meanwhile, Gompo Tashi was buying Russian-made rifles and pistols from India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Pakistan, and China.¹³⁴ The Tibetan cabinet, the *Kashag*, ordered monasteries not to distribute arms to the freedom fighters, but this order was not always obeyed.¹³⁵

125. The full name was Chushi Gangdrug Tensrid Danglang Mak (“the Kham Four Rivers, Six Ranges Tibetan Defenders of the Faith Volunteer Army”). They were also known as Volunteer Freedom Fighters for Religious and Political Resistance (VFF). Andrugtsang, at 62; Knaus, at 150. “Four Rives, Six Ranges” was a traditional appellation for Kham. The rivers are the Mekong, Salween, Yangtze, and Yalung.

126. Granahan, *Tibet’s Cold War*, at 111.

127. Knaus, at 141.

128. Dunham, at 197; Andrugtsang, at 62.

129. The CCP claim that pre-communist Tibet needed to be liberated from imperialism was preposterous. As of 1949, there were a total of eight Americans or Britons living in Tibet, all of them having permission from the Tibetan government and assisting the government with various projects, such as radio communication.

130. McGranahan, *Tibet’s Cold War*, at 116.

131. Knaus, at 349 n.18.

132. Norbu, *The Tibetan Resistance Movement*, at 394.

133. Dunham, at 237.

134. Dunham, at 237. Sikkim was an independent kingdom until 1950, then an Indian protectorate, and since 1975 an Indian state.

135. Andrugtsang, at 74-75.

With the new arms supplies and unity, the Chushi Gangdruk cut off the three strategic highways south of Lhasa, thwarting PLA mobility. The Prince of Derge was leading his own men in hit-and-run raids on Kongpo (Nyinghci prefecture), an area in between Lhoka and Chamdo.¹³⁶

The Chinese communists were outraged at the Chushi Gangdruk. It was clearly a coordinated national campaign, far more so than the local rebellions of earlier years. The CCP commanded the Dalai Lama to deploy the Tibetan army against the Chushi Gangdruk. Directly disobeying a Chinese order for the first time, the Dalai Lama pointed out that if the army were ordered to fight the Chushi Gangdruk, the army would instead join them. The Tibetan cabinet, the *Kashag*, agreed with the Dalai Lama—well aware that the army might remove the *Kashag* rather than wage war against the Chushi Gangdruk.¹³⁷ Indeed, starting in November 1958, many Tibetan army soldiers deserted to join the Chushi Gangdruk.¹³⁸

The Dalai Lama did issue announcements urging the rebels to lay down their arms, but “the Chinese censors were so heavy-handed, and the messages so clearly written for the benefit of the Chinese, that the freedom fighters could see behind the words. They knew that His Holiness might not approve of their actions, but they took comfort in the knowledge that he was not against them.”¹³⁹

More rebel bands arose and expanded. For example, one group that began with ten men and four rifles grew to 40 families, and then to 300 families.¹⁴⁰ By late 1958, the revolt had become massive. Some Tibetan refugees in India returned to Tibet to join the Chushi Gangdruk. All of the tribes of Kham were resisting in arms. Amdo was in rebellion, and twenty thousand Goloks were fighting too.¹⁴¹

The Tibetans had the morale advantage. “PLA troops fought because they were told to.” When the Chushi Gangdruk “drew their swords, they had an image of a raped wife or a murdered father to urge them on. And unlike the Chinese soldiers, they held the ultimate trump card: They had nothing left to lose.” Dunham, at 261.

The terrain naturally favored the Tibetans. They knew the rugged mountains well, and the Chinese did not. Their bodies were built to thrive in thin air that exhausted invaders from the lowlands.¹⁴² As in the Korean War, some PLA soldiers deserted at the first opportunity. The Chushi Gangdruk had to discern which self-proclaimed PLA deserters were sincere and which were PLA spies.¹⁴³

To attempt to discredit the resistance, the PLA paid local bandits to pose as rebels and plunder villages. The Chushi Gangdruk worked hard to eliminate the false flag criminals.¹⁴⁴

136. Dunham, at 256. Derge is in Eastern Tibet. The prince had become a rebel leader after the CCP took all his property and killed his family.

137. McCarthy, at 136.

138. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 240-41.

139. Hick & Chogyam, at 105; Dunham, at 239.

140. *Id.* at 259.

141. McCarthy, at 163.

142. McCarthy, at 249.

143. *Id.* at 143, 147.

144. *Id.* at 146, 163; McGranahan, *Tibet's Cold War*, at 110; Andrugtsang, at 66-67.

The rebels faced other challenges. Although they were proficient with firearms and swords, most were not trained in guerilla warfare.¹⁴⁵ The CIA-trained leaders, once they returned to Tibet, could disseminate knowledge of tactics and operations, but these trainees were not able to reach or interact with all of the many resistance groups throughout Tibet.

In addition, the resistance was often short of arms and ammunition.¹⁴⁶ As discussed, Tibet before 1949 had lots of firearms, but many of these were flintlocks or matchlocks, far inferior to the bolt action and semi-automatic firearms that had been invented in the late nineteenth century. As for ammunition, many Tibetan families before 1949 had quantities sufficient for ordinary uses—such as hunting, or family and community defense from bandits—but not for protracted guerilla warfare with numerous battles lasting hours or days.

Sharing of information among the rebels remained a problem. The only newspapers were published in Lhasa, and they were run by collaborationists and the CCP. Monasteries were information nodes, but even among them, news could only spread by word of mouth, the distance that a man could walk or travel on horseback. “Tibet was a million-and-one informational cul-de-sacs.” Dunham, at 251.

The volunteers were short of equipment for radio communication, which of course hampered coordination.¹⁴⁷ But this was a blessing in disguise. Secret Chinese military documents have revealed that the PLA had cracked the Tibetans’ simple radio encryption codes.¹⁴⁸ Besides that, the PLA had spies inside the Tibetan resistance forces.¹⁴⁹

The PLA’s biggest advantage was manpower. The Tibetan population was relatively small, and so attrition, including from absence of medical care, gradually wore them down. In contrast, the PLA had no concern for soldiers’ lives, and could easily replace dead soldiers from an inexhaustible supply back in China. McCarthy, at 228, 248; Conboy & Morrison, at 270 n.1 (estimating Tibet population at 3 million as of 1950). As the Tibetans said, if they killed one PLA soldier, ten would replace him. If they killed ten, a hundred would replace them. The overwhelming Chinese advantage was worsened by the Tibetans’ ammunition shortage. They could not afford many shots that did not cause a casualty.¹⁵⁰

In military history, there are many examples of fighters who were, man for man, superior to their opponents, but who were eventually defeated by sheer force of numbers—for example, the Romans against the barbarian tribes during the last century of the Western Roman Empire, New Zealand’s Maori natives against the

145. McCarthy, at 163.

146. *Id.*

147. McCarthy, at 160.

148. Kieler, at 94-96.

149. *Id.* at 97-98.

150. Dunham, at 320-21.

invading British in the nineteenth century, or the Germans against the Soviets in World War II.¹⁵¹

Massive Chinese reinforcements began arriving in late 1958. By the end of the year, the situation in Eastern Tibet was mostly under control, even though some resistance there would continue for years.¹⁵²

As local uprisings were crushed, the PLA would round up all the able-bodied surviving men, imprisoning them or sending them to a *laogai* slave labor camp. Their families would be permanently branded as part of the lowest class. “Prominent citizens mysteriously disappeared forever,” even those who had cooperated with the communists.¹⁵³ “In Yulshui Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the slaughter created ghost towns and ‘widows villages.’ Young men escaped death by donning their sheepskin jackets inside out as camouflage and hiding among their flocks of sheep.”¹⁵⁴

Within Central Tibet, the Chushi Gangdruk still had the initiative. In the winter of 1958, their Lhoka force advanced to within 30 miles of Lhasa.¹⁵⁵ The presence of resistance fighters in Chamdo was making travel on the two highways from China to Lhasa impossible except with heavy military escort. The new airport at Lhasa helped the PLA overcome some of the problem.¹⁵⁶

On November 8, 1958, the PLA’s Tibet Military Command established a militia in Lhasa, consisting of Han whom Mao had exported to Tibet. Quickly, the militia was well organized and well armed.¹⁵⁷ At the PLA garrison next to Lhasa, a buildup of artillery gave the PLA the ability to hit any building in the city and to shut off access to the entire valley.¹⁵⁸

1959, Lhasa, and the Momentous Day

As of early 1959, there were fifteen thousand Eastern Tibetans camped outside Lhasa. “They moved about the city fully armed and with trigger-happy eyes.”¹⁵⁹ The only remaining Tibetan supporters of the PLA in Lhasa were the dwindling numbers of collaborationist aristocrats.¹⁶⁰ To the immense embarrassment of the PLA, two thousand Chushi Gangdruk attacked a three-thousand-man PLA garrison.

151. The Maori defense of New Zealand was the longest and most effective resistance by any outnumbered indigenous group to invasion during the nineteenth century. The Maori, who had never seen firearms before Captain Cook landed, quickly became excellent marksmen and proficient in advanced battle tactics, including trench warfare. Whereas the stone age Aborigines of Australia had been rapidly defeated by the British invaders, the Maori fought so long and so effectively that the final peace settlement guaranteed them representation in the New Zealand parliament—in contrast to the Australian aborigines, who were not even given citizenship. See David B. Kopel, *The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy: Should America Adopt the Gun Controls of Other Democracies?* 233-36 (1992).

152. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 66-67.

153. *Id.* at 61-63.

154. *Id.* at 63.

155. Dunham, at 261.

156. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 78.

157. *Id.* at 75.

158. *Id.* at 78.

159. Dunham, at 261.

160. *Id.* at 261-62.

In a six-hour battle, the Tibetans battered the PLA, and made off with a trove of weaponry.¹⁶¹ Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang then headed to Chamdo, to urge everyone “to form their own armed force to defend their native towns and villages,” to block Chinese communications, and to “seize every opportunity for damaging and harassing the enemy war machine.” Andrugtsang, at 93-94.

In early February, the CCP had announced that the Dalai Lama would visit Beijing. Surprised, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans suspected a kidnapping plot. The Chinese had recently been kidnapping and then murdering lamas by inviting them to Chinese social events.¹⁶² By March, the Lhasa population tripled, with pilgrims arriving for the greatest of the Tibetan Buddhist religious events, [the Monlam Prayer Festival](#).¹⁶³

The Dalai Lama was busy studying for the final exams for his *Geshe Lharampa* degree—the highest theological degree conferred in Tibet, equivalent to a Ph.D.¹⁶⁴ Chinese officials began demanding that the Dalai Lama attend a theater performance at the PLA camp outside Lhasa on the afternoon of March 10. According to the invitation, he could not bring his customary armed bodyguards, nor could he tell the public about the visit. The Dalai Lama told the Chinese that he accepted.¹⁶⁵

The news spread rapidly in Lhasa when the Dalai Lama’s officials announced special traffic restrictions for the road from Lhasa to the PLA camp.¹⁶⁶ On the morning of March 10, thousands of Tibetans spontaneously assembled around the Dalai Lama’s Norbulingka palace, “armed and indifferent to personal safety.”¹⁶⁷ About half the crowd were Khampas, Amdowas, or Goloks. “[F]or the first time, Lhasans and Eastern Tibetans were acting as one.”¹⁶⁸ Lhasans who did not have firearms or swords brought their axes, picks, and shovels, or whatever else they could use as a weapon.¹⁶⁹

The Chinese Communist Party refers to March 10, 1959, as the “Lhasa incident” or the “March 10 Incident of 1959.” The Tibetan government-in-exile recognizes it as an [official holiday, Tibetan Uprising Day](#). It was perhaps “The Most Momentous Day in Tibetan History.”¹⁷⁰

The people of Lhasa reclaimed their city. They blocked incoming roads with barricades.¹⁷¹ For the first time since the PLA had arrived in 1951, the sovereignty in Lhasa was exercised by Tibetans. “The people were now the ruling body of Tibet.”¹⁷² They took over the National Assembly and the government.¹⁷³ What was

161. *Id.* at 262-63.

162. Dunham, at 266.

163. The Monlam Prayer Festival was banned from 1960 to 1985, allowed to take place in 1986-89, banned again in 1990, and then “severely restricted ever since.” Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 338 n.23.

164. Dunham, at 266.

165. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 16-19.

166. Knaus, at 163.

167. Dunham, at 269; Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 119-27.

168. Dunham, at 269.

169. *Id.* at 277.

170. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 135, 340.

171. Dunham, at 276.

172. Dunham, at 269-70.

173. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 131-34; Dunham, at 274.

left of the Tibetan army distributed arms to the people.¹⁷⁴ So did the Sera monastery, which had one of the biggest arsenals in Lhasa.¹⁷⁵

The PLA began preparing for action. Scouts took readings for artillery targeting. When a large PLA force advanced on the city, the defenders gathered. But the PLA movement was just a feint, to discover the size of the Tibetan forces.¹⁷⁶

In the Dalai Lama's view, "[h]and to hand, with fists or swords, one Tibetan would have been worth a dozen Chinese—recent experience in the eastern provinces had confirmed this old belief." But he knew that Lhasa could not defeat China's heavy artillery.¹⁷⁷

On March 17, the Dalai Lama consulted the State Oracle. The oracle monk was brought forth, staggering under the weight of his ceremonial armor and 30-pound headdress. While other monks chanted or played the horns and drums, the oracle went into his dancing trance.

His face was distorted, his eyes bulging, his breathing labored. He appeared to swell in stature, no longer struggling under the costume's weight. Suddenly he let out a piercing shriek.

"Go! Go! Tonight!"

He grabbed a pen and paper in a frenzy and jotted down a clear route map. Then his attendants rushed forward and relieved him of his enormous headdress. The deity departed from his body, and he collapsed onto the floor.

Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 193-94; *see also* Dunham, at 282.

That afternoon, the communists lobbed a pair of mortar shells into the marsh next to Norbulingka palace—taken as a warning of the consequences of disobedience.¹⁷⁸ The Dalai Lama escaped during the night of March 17.¹⁷⁹ Very few people in Lhasa knew. Disguised as a soldier, with a rifle and without his glasses the Dalai Lama was escorted by Chushi Gangdruk and the Tibetan army, and also "protected by unseen resistance bands covering their flanks as they passed through the mountains."¹⁸⁰

Shortly before entering India, the Dalai Lama repudiated the Seventeen Point Agreement, which the Chinese had violated, and which was the sole legal pretext for their presence in Central Tibet. He apologized for the Tibetan government's issuance of anti-Chushi Gangdruk statements, which he explained were compelled and dictated by the Chinese. The Dalai Lama promoted Gompo Tashi, in absentia, to General (*Dzasak*) in the Tibetan army. The promotion letter stated: "the present situation calls for a continuance of your brave struggle with the same determination

174. *Id.* at 275-76.

175. *Id.* at 293.

176. *Id.* at 282-83.

177. *Id.* at 278-79.

178. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 194-99.

179. The State Oracle was the thirteenth [Nechung Oracle](#), and was believed to channel the Dalai Lama's protector, the spirit [Dorje Drakden](#). Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 193.

180. Knaus, at 165; Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 199-230, 371 n.21.

and courage.”¹⁸¹ Necessarily, the promotion recognized the Chushi Gangdruk as an army of the legitimate government of Tibet.¹⁸²

The communists did not discover that the Dalai Lama had escaped until March 19. They began claiming that the Dalai Lama had not chosen to flee, but instead had been abducted by imperialists and their accomplices.¹⁸³ Later, in 1995 when the Dalai Lama’s campaign for Tibetan freedom was earning global attention, the CCP started putting out a story that Mao had intentionally allowed the Dalai Lama to escape. The tale has many factual weaknesses.¹⁸⁴

During the night of March 20, the PLA erected a barrier preventing movement between the eastern and western sides of Lhasa. Their attack began in the morning, supported by massive artillery bombardment. After two days of fierce building-to-building fighting, the PLA prevailed on the third morning as the defenders ran out of food and ammunition. Lhasa was in ruins, but the Dalai Lama was gone.¹⁸⁵

The PLA leadership brazenly lied to its troops. For example, the Tibetans were said to be “callous murderers” who tortured and killed people for the slightest infraction (a description more aptly applied to the CCP). Supposedly, the Tibetans slaughtered the laboring masses, and then used their skulls for rice bowls, their skins for drums, and female femurs for horns.¹⁸⁶ Three decades later, at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the PLA soldiers would be fed a different set of lies about the student protesters. And since the CCP controlled the media, most soldiers had no means of learning the truth. Timothy Brook, *Quelling the People: The Military Suppression of the Beijing Democracy Movement 114-15* (1998).

The PLA had grown increasingly proficient at counterinsurgency. They brought in non-Han cavalry, who as horsemen were far superior to the often inept Hans.¹⁸⁷ The PLA improved at deploying mobile artillery.¹⁸⁸ In places where it was not possible to deploy artillery, bombers were employed.¹⁸⁹ When weather or terrain obstructed bombers, scout planes could still report the movement of resistance groups.¹⁹⁰ Most importantly, the Chinese had spent the previous decade building a strong road and airport network in Central and Eastern Tibet. Although the Tibetans could and did cause trouble for Chinese supply convoys, the PLA forces in the field never ran out supplies.¹⁹¹

181. Knaus, at 166; Dunham, at 302-03; Andrugtsang, at 107 (copy of the letter, in Tibetan).

182. In the 1990s, the Dalai Lama reiterated his position that Tibetan resistance has been legitimate: “If there is a clear indication that there is no alternative to violence, then violence is permissible.” In the Dalai Lama’s understanding of Buddhism, motivation and results are more important than method. Therefore, violence is justifiable when motivated by compassion if it leads to good results. Knaus, at 313.

183. *Chou Insists Rebels Seized Dalai Lama: Hopes He Will Return*, N.Y. Times, Apr. 19, 1959.

184. See Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 218-25.

185. *Id.* at 259-90; Dunham, at 292-98.

186. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 80.

187. McCarthy, at 231, 249.

188. *Id.* at 160, 248.

189. Kieler, at 105; Dunham, at 257.

190. *Id.*; McCarthy, at 160; Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 79.

191. Conboy & Morrison, at 99.

An April 1959 PLA counteroffensive in Lhoka captured several strategic towns. The Chushi Gangdruk in the region, exhausted and running out of supplies, took the Dalai Lama's advice and used their last chance to escape to India.¹⁹²

By mid-1959, control of the tempo of warfare had shifted to the PLA. The rebels, rather than being able to attack at times and places of their choosing, were trying to outrun PLA pursuit and were having to fight several engagements per week to do so. Eventually, many of them escaped to Nepal or India. They also guided other Tibetans past Chinese lines, and to the border.¹⁹³ Cumulatively, eighty thousand Tibetans escaped to India.¹⁹⁴

As the PLA advantages grew, the rebels should have dispersed into smaller groups, which would have been harder to detect. If the fighting men had split into small guerilla bands, they could have kept operating for a long time. But the men would not abandon their defenseless families, and they needed to keep their herds with them for food. So the resistance camps were large and moved slowly.¹⁹⁵

Further from the border, hundreds of other resistance fighters, with no opportunity to escape, kept up the fight. By this time, they were no longer attempting to liberate territory, but simply to conduct raids on enemy forces.¹⁹⁶ The Goloks, too far north to flee to another country, continued their resistance.¹⁹⁷

By the fall of 1959, most of Tibet was back under PLA control, except for parts of Kham.¹⁹⁸ There, the Khampas continued to disrupt Chinese convoys and their effort allowed "untold thousands of Tibetans to make their way safely to the border—a major contribution that has often been overlooked by Western historians."¹⁹⁹ As for Central Tibet, the resistance in outlying areas continued until 1962.²⁰⁰

Tired of armed Tibetans, the Chinese forbade the Tibetan men's tradition of wearing swords. Dawa Norbu, China's Tibet Policy 131 (2001). About half of the men were put into prisons and worked to death.²⁰¹ The communization of Tibetan culture and religion, already well underway in Eastern Tibet, was fully inflicted on Central Tibet. The policy continues to this day. See Tibet Policy Institute, *Cultural Genocide in Tibet: A Report* (2017).

In April 1959, the Tibetans set up a [government in exile](#), at Dharamasala, India, which continues to this day.²⁰² The government is democratic, and provides education from kindergarten through high school.²⁰³

192. Dunham, at 322-23.

193. McCarthy, at 228-33.

194. *Chronology in Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, at xix.

195. McCarthy, at 168-70, 228-29; Knaus, at 225-26, 321-22.

196. *Id.* at 218-20; Dunham, at 324-25.

197. McCarthy, at 218.

198. Dunham, at 340.

199. *Id.* at 340-41.

200. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 314.

201. Chang & Halliday, at 453-56.

202. The government in exile is for all Tibetans, regardless of province of origin.

203. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 310.

The CCP's Political Commissar for Tibet, General Tan Guansen, might have thought he had earned a lifetime of respect from Mao's regime. But during the Cultural Revolution that began in 1966, *infra*, he would be purged as a supposed "capitalist roader."²⁰⁴

Resistance from Nepal

The Tibetan freedom fighters were allowed to set up in Mustang, a thinly populated district in Nepal, surrounded on three sides by Tibet, populated primarily by Tibetans, and run by a friendly and mostly autonomous local king who was Tibetan. The fighters who had retreated to India in 1959 were joined by other fighters coming directly to Mustang from Tibet. Over the next several years, they caused so much trouble on the highway from Kham to Lhasa that the Chinese had to divert traffic to the other highway 180 miles north.²⁰⁵

In 1961, the Mustang fighters scored the biggest anti-communist intelligence coup since the Korean War, capturing over 1,600 classified PLA documents from a PLA commander. The documents provided much insight into the Chinese PLA and government, including secret codes and Sino-Soviet relations. The documents noted that the famine in China caused by the Great Leap Forward, *infra*, was demoralizing PLA troops. The communist militia was acknowledged to be of almost no value militarily, and some of the militia was joining uprisings in China. Some of the captured materials were later used as evidence by the Tibetan government in exile in its international law protests against Chinese atrocities in Tibet.²⁰⁶

Through 1963, the Mustang fighters helped five thousand Tibetans escape to India, Nepal, Bhutan, or Sikkim.²⁰⁷ The last CIA airdrop into Tibet was in 1965 and Camp Hale was shut down.²⁰⁸ However, other CIA support for the Mustang fighters continued.²⁰⁹

The governments of Nepal, India, and East Pakistan (a part of Pakistan near southeast Nepal) were pretending not to know about CIA support for Mustang, so the need to maintain secrecy was paramount. Accordingly, the CIA could not send a case officer to observe the situation in Mustang, since a stranger would be readily observed. As of 1960, only one Westerner had ever entered Mustang.²¹⁰ Thus, the CIA was not able to monitor how its donations were being spent. Unfortunately, the first Mustang general, Baba Gen Yeshe, who was in charge of the rebels, stole a great deal of the resources.²¹¹

204. *Id.* at 314.

205. Knaus, at 246-47; Dunham, at 374.

206. *Id.* at 355; Knaus, at 247; McCarthy, at 236; McGranahan, *Tibet's Cold War*, at 119-20. The documents were released in 1963 and published in 1966. *The Politics of the Chinese Red Army: A Translation of the Bulletin of the Activities of the People's Liberation Army* (J. Chester Cheng ed. 1966).

207. Andrugtsang, at 110.

208. Dunham, at 374.

209. *Id.*

210. Conboy & Morrison, at 146.

211. Dunham, at 332-34.

U.S. financial assistance ended after 1969; the Mustang guerillas were clearly not able to meet the CIA's metric that they establish operational bases within Tibet.²¹² Although the Mustang resistance persisted even without CIA backing, a few years later the Nepali central government began tilting toward China for support against India, and so insisted that the Tibet venture be ended. The Mustang fighters finally shut down in 1974.²¹³

The final major combat mission of the Tibetan exiles was to fight a different genocide. Starting in 1962, the government of India had created a Special Frontier Force, consisting of three thousand Tibetan exiles living in India; the Chushi Gangdruk in Nepal regarded them as an Indian branch. India used the Tibetans for scouting near the India-Tibet border.²¹⁴ After the British had left their Indian colony in 1947, the Muslim majority portions of India were partitioned into the new nation of Pakistan, which consisted of West Pakistan and East Pakistan. In 1970-71, West Pakistan attacked East Pakistan, to put down an incipient independence movement and to mass murder the Bengali people.²¹⁵

After East Pakistan was invaded, the Tibetans were sent into the Chittagong Hill Tracts of East Pakistan. For deniability, their American and British rifles were replaced with Bulgarian AK-47s. The Tibetan guerillas were "unstoppable." There, they halted the West Pakistani army's advance, and saved the royal family of the Chakmas, the Tibeto-Burman ethnic group who live in the area. Tying up West Pakistani forces, the Tibetans helped set the stage for a direct invasion by the Indian army three weeks later, ending the genocide. When the West Pakistan army tried to retreat via Burma, the Tibetans blocked them. With West Pakistan defeated, East Pakistan became the new, independent nation of Bangladesh. The Tibetans "paraded through Chittagong to ecstatic Bangladeshi masses."²¹⁶

Genocide

Mao's stated position had always been that the Tibet uprisings were a good thing: they provided a pretext for faster imposition of full communism, and they offered the PLA combat training under challenging conditions.²¹⁷ But not all of the CCP elite shared Mao's bravado.

For years Chinese premier Zhou Enlai (Chou Enlai) had been attempting to deal with the diplomatic problems that the Chinese colonization of Tibet was causing with public opinion in India and (in private) with Nehru's government there. After the Lhasa uprising and the Dalai Lama's escape, Tibet's plight finally garnered worldwide attention. No recent communist event was more broadly condemned in South and Southeast Asia. Conboy & Morrison, at 96; Knaus, at 181 (Chinese actions universally condemned in non-communist press).

212. Knaus, at 296-97.

213. Dunham, at 382; McGranahan, *Tibet's Cold War*, at 122-24; Conboy & Morrison, at 145-253 (detailed history of Tibetan exile fighters).

214. Knaus, at 270-77.

215. Rummel, *Death by Government*, ch. 13.

216. Conboy & Morrison, at 242-45; McGranahan, *Tibet's Cold War*, at 123-24; Knaus, at 305-06.

217. See, e.g., Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 81, 165-67.

The suppression of the Tibetans was blatant and vicious imperialism. It undermined Mao's pretensions to be the anti-imperialist leader of the Third World, the supposed global hero of national liberation movements. Once the truth about Tibet was exposed to the world, many people realized that Maoism as applied was little different from Hitlerism—including in terms of genocide.

Because of the new global awareness engendered by the March 10 uprising and the escape of the Dalai Lama, the [International Commission of Jurists](#) began an inquiry into genocide in Tibet. The Commission concluded that the evidence showed a prima facie case for Chinese government acts in violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. International Commission of Jurists, *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law in Genocide in Tibet* at 34, 98.²¹⁸ According to the Tibetan government in exile, the Mao regime slayed 1.2 million Tibetans, including those killed in the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, *infra*.²¹⁹

Accomplishments of the Resistance

What did the Tibetan resistance accomplish? First, it helped the Dalai Lama escape to India; he has traveled the world and informed the people of the world of Tibet's right to self-government.²²⁰ Had the Dalai Lama been captured by the Chinese (as the Panchen Lama was), the Tibetans and their cause would never have been as globally visible as they did in fact become.²²¹

It was not just the Dalai Lama who was saved by the freedom fighters. "Because of the efforts by the resistance forces, many tens of thousands of Tibetans were able to escape their Chinese executioners." McCarthy, at vi. Today, most Tibetan refugees remain in the adjacent nations of India, Nepal, or Bhutan, to which they originally fled, while many others in the Tibetan diaspora have moved to North America, Europe, or Oceania, sharing their religion and educating the public about Tibetan rights. Whereas the outside world knew very little about Tibet before 1949, today there are many scholars of Tibetan Studies and many lay persons who have learned about Tibetan culture.

218. The Genocide Convention treats only some mass murders by government as genocide. Murders based on religion, race, or ethnicity are covered, whereas murders based on class or ideology are not. The distinction was put into the Convention at the insistence of the Soviet Union. See online Ch. 18.D. Thus, most of the CCP's mass murders in China were not genocide under international law. The murders of Tibetans, however, were in part aimed at exterminating the Buddhist religion, and thus were illegal acts under the Genocide Convention, which all nations that ratified the Convention had (and have) a legal obligation to prevent and punish.

219. Dunham, at 372.

220. Although the Tibetan government in exile states that Tibet has never been part of China, the government has offered to compromise, with Tibet remaining in the PRC if Tibetans could have genuine autonomy, rather than the current sham of "autonomous" regions with no actual self-government.

221. According to the Dalai Lama, the international attention focused on Tibet by the resistance movement and by the Dalai Lama's escape deterred the Chinese from executing the Panchen Lama, who had refused the Chinese order to replace the Dalai Lama as head of Tibet's government. Knaus, at 312.

Within Tibet, the Tibetan Buddhist religion is being perverted, like all religions under CCP control, into an empty shell where compassion for sentient beings is replaced with submission to the will of the atheistic communist party. See Tibet Policy Institute, *Cultural Genocide in Tibet: A Report* (2017); U.S. Dep't of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, & Labor, *China (Includes Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Macau)*, in 2018 Report on International Religious Freedom (2019); Eleanor Albert, *Religion in China*, Council on For. Rel. backgrounder, Oct. 11, 2018 (“Tibetan Buddhists face the highest levels of religious persecution in China, along with Uighur Muslims and Falun Gong members.”); 中國靈魂爭奪戰：習近平治下的宗教復興、壓制和抵抗 [The battle for Chinese souls: religious revival, suppression and resistance under Xi Jinping], Freedom House (2017) (in Chinese).

But in the diaspora made possible by the resistance, Tibetan Buddhism thrives. The “great three” Lhasa monasteries of Sera, Drepung, and Ganden have been established anew in southern India. Li, *Tibet in Agony*, at 310. “Tibetan Buddhism moved onto the worldwide stage after the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, and the subsequent mass migration of Tibetan masters to India.” United States, *Buddhism in*, in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, at 530; see also Jeffrey Paine, *Re-Enchantment: Tibetan Buddhism Comes to the West* (2004) (describing growing Western interest in Tibetan Buddhism, beginning in the late 1960s).

Importantly, the Tibetan resistance set a marker so that all future generations may know that China took Tibet by violence and not by consent. As the Dalai Lama wrote:

Intergenerational awareness of what took place in the Land of Snows may generally have grown, but what may not be so well known or appreciated is the fact that there was an armed resistance. In Kham, Eastern Tibet, in particular, where people retained warrior-like qualities of old, groups of men banded together to oppose the Chinese by force. These guerillas riding on horseback and often equipped with outdated weapons, put up a good fight. They expressed their loyalty and love for Tibet with indomitable courage. And although they were ultimately unsuccessful in preventing the Chinese from overwhelming Tibet, they let the so-called People’s Liberation Army know what the majority of Tibetans felt about their presence.

Although I believe the Tibetan struggle can only be won by a long-term approach and peaceful means, I have always admired these freedom fighters for their unflinching courage and determination.

The Dalai Lama, Foreword, in Dunham, at xi. Likewise, in a preface to Gampo Tashi Andrugtsang’s autobiography, the Dalai Lama praised his sacrifices of “his wealth and his life for the Dharma and the national freedom of Tibet. Despite the insuperable and awesome odds that China posed, Gampo Tashi was undaunted. . . . I pray that the forces of his meritorious deeds—his noble act of sincerely and perseveringly struggling for the Dharma, the nation and the people of Tibet allow him to reach the highest level of attainment.” Dalai Lama, Preface, in Andrugstang, at 6. The Dalai Lama has encouraged all Tibetan freedom fighters to record their stories, so that new generations will learn from them.

Today, Tibetan independence seems impossible. The same was true in 1983 for the many captive nations trapped in what Ronald Reagan called the Soviet Union’s “evil empire.” Less than a decade later, 14 sovereign nations had broken the fetters

of Soviet imperialism.²²² On the other hand, the current Chinese government is strongly encouraging Han immigration to Tibet and Xinjiang, to change the population balance. A similar strategy succeeded in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, where Manchus and Mongols are now very much the minority. Perhaps one day a free vote of the residents of Tibet might even support keeping Tibet in China. But that day has not come, nor has free voting anywhere in the PRC.

Further reading: Jane Ardley, *The Tibetan Independence Movement: Political, Religious, and Gandhian Perspectives* (2002); George N. Patterson, *Tragic Destiny: The Khamba Rebellion in Tibet* (2008) (autobiography of a Scotsman who aided the resistance in Eastern Tibet); [March 10th Memorial](#) (website commemorating the 1959 uprising); Carole McGranahan, Tashi Dhondup, Dorjee Damdul & Tashi Gelek, *Resistance and Unity: The Chinese Invasion, Makchi Shangri Lhagyal, and a History of Tibet (1947-1959)* (2019) (biography of resistance leader, and detailed descriptions of the many revolts); Robert Ford, *Captured in Tibet* (1990) (1957) (English radio expert who worked for the Tibetan government in 1948-50, and then was captured by the Chinese and held prisoner for five years); Michael C. van Walt van Praag, *The Status of Tibet: History, Rights, and Prospects in International Law* (1987) (including an appendix of the full text of Tibet's international treaties and agreements); Chanakya Sen (pseud.), *Tibet Disappears: A Documentary History of Tibet's International Status, the Great Rebellion and Its Aftermath* (1960) (including reprints of debates about Tibet in India's legislature and press); Birgit van de Wijer, *Tibet's Forgotten Heroes: The Story of Tibet's Armed Resistance Against China* (2012) (includes oral histories of 48 freedom fighters from Mustang).

g. Destalinization, Destabilization, and the Hundred Flowers

Mao and His Army

Despite all the rebellions in Tibet and in China itself, Mao said he was not worried. He frankly told the Politburo, the highest body of the CCP, that the party was engaged in “a war on food producers—as well as on food consumers.”²²³ He warned that the food confiscation could result in riots in a hundred thousand villages. Mao compared his great requisitions to what the Japanese had done in Manchuria (northeastern China) after they conquered it in 1931. The Manchurian peasants were angry, but the Japanese army kept the Manchurians under its thumb and kept taking their crops until the Japanese were expelled by the Soviet army in 1945. Similarly, argued Mao, the Chinese army could keep the Chinese people

222. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

223. Formally speaking, power in the CCP one-party state was held by the CCP Central Committee, which passed its power to the Politburo (political bureau), which passed its power to the Politburo Standing Committee, which in turn passed most of its power to the Chairman of the CCP Central Committee, Chairman Mao. Li Cheng-Chung, *The Question of Human Rights in China Mainland 14* (1979) (hereinafter Li, *Human Rights*). As discussed below, part of Mao's strategy during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution was to shift power from the Politburo to his handpicked Central Cultural Revolution Group.

under control.²²⁴ In January 1957, he mused that “even if several counties and provinces were occupied, with rebel troops all the way up to West Chang’an Avenue in Beijing, would the country collapse? Not as long as the army is reliable.”²²⁵

But would the military, formally known as the “People’s Liberation Army,” stay reliable? Mao had to manage the issue throughout his reign. PLA recruits were carefully vetted for ideology. “Great care was taken to ensure that only the politically reliable were allowed to carry a gun.” Fang Zhu, *Gun Barrel Politics: Party-Army Relations in Mao’s China 19-20* (2018).

The backbone of the PLA was the Group Armies (*jituanjun*), which were capable of being moved anywhere in the nation. To prevent a coup, these troops could not leave their region without express permission from the Party Center. Movements of these units within their region did not require permission, nor did the smaller movements of more local forces. *Id.* at 166. The most reliable units were stationed around Beijing, while all other units were forbidden to be armed in Beijing. Top generals were not supposed to travel without Mao’s advance permission. He was surrounded at all times by a large Praetorian Guard, and when he traveled, it was usually in a special armor-plated train.²²⁶

The apex of the CCP lived in or near what had once been the emperor’s grounds in Beijing. Within the heavily guarded *Zhongnanhai* (Chung Nan Hai) compound, Mao occupied a former imperial palace. The compound had concentric circles of armed guards, with a special group guarding Mao at the center. The palace and compound grounds were surrounded by the Central Guard Regiment, consisting of 35,000 to 40,000 ultra-loyal soldiers.²²⁷

Mao moved around constantly and spent lots of time away from Beijing. His movements and locations were kept secret from all but a few, and even they were notified only at the last minute. When he moved, all train traffic along the line was halted, leading to national train disruptions that lasted a week. The journey was protected by guards stationed every 50 meters. At the train stations, everyone was cleared out and replaced by security personnel. To make their appearance more pleasing, the security dressed as vendors. Since Mao’s schedule was erratic, the guards might have to stand duty for two weeks before Mao’s train eventually passed. When traveling, Mao stayed at one of his 50 luxurious and heavily fortified villas around China.²²⁸

For most of his reign Mao was a master tactician at army and CCP factional politics, maneuvering to keep the balance of power favorable to him. *See* Zhu. Mao was a “marvelous actor.” Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 343. “He loved the traditional stories of strategy and deception. He was an expert in when to wait, feint, and withdraw, and how to attack obliquely.” Nathan, at ix.

224. Chang & Halliday, at 393.

225. Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 285. Chang’an Avenue (Avenue of Eternal Peace) is a large east-west boulevard in Beijing. It separates the Tiananmen Gate from Tiananmen Square.

226. Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 128; Chang & Halliday, at 505-11, 556-58. The Praetorian Guard was the portion of the army around the Roman emperor, under his immediate control. *See* Guy de la Bédoyère, *Praetorian: The Rise and Fall of Rome’s Imperial Bodyguard* (2017).

227. Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 76-78, 344; Zhu, at 115.

228. Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 128-33.

Destalinization Destabilizes Mao

Political trends in the rest of the communist world worried Mao. His model was Soviet tyrant Josef Stalin, who murdered tens of millions. *See* R.J. Rummel, *Lethal Politics: Soviet Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1917* (1990) (about 61 million murdered by the Soviet regime from 1917 to 1987, with the peak under Stalin). Stalin died in 1953, and then in February 1956, Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev, denounced Stalin in a sensational and [widely read speech](#). Khrushchev said what everyone knew but had been afraid to say: forced collectivization of agriculture in the USSR had been a catastrophe; Stalin had created "a cult of personality" around himself; his erratic and narcissistic dictatorship had gravely injured the people and the communist party. *Cf.* Frank Dikötter, *How to Be a Dictator: The Cult of Personality in the Twentieth Century* (2019) (detailing how dictators create personality cults to create an illusion of popularity, and thereby to terrify opponents of dictatorship from revealing their true feelings to each other).

Under Khrushchev, the Soviet Union remained totalitarian, but some controls on the economy were loosened. While Khrushchev demanded to be obeyed and feared, he did not insist on being worshipped. Many prisoners in the slave labor *gulags* were released. The Soviet Union was "destalinized." At times, Khrushchev spoke in favor of "peaceful coexistence" with the West.

The reverberations were felt in China. Even in the highest ranks of the party, there were leaders who were increasingly willing to suggest that the food requisitions and exports were going too far, or that the military construction buildup should be slowed down and better organized. More resistance was appearing nationally.

In May 1956, Mao listened to the criticism and changed course. Or at least he appeared to. He announced, "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend." The government asked for denunciation of communist party errors. After a few months of repeated urging to speak up, many people began to do so.²²⁹ Mao was deeply hurt to find out how unpopular he was. After students in Beijing created a "Democracy Wall" with anti-communist slogans in May 1957, strikes and student protests intensified. In a secret instruction article for party leaders, Mao urged continued encouragement of dissent, so that the "rightists" could later be "rounded up and annihilated."²³⁰

The temporary free speech of Hundred Flowers months led to revolts. Students demonstrated, went on strike, and beat up communist officials. "[I]n every part of the nation except Tibet and Sinkiang," which were having their own ethnic revolts, students "exploded into violent defiance and enjoyed delirious freedom of speech."²³¹ They spread news about the 1956 Hungarian Uprising against communism, which had restored freedom to Hungary for 12 days until being crushed by a

229. Chu, at 169.

230. Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 289-91; Chang & Halliday, at 417-23.

231. Chu, at 173.

Soviet invasion.²³² Some Chinese students tried to organize a revolution, predicting that the peasants “will rise all over the country if they have weapons and leaders.”²³³

The peasants had neither, but some revolted anyway. In 1956 in Henan (Honan, central China) province, ten thousand peasants used farm implements such as hoes, scythes, and poles to take over the county seat, and then two more counties. Cf. *Joel* 13:10 (“Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am a warrior.’”). It took a hundred thousand troops two months to suppress them. Overall, 90,000 peasants participated in 320 riots against the CCP.²³⁴ The communist press admitted that there were at least 27 anti-communist rebel organizations nationwide.²³⁵ In Shandong (Shantung) province, on the northeast coast, villagers attacked locations where the government was storing confiscated food, and they killed CCP cadres.²³⁶

Hundred Flowers had worked well in tricking peaceful and nonpeaceful dissidents into exposing themselves. A new Anti-Rightist Movement inflicted mass arrests and executions. Starting in June 1957, “[r]ioting students were subdued by troops, secret police, and party goons, and their leaders condemned to slave labor or execution.”²³⁷ All elementary and secondary schools were ordered to declare 5 to 10 percent of their staff to be “rightists,” whether or not there were sufficient people who had spoken up during the Hundred Flowers period. About half a million people were swept up, including sincere party loyalists..²³⁸

Hundred Flowers and the Anti-Rightist Movement identified and removed people who had spread counterrevolutionary ideas, such as freedom of speech and antislavery. The leader of the persecutions in the Anti-Rightist Movement was CCP Secretary General Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-ping), a veteran commander of communist forces during the revolution and the Sino-Japanese War.²³⁹

232. *Id.* at 168. The main phase of the Hungarian Revolution lasted from October 23 to November 3, 1956, when it was suppressed by a Soviet Red Army invasion. Guerilla warfare continued afterward. The uprising allowed 200,000 Hungarians to escape to neighboring Austria. See Victor Sebestyen, *Twelve Days: The Story of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution* (2006) (best overview); Erwin Schmidl & László Ritter, *The Hungarian Revolution 1956* (2006) (military history); John P.C. Matthews, *Explosion: The Hungarian Revolution of 1956* (2007) (by Radio Free Europe reporter who was on scene); Paul Lendvai, *One Day That Shook the Communist World: The 1956 Hungarian Uprising and Its Legacy* (Ann Major trans. 2008) (by Hungarian journalist who was on scene); Sandor Kopacsi, *In the Name of the Working Class: The Inside Story of the Hungarian Revolution* (Daniel & Judy Stoffman trans. 1987) (1979) (by Budapest police chief who joined the uprising and served as deputy commander of the revolutionary militia); Csaba Bekes, *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents* (2002) (Soviet, Hungarian, and U.S. documents not previously available in English); Zoltan Virag, [Factors that Contributed to the Success of the Revolutionary Forces in the Early Phase of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956](#), M.A. thesis, Defense Technical Info. Ctr. (2011).

233. Chu, at 172.

234. Chow, at 305; Chu, at 175.

235. *Id.* at 175.

236. Chow, at 306.

237. Chu, at 176.

238. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 214, 242; Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 291-96

239. Spence, *Mao Zedong*, at 120.

As intellectual life was strangled, college and high school students took refuge in surreptitiously reading the Chinese classics, notwithstanding the Anti-Ancient campaign and the Anti-Ancient-Love-Modern purge.²⁴⁰

Legalism and Lawlessness

During Hundred Flowers, a professor's ten-thousand-word letter to Mao had been published in the *Yangtze Daily*. The letter complained about the persecution of intellectuals and referred to a notorious emperor who had buried alive 460 scholars.²⁴¹ In 1958, Mao responded in a speech at a CCP assembly: "What's so unusual about Emperor Shih Huang of the Chin Dynasty? He had buried alive 460 scholars only, but we have buried alive 46,000 scholars. They say we are behaving worse than Emperor Shih Huang of the Chin Dynasty. That's definitely not correct. We are 100 times ahead of Emperor Shih of the Chin Dynasty in repression of counter-revolutionary scholars."²⁴²

Mao liked to compare himself to the ruthless Emperor Shih Huang, and Mao was not incorrect in boasting about exceeding the emperor. Indeed, although Mao was a Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist, much of his philosophy came from the reign of Shih Huang. That philosophy is known as Legalism. As an 18-year-old student, Mao had written an essay defying the long-standing consensus against Emperor Shih; Mao extolled the emperor's most notorious advisor, Lord Shang, and bemoaned "the stupidity of the people of our country" for failing to accept Lord Shang's totalitarian program. Mao's *Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-49*: vol. 1: Pre-Marxist Period, 1912-20, at 5-6 (Stuart R. Schram ed. 1992) ("Essay on How Shang Yang Established Confidence by the Moving of the Pole," June 1912).

As Mao and other educated Chinese of his time knew, in 246 B.C., Ying Zheng became king of Chin (pinyin *Qin*), one of several kingdoms in the region. The militaristic, totalitarian Chin kingdom had long been gobbling up other kingdoms, and King Ying conquered the last holdout in 221 B.C. This marked the end of the [Warring States Period](#) (475-221 B.C.), which was regarded as an unfortunate period of chaos, with inferior rulers compared to more ancient times. Upon completion of the conquests, Ying dubbed himself Shih Huang, literally

240. Chu, at 180-81.

241. To prevent scholars from contrasting the emperor's reign unfavorably with previous rulers, in 213 B.C. the emperor ordered the burning of most books, especially the *Book of Songs* (a/k/a *Book of Poetry*, a collection of ancient poetry) and the *Classic of History* (a collection of government and political documents, essays, and speeches). Clements, at 131-32. See also Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian* (ca. 94 B.C.); Jens Østergård Petersen, *Which Books Did the First Emperor of Ch'in Burn? On the Meaning of Pai Chia in Early Chinese Sources*, 43 *J. Oriental Stud.* 1 (1995).

The burying incident took place in 212 B.C. Although Mao and everyone else during Mao's reign thought that the 460 men had been buried alive because they were Confucian scholars, newer scholarship suggests that the 460 were court scientists for the emperor, who killed them because they had failed in their project to discover the secret of immortality so that the emperor could reign forever. See Clements, at 133-35; Nicolas Zuffery, *Le Premier Empereur et les Lettrés: L'exécution de 212 av. J.-C.*, 16 *Etudes Chinoises* 59 (1998).

242. Li, *Human Rights*, at 12.

“First Emperor”—above mere kings. Foreigners began to call the large, unified realm “China.” Jonathan Clements, *The First Emperor of China* 199 (2015).²⁴³ The First Emperor reigned until his death in 210 B.C., which was followed by a succession crisis, and then the replacement of the Qin Dynasty by the Han Dynasty in 202 B.C.

Under the First Emperor, “weapons were confiscated” and melted into statues. *Id.* at 80. We do not know how much democide he perpetrated, but we do know that from 221 to 207 B.C., the population of China decreased from 20 million to 10 million.²⁴⁴

The governing political philosophy of the short-lived Qin/Qin Dynasty was Legalism. With roots hundreds of years old, Legalism was perfected in the writings of Mao’s favorite philosopher, Han Feizi. *See Han Feizi: Basic Writings* (Burton Watson trans. 2003); Chu, at 225.²⁴⁵ The Han Feizi “condemns counter-revolution, glorifies war and is utterly totalitarian.” *Id.*

Legalism reduced its adherents to animals. . . . [T]o the average inhabitant of Qin, life was a constant round of compulsory government service, timid interactions with neighbours who could turn one in, and constant fear of bucking the status quo. It is perhaps no surprise that one of the First Emperor’s greatest modern admirers was Chairman Mao, who imposed similarly restrictive conditions on the populace of modern China.

Clements, at 91. Reporting on suspected crimes, or anything suspicious, such as a sudden increase in wealth, was mandatory. Spouses were required to inform on each other. *Id.* at 93. Slave labor was a typical punishment for crimes, and judges who failed to convict and enslave put their own lives at risk. *Id.* at 94-97. All the same was true under Mao.

Mao also followed the Han Feizi’s advice for how an emperor should behave. The Legalist ruler

243. “After long debate, Ying Zheng’s advisers decided to combine a series of old terms for the all-highest, including *huang*, the old term for the rulers of the world, and *di*, an archaic word for the supreme being of a departed dynasty. The final term, *huangdi*, means Emperor in Chinese to this day.” In pinyin, he was *Qin Shi Huangdi* (Wales-Giles, *Chin Shih Huang*). Clements, at 76-77. Literally, China First Emperor.

Today, the First Emperor is best known for his necropolis, constructed by slave labor and comprising a vast number of terracotta figures. Shortly after the emperor’s death, many of the swords and other weapons of the terracotta soldiers were looted, for use in the ongoing battles among rival claimants to the throne. *Id.* at 151 (noting that the weapons looting was necessitated by the emperor’s earlier confiscation of weapons from the living). The necropolis was forgotten, then rediscovered in 1974. The First Emperor also used his slave labor machine, consisting of convicted criminals, to build earthen mounds linking the several anti-barbarian walls that had been constructed by different kingdoms. This was the first iteration of the Great Wall of China. The Great Wall as we know it today was constructed much later, in the Ming Dynasty

244. Rummel, *Death by Government*, at 51.

245. The authoritative Chinese edition of the complete Han Feizi is Chen Qiyou, *Han Feizi jishi* (2 vols., Shanghai, 1958). The year of publication is notable, since by 1958, publication of anything not in accord with the communist party line was not allowed.

withdraws, deliberately shunning contacts with his subordinates that might breed familiarity, dwelling deep within his palace, concealing his true motives and desires, and surrounding himself with an aura of mystery and inscrutability. . . . [H]e sits, far removed . . . at his desk in the innermost office and quietly initials things. . . . The ruler, to succeed, must eschew all impulses toward mercy and affection and be guided solely by enlightened self-interest. Even his own friends and relations, his own wife and children, Han Feizi warned, are not to be trusted, since all for one reason or another stand to profit from his death. He must be constantly alert, constantly on guard against deception from all quarters, trust no one and never reveal[] his inner thoughts and desires.

Burton Watson, *Introduction*, in Han Feizi, at 10-11. The ruler should have “the people kept in a state of ignorance and awe.” *Id.* at 7.

Pursuant to the Han Feizi, the First Emperor “built magnificent palaces and surrounded himself with the appropriate air of aloofness and mystery.” *Id.* at 11. He was so mistrustful that he coerced Han Feizi to commit suicide. *Id.* at 3-4. Living in social isolation, the First Emperor grew paranoid and increasingly agitated by the realization that he would die one day. He ordered the construction of an immense tunnel network connecting his palaces, so that there were 277 locations to which he could secretly move and almost no one would know where he was. Clements, at 133-34.

Mao imitated all of the above. Rarely appearing in public, he moved frequently among his 50 fortified palaces.²⁴⁶ He slept odd hours, seldom as much as 30 hours per week, and he thought nothing of summoning someone to a meeting at 2 A.M.²⁴⁷

Mao was personally estranged from his fourth wife, the former Shanghai stage and screen actress Jiang Qing (Chiang Ching, Madame Mao), who had a separate bedroom in the palaces.²⁴⁸ Nevertheless, he made her a valuable political ally, as described *infra*. Most of Mao’s waking time was spent reading in bed, working at his desk in the bedroom, or lounging by the private pools or beaches that were a feature of his palaces.²⁴⁹ He was a strong swimmer.

The isolation left Mao very few people to talk with. He had a large and ultra-loyal Praetorian Guard around him at all times, but these were mainly peasants or workers, and not much good for conversation about Chinese history and philosophy, Mao’s favorite topics.²⁵⁰ He also had an enormous number of mistresses, partly

246. Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 128-33.

247. *Id.* at 107.

248. Mao had ignored his first marriage, which had been arranged by his father. He then married the daughter of his favorite teacher, but later abandoned her to fight as a guerrilla. She stayed loyal to him and was eventually executed by the Nationalists for refusing to denounce him. While the second wife was still alive, Mao married wife number three. Later, when living in the caves at Yenan, Mao dumped wife three and took up with Jiang, 20 years his junior. Chu, at 225. *See generally* Spence, *Mao Zedong* (describing Mao’s relationships).

249. Li, *Private Life*, at 107, 132.

250. *Id.* at 85.

because he believed that prolonged intercourse with young women would enhance his longevity. Although Mao enjoyed playing Mahjong with the ladies, they had been procured for looks, not erudition.²⁵¹ So Mao spent much time talking with his personal physician, one of the few well-educated people Mao allowed to be around him on a regular basis.²⁵² He was often depressed.²⁵³

Mao's major break from Legalism was in legal codes. The Legalists got their name because they favored comprehensive laws, rigidly applied. As detailed in Section D.3.c, Mao eschewed law as such, and instead preferred that people could be executed or enslaved on a more arbitrary and changeable basis than would be possible under detailed codes.

As Mao accurately understood, Legalism was contrary to Confucianism, which favored a hierarchical society in which everyone, including the emperor, performs his or her duties according to law and custom. If the emperor did not rule for the benefit of the people, but instead behaved tyrannically, the people were authorized to overthrow him, Confucius said. Mao disdained Confucianism as "humanism . . . that is to say, People-centred-ism."²⁵⁴ According to Confucianism, the preeminent moral precept is to treat others as one would want to be treated—a principle that Westerners call the Golden Rule.²⁵⁵ As Mencius, the leading developer of Confucian thought, put it, "Try your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself, and you will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence." Mencius, Mencius 182 (D.C. Lau trans. 1970) (bk. 7, pt. A, no. 4). Mao said his own "principle is exactly the opposite. Do to others precisely what I don't want done to myself."²⁵⁶

In the anti-Confucian campaigns during Mao's reign, the people were ordered to study why Confucius was reactionary and Legalism was progressive—perhaps even a predecessor of Mao Zedong Thought. Yuri Pines, *Legalism in Chinese Philosophy*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Edward N. Zalta ed., rev. entry 2018). For more on Confucius and Mencius, see online Chapter 21.A.1.

Death Count

Not counting regional famines, Rummel puts the 1954-58 regime's death toll at 7,474,000, including 1,875,000 in the *laogai* camps. This appears to be an undercount. As discussed in Section D.3.a, Rummel concluded that the famine deaths from the Great Leap Forward (discussed next) should be considered democide because the famine was man-made and the government persisted in policies knowingly causing starvation. If the famine deaths in 1949-58 and 1963-75 (i.e., famine

251. *Id.* at 80, 94, 104, 150, 260, 358.

252. *Id.* at 85.

253. *Id.* at 8, 109-10, 197, 200, 339, 356, 542, 652. Although Doctor Li was not specifically trained as a psychiatrist, he presumably had enough medical training to recognize depression. A fifth-generation physician, Li had returned to China from Australia after the 1949 revolution. His grandfather had been a physician to a Manchu emperor. *Id.* at 14, 33-41.

254. Chang & Halliday, at 522.

255. Clements, at 17.

256. Chang & Halliday, at 433.

in years other than the Great Leap Forward) are considered to be the result of depraved indifference to human life, then these too should be included in Mao's democide count.

Rummel estimates famine deaths in 1949-53 as 1.0 million; 1954-58 as 5.5 million; and 1964-75 as 1.0 million. Mao died in 1976, and Rummel finds no evidence of large-scale famine deaths for 1976-87 (the last year for which he collected data).²⁵⁷ According to Dikötter, in 1953-54 "much of the starvation was man-made" and CCP evaded responsibility by falsely blaming natural disaster.²⁵⁸ It is fair to ascribe all of the Mao reign's famine deaths to Mao. Since Mao died, there have been no famines in China, because the government has operated more rationally.

"[T]here has never been a famine in a functioning multiparty democracy." Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* 178 (2000). "Famines are so easy to prevent that it is amazing that they are allowed to occur at all." *Id.* at 175. Thus, India's last famine was the Bengal famine of 1943, when it was a British colony; since independence, there have been no famines in India. *Id.* at 180.

To be sure, conditions that could lead to famine still arise: natural disasters cause crop failures, or the purchasing power of the poorest people suddenly declines. When such conditions arise, democratic governments even in very poor countries—like India after 1948—prevent starvation by helping those at most risk. *Id.* at 163-87. Among the advantages of free government is that a free press and free political opposition provide early warning about famine conditions and pressure the government to take steps to relieve the famine. *Id.* at 181.

Not counting the famines, over the five-year period of 1954-58, about one person per hundred in China was killed.²⁵⁹ On an annualized basis, this is a homicide rate of 200 victims per 100,000 population. Adding in the famine deaths in the period raises the death by government rate to about 340 victims per 100,000 population. As noted the worst annual homicide rates in the United States have been 11 victims per 100,000 population.

h. The Great Leap Forward and the Select Militia

In Marxist-Leninist theory, a post-revolutionary nation must initially go through a period of building and achieving socialism before it can move to building and then achieving communism. Firmly back in control, Mao was ready for full communism. In the Great Leap Forward (*dayue jin*), all labor and all products would be directly owned by the state. Peasants were herded into slave labor farms, euphemistically called "people's communes" (*renmin gongshe*).²⁶⁰ Keeping the peasants in camps prevented them from surreptitiously harvesting food and eating it themselves, rather than letting the government take it.²⁶¹

257. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 12 tbl. 1.1.

258. Dikötter, *Tragedy*, at 222.

259. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 244.

260. People's communes were replaced by township governments in 1983. CLI.16.1809 (pkulaw). After the separation between governments and communes, most communes simply vanished by June 1985.

261. Chang & Halliday, at 434-35.

In many communes, families were forced to leave their homes, live in sex-segregated barracks, and eat in mess halls. Husbands and wives were allowed one short conjugal visit per week.²⁶² Mothers were sent out to hard labor in the fields; pregnant women were allowed respite 40 days before parturition. They were liberated from childcare, as babies over a month old were taken to be communally raised by youngest and oldest females of the commune, sometimes sleeping communally rather than with parents. Starting at age 3, the child would be under the control of state education.²⁶³ This was consistent with Marxism, which boldly demanded “[a]bolition of the family!” Karl Marx, *Communist Manifesto* 24 (Samuel Moore & Friedrich Engels trans. 1888) (1848); see also Fredrick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Ernest Untermann trans. 1909) (1884, as *Der Ursprung der Familie*) (families with fathers exist only because of private property).

To enforce the slave labor system, a select militia was used. Mao’s militia was theoretically broad, consisting of most of the able-bodied population. Mao said that the militia was “the armed force of all the people” (*quanmin wuzhuang*). Ralph A. Thaxton, Jr., Catastrophe and Contention in Rural China: Mao’s Great Leap Forward Famine and the Origins of Righteous Resistance in Da Fo Village 331 (2008); Frank Dikötter, Mao’s Great Famine: The History of China’s Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962, at 49-50 (2010). According to government propaganda, “the people of the commune are armed.”²⁶⁴ If one took the rhetoric of Mao and CCP at face value, one might think that they were the words of enthusiasts for a broad militia—such as the ancient Chinese Taoists (online Ch. 21.A.2), the Renaissance Italians (online Ch. 21.D); the English Whigs (Ch. 2.H & K, 22.H & K), or the American Founders (Chs. 3-5). In the 1958 People’s Militia Movement, Mao had declared: “Organize the people’s militia on a big scale” (*da ban min bing shi*).²⁶⁵

But what Mao created was actually a select militia, consisting of a small portion of the population. See Ch. 5.A. The greatest famine in history was the intentional result of the Great Leap Forward. The means by which the famine was imposed was the employment of Mao’s select militia against the disarmed populace.

At the Virginia Convention for ratifying the U.S. Constitution, George Mason had warned that a select militia would “have no fellow-feeling for the people.” Ch. 5.B.5. In England, the despotic Stuart kings had used “select militias loyal to them to suppress political dissidents, in part by disarming their opponents.” *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570, 592 (2008) (Ch. 11.A). One reason the Second Amendment was enacted was to assuage fears that the U.S. government “would disarm the people in order to impose rule through a standing army or select militia.” *Id.* at 588.

As Mao imposed what he called “war communism” on society, the slogan was “everyone is a soldier” (*quanmin jiebing*). E.g., U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, *Conference of Militia Leaders in Communist China* 7 (1960) (translation of Michio Iwaruma, *Communist China’s Defense Advances on Two Legs* (Nihon Ashide Aruku Chugoku Kokobu), Asian Econ. Thrice-Monthly Report (Tokyo), May 20,

262. Chu, at 127.

263. Chu, at 133, 185; Chow, at 234-35.

264. Labin, at 104.

265. Wang, at 136.

1960). “Everyone is a soldier” hardly meant that everyone had arms. Instead, it meant slave labor, no private property (not even clothing or eating utensils), and no dissent.²⁶⁶

In the cities, many workers had been armed during the revolution, and they wanted to keep their arms and their unions. The new regime in its first several years eliminated the right to strike, eliminated independent unions (replaced by puppet organizations controlled by the CCP), constricted the worker militias, and confiscated their guns.²⁶⁷ The militias (*minting*, *minbing*) were under the direct formal control of the PLA and the CCP, although actual control varied at times. Thomas C. Roberts, *The Chinese People’s Militia and the Doctrine of People’s War* 14, 35-37 (1983); Perry, at 183, 239 n.115.

Most Chinese of the requisite ages (often, 16-45 for males, 16-35 for females) were pressured to “voluntarily” join the local militia. Persons from bad class backgrounds, such as the son of a former small landowner, were excluded. So were persons not considered politically reliable. On a daily basis, the militia was mainly a large labor force assigned to construction projects, agricultural work, and so on. The majority of the militia received little military training. A subset of them, males 16-30 and females 16-25, might receive several days or two weeks of training annually. The “armed backbone militia” (*wuzhuang jiguan minbing*) were especially screened for family background, political loyalty, and military aptitude. Many of them were demobilized former PLA soldiers. Ralph L. Powell, *Everyone a Soldier: The Communist Chinese Militia*, *For. Aff.* 100 (Oct. 1960); Roberts, at 19 (summarizing a 1978 PLA document). Sometimes the militia were given no funds to pay for training equipment, such as wooden rifles, so they resorted to extortion to raise money from the public.²⁶⁸

A 1965 report indicated that there were 9 million militia weapons, including rifles, mortars, and antitank guns. So in a nation of over 600 million people, the armed select militia comprised fewer than 2 percent of the population. Militia arms were not personally owned but were usually centrally stored and guarded.²⁶⁹ Militia rifles were not standardized to match PLA arms until the early 1980s. Before that, militia arms included a heterogeneous mix of Japanese, German, British, or U.S. rifles, perhaps scavenged from battlefields.²⁷⁰ A 1963 book stated that the PLA “supply of rifle bullets is so precious that in recent years they have seldom been used for target practice.”²⁷¹ If the standing army was not getting much target practice, the militia was presumably getting even less, especially given the diverse ammunition it would need. In rural areas, most Chinese militia members were unarmed. Only “a small proportion practised with live ammunition and were trained as shock troops.”²⁷² Accordingly, the firearms proficiency of much of the armed militia may have been low. However, while proficiency may be necessary to fight an invading foreign army, not much proficiency is needed to shoot an unarmed peasant a few feet away.

266. Dikötter, *Famine*, at 298.

267. Perry, at 158-68, 178-81.

268. *See* Li, *Militia*, at 45-46, 139-41.

269. Roberts, at 42-45.

270. *Id.*

271. Chu, at 279.

272. Dikötter, *Famine*, at 50.

As discussed *infra*, during the 1950s some militia joined resistance fighters, or turned a blind eye to their activities. After several militias in Guangdong province attacked government offices and then launched guerilla warfare from the mountains, controls on the political reliability of the militia were intensified.²⁷³

In a 1960 speech, a high-ranking CCP official bragged that the people are the masters in China because they are armed; in the same speech he urged that the militia be reorganized so that only true communist loyalists would be armed. Powell, at 105 (quoting Huang Huo-ch'ing, *Liaoning Jih-Pao*, Feb. 27, 1960, as reported in *Survey of the China Mainland Press*, Apr. 12, 1960, 13, 15 (American Consulate General, Hong Kong)).

According to a political refugee interviewed in Hong Kong, in a commune of 15,000 families, there would be about 1,500 militiamen, chosen from the politically correct, who would have rifles. Of these there was "a further selection of 150 super-reliable men whose rifles are always loaded."²⁷⁴ "Otherwise ammunition is kept at a central armoury guarded day and night by special police armed with machine-guns. As an extra precaution the personnel of this guard is changed every two months."²⁷⁵ A hundred and fifty always-armed males could control 15,000 families.

"They would turn out to be crucial in enforcing discipline, not only during the frenzy to establish communes, but throughout the years of famine that lay ahead." Dikötter, *Famine*, at 50. See also Perry, at 182 ("local militia were a critical ingredient in the CCP's consolidation of power in the countryside").

The militia movement and a small corps of trained fighters brought military organization to every commune. All over China farmers were roused from sleep at dawn at the sound of a bugle and filed into the canteen for quick bowl of watery rice gruel. Whistles were blown to gather the workforce, which moved in military step to the fields. . . . Party activists, local cadres and the militia enforced discipline, sometimes punishing underachievers with beatings. At the end of the day, villagers returned to their living quarters, assigned according to each person's work shift. Meetings followed in the evening to evaluate each worker's performance and review the local tactics.

Dikötter, *Famine*, at 50. "Militiamen spearheaded the countless mobilization campaigns that were the hallmark of Mao's rule. They enforced universal participation by all members of the factory or village, dragged out or designated targets of struggle, and monitored mass meetings." Perry, at 191.

A case study of the remote village of Da Fo, located on the North China Plain, details the operation of the select militia. There, guns had been confiscated in 1951 (later than the general confiscation in 1949, perhaps because of the village's isolation). Over the course of the war against the Japanese (1937-45) and then the civil war (1945-49), the high-quality leaders of the Da Fo communist militia had been moved elsewhere, to positions of greater responsibility. The militiamen left behind were the dregs of society. "Villagers remember them as poorly endowed,

273. Perry, at 184-88.

274. Labin, at 104.

275. *Id.*

uneducated, quick-tempered, perfidious hustlers and ruffians who more often than not operated in an arbitrary and brutal political manner in the name of the Communist Party.” Thaxton, at 329. There were no rules against them exploiting or coercing peasants. *Id.* at 327. To the extent that the national government provided subsidies, the militia took them. *Id.* at 328. The Da Fo militia had 30 guns and kept the crop fields under a four-man armed guard day and night, to prevent peasants from obtaining food. *Id.* at 205.

Because the government was seizing so much food for export and for the cities, widespread famine developed. All food was dispensed collectively, with only the most productive workers getting life-sustaining rations. The elderly, infirm, sick, or weak, already half-starving, were deliberately starved or beaten to death, thus reducing state expenditures on what the state considered to be inefficient production inputs.²⁷⁶ “In collective canteens, food, distributed by the spoonful according to merit, became a weapon to force people to follow the party’s every dictate.” Dikötter, Cultural Revolution, at 8. Indeed, “the most common weapon was food, as starvation became the punishment of first resort.” *Id.* at 10.

“The militia was a repressive institution, and Mao needed it to press the countless rural dwellers who were resisting disentanglement by the agents of the people’s commune.” Thaxton, at 329. “These men were practically the perfect candidates to tear apart civil society and destroy human purpose. . . . [T]hey had a lot in common with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, with Ceaușescu’s militias in Transylvania, and with the Janjaweed in the Darfur region of Sudan. In rural China of the late 1950s, as in these other killing field environments, such men were backed by state power.” *Id.* at 330.²⁷⁷ The militia played “a critical role in helping the Great Leap to achieve liftoff,” as it forced the peasantry into slave labor at the point of a gun. *Id.* at 331.

Da Fo village had a strong martial arts tradition when China was a republic (1912-49), but the exhaustion and poverty caused by communization made it impossible to pay for training, and “forced the abandonment of the sport. From the standpoint of Communist Party leaders, this development proved politically convenient, for without martial arts training it became far more difficult for male villagers to defend themselves and family members against Great Leap berating and beatings.” *Id.* at 315.

The militia and the communist party cadres carried large sticks they used to beat the peasants.²⁷⁸ The frontline enforcers were under orders from their superiors to administer frequent beatings, and those who failed to do so were punished.²⁷⁹ “A vicious circle of repression was created, as ever more relentless beatings were required to get the starving to perform whatever tasks were assigned to them.”²⁸⁰

276. Dikötter, *Famine*, at 299-302.

277. The Darfur genocide is discussed in online Chapter 18.D. Nicolae Ceaușescu was the communist ruler of Rumania from 1965 to 1989. Transylvania (“the land beyond the forest”) is a region in central Rumania. Many English speakers know of Transylvania from Bram Stoker’s 1897 novel *Dracula*, whose vampire shares a name with the notoriously cruel fifteenth-century monarch Vlad Dracula (in English, Vlad the Impaler).

278. Dikötter, *Famine*, at 293.

279. *Id.* at 293, 299-300.

280. *Id.* at 299.

Without the select militia, “surely the famine’s death rate would not have been so high.”²⁸¹ Because of the select militia, peasants suffered “socialist colonization, subhuman forms of labor, and starvation.”²⁸²

“As starvation sets in, famished people are often too weak and too focused on their own survival to contemplate rebellion.”²⁸³ “As in other famines, from Bengal and Ireland to the Ukraine, most villagers, by the time it became clear that starvation was there to stay, were already too weak to walk down the road to the next village, let alone find weapons and organize an uprising.”²⁸⁴

The same was true for Cambodians two decades later, under Mao’s proteges the Khmer Rouge; the Cambodians who were not immediately exterminated by the government were put into slave labor and half-starved, leaving them in no condition to organize a revolt. *See* Pin Yathay, *Stay Alive, My Son* 102 (1987). *See generally* Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79* (3d ed. 2008).

Thaxton’s study of Da Fo village found that because the militia confiscated all of the weapons they could find, “the physically exhausted and virtually weaponless villagers were not prepared to pursue aggressive retaliation.”²⁸⁵ Some persons did have hidden guns; in 1960 house-to-house searches for hidden food turned up 23 rifles and “scores of rifles in surrounding villages.”²⁸⁶

Resistance

Although starvation dampened the ability of many to revolt, there were many revolts during the Great Leap Forward. Mao knew his regime was unpopular. As he privately acknowledged in 1959, “Several hundred million peasants and production team leaders are united against the Party.”²⁸⁷

Indeed, forced communization had partly been for the purpose of preventing uprisings. After losing the civil war in 1949, the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-Shek had fled to the island of Taiwan. The communists worried that the Nationalists might invade at any time, and

281. Thaxton, at 331.

282. *Id.* at 334.

283. *Id.*

284. Dikötter, *Famine*, at 227. The Great Bengal Famine of 1769-73 killed 10 million people in India and was caused by the rapacity of England’s East India Tea Company. The famine was one of the reasons why American Patriots resisted being coerced into buying the company’s tea. *See* Ch. 2.E. There was another Bengal famine in 1943, during World War II, killing 3 to 7 million.

The Irish Potato Famine (1845-49) killed about a million, and forced another million Irish to emigrate, many to America.

The Ukraine famine (*Holmodor*) of 1932-33 was similar to the Great Leap Forward. It was deliberately imposed by Stalin as part of his farm collectivization program, and was intended to destroy middle class farmers, known as *kulaks*. The death toll was about 6 or 7 million. *See* Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (1986).

285. Thaxton, at 246.

286. *Id.* at 180, 246.

287. Chang & Halliday, at 446.

if such an invasion did take place, the danger would not be so much from the military strength of the invaders, but from the popular risings which would take place in support of them all over the country. Such risings must therefore be prevented before they have a chance of developing. That is why Mao organises his praetorian militia all over the country, and that is why he is concentrating the population in the People's Communes, where he can keep an eye on them better and have them always under his own guns.

Labin, at 115 (citing the CCP political magazine *Red Flag*, Sept. 1, 1958).

The regime's fears were well founded. As described *infra*, the mere hope of a Taiwanese invasion had led to uprisings during the Korean War. Starting in 1954, Mao ordered artillery bombardment of Quemoy, a small Taiwanese-controlled island near the Chinese coast. In the next several months, there were 11 peasant uprisings in the area from which the shells were launched, "touched off by rumors that the Nationalists were landing in the vicinity. These suicidal revolts by peasants armed with scythes, hoes and a few seized rifles do not prove the feasibility of such actions, but they reveal the immense probabilities in case an outside force does land in the coastal areas."²⁸⁸

On September 24, 1958, Taiwan airplanes bombed a town in Fujian, the province nearest Taiwan. Thousands of people—including militia—rose up. They raided arsenals, seized communication facilities, and killed CCP cadres. The army responded immediately and defeated them within 24 hours. Three thousand rebels and four hundred CCP cadres were killed.²⁸⁹ Fujian saw another "serious armed uprising" in the fall of 1961, lasting into the next year.²⁹⁰

Fujian was not the only province to see desperate insurrection against the Great Leap Forward. In December 1958, a revolt at a commune in Guangdong resulted in a two-hour battle, with shots that were heard in nearby Macau (at the time, a Portuguese colony and port; now a special administrative region in China).²⁹¹ In the west in 1959-60, armed revolts took place in the provinces Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan (Szechuan), Henan, and Shandong; they were caused in part by the CCP's confiscation of livestock.²⁹² In 1961-62, there was "continuous guerrilla warfare" in southern China. *Id.* at 250. In Wuhua county, near the southeast coast, in 1962 a "former army officer, a Colonel Chung, led some 8,000 peasants to attack the militia and loot granaries."²⁹³

Not all forms of resistance involved weapons. On a few occasions, a huge mass of people used their bodies to block trains, and then take the food that was being shipped to the cities.²⁹⁴ Throughout Mao's reign, arson was an especially common form of resistance, in part because it did not require armed confrontation with the standing army and the select militia. Sabotage was also frequent, sometimes

288. Chu, at 243.

289. Chow, at 310.

290. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 250; *see also* Chu, at 200-01.

291. Chow, at 311.

292. Chu, at 200; Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 247-49.

293. *Id.*; Chu, at 201.

294. Dikötter, *Famine*, at 224.

accompanied by hit-and-run raids. *See, e.g.*, Chu, at 201 (describing northeastern rebels who “used coal shops as secret arms depots”). In Mao’s home province of Hunan, the militia reported in 1959 that during the last decade it had dealt with 19,584 instances of sabotage and 1,692 revolts.²⁹⁵ Sometimes slave laborers revolted and destroyed infrastructure.²⁹⁶

Overall for 1961, the central government reported 146,852 granary raids, 94,532 arsons, and 3,738 revolts.²⁹⁷ In short, there were many people who did not like what the CCP was doing to them and were brave or desperate enough to take violent action.

Around New Year’s Day 1963, the China and Taiwan regimes confirmed that the Taiwanese were transporting armed supporters into China to prepare for guerrilla warfare. The PLA held conferences to make plans in case of large Taiwanese landings.²⁹⁸ Luckily for Mao, Chiang would not actually invade if the Americans objected; Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy rejected calls from some Americans to “unleash Chiang Kai-shek.” The U.S. government supplied Taiwan enough military aid to defend itself, but not enough to support full aid to the resistance in China, let alone an invasion. *See* Leonard H.D. Gordon, *United States Opposition to Use of Force in the Taiwan Strait, 1954-1962*, 72 *J. Am. Hist.* 637 (1985).

Although a full-scale Taiwanese invasion might have sparked a simultaneous nationwide revolution, the CCP regime was able to weather lesser revolts. First of all, the confiscation of radios, especially radio transmitters, made it very difficult for news about an uprising in one area to inspire similar action elsewhere.

The effect of radio confiscation was augmented by a ban on distribution or possession of newspapers outside their local circulation area. Only “two newspapers, one journal” (*liang bao yi kan*) were allowed national circulation. They were the *People’s Daily* (the CCP newspaper, *Renmin ribao*), *Liberation Army Daily* (the military newspaper, *Jiefang jun bao*), and *Red Flag* (the CCP political magazine, *Hongqi*). They often published joint editorials.²⁹⁹ So even though local newspapers might report on a local revolt after it had been defeated, readers in other provinces would never learn that the revolt had taken place.

Besides successfully controlling communications, the CCP retained the loyalty of the military, the People’s Liberation Army. The PLA suppressed local revolts with local army units, and called in forces from other areas when needed.³⁰⁰ As the economy collapsed, and famine spread, popular revolts could be put down one at a time by the army. By tightly controlling communication and arms, the communists retained domination.

The Rise of Lin Biao and Political Correctness in the Army

When the CCP Politburo and Central Committee gathered at the Mount Lushan resort in the summer of 1959, defense minister Peng Dehuai sent Mao a private memo, politely suggesting the Great Leap Forward’s communization of

295. Chu, at 205.

296. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 248.

297. Chu, at 205-06.

298. *Id.* at 247.

299. Chu, at 154, 272; Wang, at 147.

300. Dikötter, *Famine*, at 224-25; Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 35.

agriculture was having counterproductive results. Peng had previously opposed Mao's personality cult, to Mao's annoyance. And Peng had interfered with Mao's personal fun, by complaining about Mao's sybaritic lifestyle, such as all the government-procured concubines.

At the Lushan conference, Mao circulated Peng's letter and soon thereafter purged him. Responding to criticisms of the Great Leap, an angry Mao said that the army was still with him, and that was enough. If the army ever did turn against him, warned Mao, he would head to the hills and lead a guerilla opposition. Nobody dared speak against him. Forever after, it was clear that anyone who dared to contradict Mao would be eliminated.³⁰¹

To replace Peng, Mao turned to war hero Lin Biao. A great general from the revolution, Lin had won two of the three decisive battles. With an army of over a million, Lin had swept from frigid Manchuria all the way south to the tropical island of Hainan.³⁰² Within the PLA, Lin had a natural base of support among the officers who had served under him; their political fortunes were partly tied to his reputation. Roberts, at 61-62. Mao had been jealous of Lin's popularity, so after the revolution Mao had sidelined Lin into jobs with good titles but nothing to do. Chow, at 69.

By installing Lin, Mao got the kind of defense minister he wanted: one who never questioned him. Lin Biao purged the PLA officer corps, rooting out officers suspected of insufficient submissiveness to Mao. Lin dedicated the PLA to political indoctrination of service members. Zhu, at 111, 128-31. As Lin proceeded, he made many enemies in the PLA. He not only stripped the officers of their privileges, such as separate dining areas, in 1965 he even abolished ranks. Zhu, at 195; Li, *Private Life*, at 543; Roberts, at 6.

Lin relentlessly parroted Mao's military strategy of "People's War." If China were invaded by the Soviet Union, whose army was well trained and well armed, the Chinese could retreat, lure the invaders deep into the country, and then destroy them, with joint operations of the regular army and the militia. A huge mass of people, even if poorly armed, could triumph over weapons. "Militia is the basis of victory" was the official line. Roberts, at 15, 115-17.³⁰³

Whether the strategy that had won the revolution would have been effective to defend China in the case of major invasion by the Soviet Union is questionable. Many PLA officers did not think so. They also "opposed the hyperbole of Lin's cult

301. Zhu, at 86-88, 103; Spence, *Mao Zedong*, at 144-46.

302. Hainan Island was invaded by the PLA in March 1950 and conquered by May.

303. During the Chinese revolution, Mao had accepted Stalin's leadership of the communist bloc. But after Stalin died, personality conflicts between Mao and Khrushchev exacerbated conflicts over global communist leadership, with Mao unsuccessfully demanding to be in charge of communism throughout Asia, and making pretensions to be leader of the "Third World." Additionally, China and Russia had a centuries-long rivalry over influence in Siberia and Central Asia, with Russia having emerged the victor by the late nineteenth century, and then adding to its advantage immediately after World War II. Border disputes between China and the Soviet Union in Manchuria and Xinjiang turned violent in 1969, and no one knew whether the Soviets would launch an invasion to replace Mao with a more pro-Soviet regime. *See* Danhui Li & Yafeng Xia, *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1959-1973: A New History* (2018).

of personality, his simplistic insistence on men over machines, his opposition to modernization, his inane mouthing of slogans.” Li, *Private Life*, at 543.

Lin himself knew that Mao did not deserve worship. In his private diary he wrote that the Great Leap Forward was “based on fantasy and a total mess.” Mao “worships himself, he has blind faith in himself, adores himself, he will take credit for every achievement but blame others for his failures,” Lin wrote.³⁰⁴

Whatever people privately thought of Mao, “[t]he secret of Mao’s political survival lay in his ability to take advantage of the unique nature of the Chinese political system, characterized by the civil-military dualism and factional divisions. He managed to stay in power by playing the civil and military groups off against each other and by utilizing all the cleavages among the civilian and military elites.”³⁰⁵

Seven Thousand Cadres and the End of the Great Leap Forward

The Party Center had backed off somewhat from the Great Leap Forward in October 1960, but too late to prevent continuing famine. To Mao’s great humiliation, the Great Leap Forward was recognized by the party as a failure. The verdict came in 1962, at the January-February conference of the Seven Thousand Cadres. There, leading CCP officials from all over the nation were able to meet and find that the deadly conditions in their own provinces and counties were a nationwide problem. Although Mao managed to suppress public discussion of the famine for most of the meeting, the tide turned when the CCP’s second-highest official, Liu Shaoqui, departed from his prepared text in his closing remarks and bravely denounced the famine as a “man-made disaster” (*renhuo*). He received a standing ovation, and even Mao was forced to pretend to take some of the responsibility.³⁰⁶ The government’s food requisition for the next year was significantly reduced.³⁰⁷

Rummel’s range for deaths in 1959-62 is 4,244,000 to 21,955,000 killed; he estimates about 10,729,000, including 5 million in the *laogai* camps.³⁰⁸ As noted above, Rummel originally did not include the Great Leap famine in his totals, but he later decided that it should be included, since it was the result, at the least, of depraved indifference to human life.

Dikötter, using archival population data and other sources not available when Rummel was writing in the early 1990s, estimates a minimum of 45 million people perished during the Great Leap Forward (1958-62); of these, “at least 6 to 8 percent of the famine victims were directly killed or died as a result of injuries inflicted

304. Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution*, at 35.

305. Zhu, at 103.

306. Liu, a leading communist theoretician, had created the Mao cult in 1943 as a counterpoint to Chiang Kai-shek’s portrayal of himself as the savior of China. Among Liu’s many works was the widely read [How to be a Good Communist](#) (1939). During the Cultural Revolution, he was beaten nearly to death, put under house arrest in a single room (separate from his wife), and denied medical care. Rather than execute Liu, Chairman and Madame Mao kept Liu alive to prolong his suffering. Like many high-ranking victims of the Cultural Revolution, he was posthumously rehabilitated after Mao died. *See generally* Lowell Dittmer, *Liu Shao-ch’i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Mass Criticism* (1974).

307. Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution*, at 10.

308. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 251.

by cadres or the militia.”³⁰⁹ The 45 million figure is consistent with secret research conducted by senior CCP official Chen Yizi in the post-Mao era, which assessed the Great Leap fatalities at 43 to 46 million. As Dikötter notes, another researcher “with a great of experience” estimates a death toll of 55 million.³¹⁰ As detailed the figure of 86 million deaths used in this chapter is based on 50 million deaths in the Great Leap Forward, including 5 million in the *lao gai*.

Mao’s Grip Loosens

In order to survive the Great Leap Forward, the people had begun massive evasion of the party’s monopoly on all production and trade. Black markets became pervasive, often with the tacit consent (or bribery) of local party officials.³¹¹

With the Great Leap Forward finished, and the underground economy spreading, some illegal private tutors and schools were even teaching the [Confucian Classics](#). Traditional folk culture was being revived. In some places, Buddhist temples and Christian churches were operating. Young people took the pervasive propaganda song “Without the Communist Party, There Would be No New China,” and instead sang “Without the Communist Party, There Would be No Dried Yam” (a dried yam being a symbol of famine).³¹²

Ever since Mao’s defeat at the Seven Thousand Cadres meeting in 1962, he had been working on plans to put things fully under his thumb, and to get rid of Liu Shaoqi. In 1963, Mao coerced the CCP leadership into purging 5 million party members and killing 77,000. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 23.

Despite all the forced professions of loyalty that had been required ever since the CCP took over in 1949, in 1964 Mao estimated that “a third of the power in this country is no longer in our hands, it is in the hands of our enemies.”³¹³

It was time for bolder steps. By the mid-1960s, it had become clear that killing off the bourgeoisie had not killed bourgeois ideas—such as free labor and free exchange. Even within the high echelons of the CCP, there were “revisionists.” They secretly thought that the Soviet Union’s post-Stalin version of communism was more sensible than Stalin’s and Mao’s. From the top party leaders in Beijing to the rank and file party cadres a thousand miles away, much of the Chinese Communist Party was aligned with antidemocratic but rational party officials such as Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping.

Mao devised a plan to deal with them. Its aims and methods were audacious. He was going to incite a popular revolution to overthrow the communist party itself. He would start a civil war. Making sure that his side would win would require control of weapons.

309. Dikötter, *Famine*, at 295, 326-33.

310. *Id.* at 324-25; Yu Xiguang, *Dayeujin Ku Rizhi: Shangshuis (The Great Leap Forward and the Years of Bitterness: A Collection of Memorials 8 (2005) (55 million)*.

311. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 15-22; *see also* Thaxton, at 170-76 (case study in Da Fo).

312. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 30-32.

313. *Id.* at 22.

i. The Cultural Revolution

The warmup to the Cultural Revolution began in 1963, with attacks on classical Chinese opera. In China, opera has always been popular with people of all educational levels. Mao's fourth wife, a former actress from Shanghai, led campaigns denouncing operas for political incorrectness. Jiang Qing, *On the Revolution in Peking Opera (Tan Jingju geming): A Speech from the Plenary Discussion with Performers After the Modern Peking Opera Trial Performance Convention in Beijing, July 1964*, 26 Opera Q, 455 (2010) (published in 1967 in *Red Flag*, *People's Daily*, and *People's Liberation Army Daily*). See generally Ross Terrill, *Madame Mao, the White-Boned Demon: A Biography of Madame Mao Zedong* (rev. ed. 1992).

By the time she was done, fine arts performances were limited to five operas, two ballets, and one symphony. These post-1949 "model" pieces were crude propaganda. In the privacy of her palaces, Madame Mao had a broader selection of entertainment and enjoyed private screenings of Western movies.

The major problem, in Mao's view, was that people were not fully thinking like socialists. "Dead people are still in control of literature and the arts," Mao complained in 1963. Party members were "promoting feudal and capitalist art but ignoring socialist art."³¹⁴

Playwrights and other intellectuals were targeted. The most-vilified playwright had previously been praised by Mao himself for the 1961 opera *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* (or *Dismissal of Hai Jui from Official Post*). The story was based on a historical hero who was imprisoned because he told the Ming emperor that the emperor was out of touch with the people and did not recognize their suffering.³¹⁵

There is a long Chinese literary tradition of "pointing at the mulberry and reviling the ash" — in other words, indirectly criticizing A by criticizing B. Anne F. Thurston, *Enemies of the People: The Ordeal of the Intellectuals in China's Great Cultural Revolution 85-89* (1987). Mao apparently realized that he was seen as more like the incompetent and self-centered emperor and not as the brave and honest civil servant. *Id.*; Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 46-48, 295; Yao Wen-yuan, *On the New Historical Play "Dismissal of Hai Jui,"* Shanghai Wen Huipao, Nov. 10, 1965, *reprinted in* *People's Daily*, Nov. 30, 1965 (article initiating the campaign against the play's author).³¹⁶

314. Li, *Private Life*, at 405.

315. The Ming Dynasty ruled from 1368 to 1644. The Hai Ru incident took place in 1565.

316. Other works attacked were Hsia Yen, *Lin Family Store*; Yang Han-sheng, *Pei Kuo Chang Nan*; Ko Ling, *A Nightless City*; Meng Chao, *Li Hui Liang*; Shao Chuan-lin, *Theory of Writing About Intermediate Personages*; Chou Ku-cheng, *Theory of Literature and Arts: A Reflection of the Spirit of Our Era*; Tien Han, Hsieh Yao Huan (1961) (the dramatist Tien was author of, *inter alia*, the lyrics of the Communist China national anthem, *March of the Volunteers*); Chien Po-tsang, *Views on History*; Teng To, *Night Talks at Yenshan* (denounced in Yao Wen-yuan, *On "Three-Family Village" — The Reactionary Nature of Evening Chats at Yenshan and Notes from Three-Family Village*, *Liberation Daily*, May 10, 1966); and Liao Mo-sha, *Three Family Village* (discussed in Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Curious Case of the "Three-Family Village,"* in *Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 3: The Coming of the Cataclysm 1961-1966* (1987)). See Li, *Human Rights*, at 123, 126.

Mao's objective in the Cultural Revolution was to overthrow the CCP itself, which had always been closely tied to the army. He knew that the majority of the Politburo was against his plans, and so were most of the provincial and local CCP committees.³¹⁷ So Mao knew he needed the army's backing. Although Lin Biao would prove himself absolutely subservient to Mao and the Cultural Revolution, getting the entire army to go along was not so easy, as Mao and Lin would later discover.

Next to Liu Shaoqi, Mao's top target in the Cultural Revolution was Deng Xiaoping, who had also objected to the excesses of the Great Leap Forward, although in a more circumspect manner than Liu. "Why did Liu, Deng, and their followers in the Party Center allow such blatant political manipulation against them without objecting? The answer was military intimidation." Shortly before the launch of the Cultural Revolution, troops loyal to Lin were moved into Beijing, encircling the city. Commando units took over media offices, such as those of the *People's Daily*, and the radio stations. Troops under the command of Mao's personal bodyguard were sent to surveil (or, supposedly, protect) the homes of all high-ranking officials in the Zhongnanhai compound. "Mao and Lin would not have been able to prevail, at least not so easily, without the threat of force against their opposition in the party leadership." Zhu, at 117-20.³¹⁸

Rage Mobs of the Most Privileged Students

To start the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (*wuchan jieji wenhua da geming*), Mao used the most privileged youths in China. Mao had won the war in 1949 in part by promising to abolish the old class system, and he had done so. Rather than creating a classless society (the proclaimed goal of communism), Mao had instead established a new class of inherited rank. Everyone was color-coded. The top class were those who had fought in the revolution and belonged to the party. They and their descendants were "red." The lowest new class was colored black. It consisted of the former "bourgeoisie" and "landlords"—not just the middle class and large landowners, but also peasants or vendors who had made small profits before the revolution. The blacks also included persons who once had a minor relation with the former government. In between was the white class—such as apolitical peasants. In the class system, class was inherited. If your parents were red, so were you; if your parents had been blacks, you were forever black. Inter-class marriage had been forbidden since 1950. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 226-27.

The class system was not perfectly stable, especially in a relentless atmosphere of purges and accusations. For example, in the 1930s and 1940s, some loyal communists had been ordered by the CCP to infiltrate Nationalist labor unions by posing as Nationalists. Considering the risks they took, they should have been impeccably red. But during the Cultural Revolution, as everyone was looking for

317. Zhu, at 116-17.

318. The Cultural Revolution purges of 1966-69 removed 7 of the 17 Politburo members, 53 of the 97 members of the CCP Central Committee, 4 of the 6 first regional party secretaries, and 23 of the 29 provincial first party secretaries. Thurston, at 108.

reasons to denounce everyone else, the old labor union records of the former spies were dug up, and they were persecuted for supposedly being collaborators with the Nationalists.

More generally, there were always propaganda campaigns against the Four Types (*silei fenzi*): former landlords; former rich peasants (e.g., a small family business); counterrevolutionaries (non-communists); and bad elements (persons who deviated from the CCP orthodoxy of the moment). The first two types were straightforwardly black bloods; the latter two “types” were sufficiently elastic that almost anyone could be accused. Being securely recognized as a good red one day did not necessarily protect individuals and their relatives from being reclassified another day and then murdered or sent to a slave labor camp.

The top schools were mainly for the children of the red class. The students at these schools received military training, starting in elementary school by shooting air guns at pictures of Chiang Kai-Shek and Americans, then progressing to rifles in secondary school.³¹⁹ The Cultural Revolution began in earnest at Beijing’s top school for the children of Chinese Communist Party elite.

At schools in general, pureblood students resented the students of lower-class blood; having no class advantage, the black students tended to work harder in school and thereby outperform their social betters.³²⁰

In the first half of 1966, based on articles in the *People’s Daily*, politically correct students realized that something was up. They began scouring libraries “and soon problems were discovered with short stories, novels, movies and plays. . . . Posters appeared questioning the background of some teachers.”³²¹

On May 16, 1966, a circular within the Party Center announced the creation of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, CCRG.³²² In effect, the CCRG, and not the Politburo Standing Committee, would be in charge for quite a while.

The Cultural Revolution was often publicized via **big character posters**—handwritten political essays in large characters, affixed to walls. To get things going, Madame Mao’s allies searched for people at Beijing University to write a big character poster denouncing the university president. An uneducated party hack, Nie Yuanzi, and some of other university employees took on the job. On May 25, 1966, they pasted their big character poster accusing the university administration of being “Khrushchev-type counterrevolutionary revisionists,” and “ox ghosts and snake spirits.”³²³ The university president, Lu Peng, was fired the next day.³²⁴ An ox-ghost is a mythical fanged monster that devours people.³²⁵

The Cultural Revolution was publicly declared on June 1, 1966, with a *People’s Daily* editorial telling the people to “[s]weep away all ox-ghosts and snake spirits” (also translated as “monsters and demons” or “freaks and monsters”; *hengsao yiqie*

319. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 36.

320. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 38; Thurston, at 48.

321. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 54; Li, *Human Rights*, at 81.

322. Sometimes translated as Cultural Revolution Small Group, or another variant.

323. Thurston, at 89-90.

324. *Id.* at 93.

325. *Id.* at 223.

niugui sheshen). Editorial (Chen Boda), *Sweep Away All Monsters and Demons*, People's Daily, June 1, 1966; Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 55; Wang, at 143.

Classes were cancelled at schools nationwide so that students could attack their teachers. The next day, Nie Yuanzi's big character poster was reprinted in *People's Daily*, accompanied by an editorial urging people to "oppose, beat, and thoroughly destroy" revisionists.³²⁶

Students were encouraged to put up big character posters denouncing teachers for revisionist thinking. "Revisionist" meant thinking like Khrushchev or anyone else who deviated from pure communist totalitarianism: all life must be political; only one political line is allowed. Often, "revisionist" was just a label for persecuting anyone, including sincere ultra-Maoists.

Student mobs beat and humiliated their teachers. Many used improvised weapons, fencing swords, or javelins. Fearful, the teachers began to denounce each other, since teachers know much more about each other than students do. At the beginning, the violence of the Cultural Revolution was only on campus.³²⁷

The student mobs began to call themselves "Red Guards" (*hong weibing*), since they were acting to guard Chairman Mao. Under communism, there was supposed to be no civil society; no organization should exist outside the state. All Chinese charities, unions, religions, or other independent groups had been eliminated or were under state control. But the Red Guards boldly created themselves. They did not ask for official party approval.

The red bloods already were organized, thanks to military training at summer camps and rifle clubs at home. Mao's constant exhortation was "Never forget class struggle." Dressed in their parents' old military uniforms and proud of their blood purity, they attacked black students. Children of high-ranking military and political parents, the Red Guards had been told by their parents that communist party revisionists were against Mao. Fully indoctrinated in Maoism, the superior class of students was eager for violent class war.

At first, adult political cadres and others resisted, attempting to suppress the violent upstarts. The CCP center was dispatching "work groups" to high schools and universities to try to guide the Cultural Revolution, and some of those groups tried to stop the attacks on school staff. "However, without the support of the gun barrel, their cause was doomed." Beijing was fully under Maoist military control.³²⁸ When a CCP Central Committee plenum (full meeting) opened on August 1, 1966, it was surrounded by Lin's soldiers. A PLA marshal warned the plenum that the military would act against any dissenters.³²⁹ As a speech by Lin Biao several days later explained, there had been two essentials to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution: Mao's thought and the power of the PLA.³³⁰

326. Thurston, at 90.

327. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 61-62.

328. Zhu, at 120.

329. Zhu, at 123-24.

330. Zhu, at 119.

The day the plenum opened, Mao wrote a public letter to some Red Guards, telling them, “Revolution is not a crime, to rebel is justified.”³³¹ On August 5, 1966, Mao put up his own big character poster at Beijing University: “Bombard the Headquarters” (*paoda silingbu*). Violence exploded. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 69-75. *See also* Shaorong Huang, *To Rebel Is Justified: A Rhetorical Study of China’s Cultural Revolution Movement 1966-1969* (1996).

On August 18, 1966, a million youths were assembled in Tiananmen Square, where defense minister Lin Biao, repeating the June 1 *People’s Daily* editorial, exhorted them to “Smash the Four Olds”: “all old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits of the exploiting classes.” Two weeks earlier, the first murder in the Cultural Revolution had taken place. The victim was Bian Zhongyun, an assistant headmistress at the Girls’ Middle School (a secondary school) attached to Beijing Normal University. She was tortured to death for hours by a mob of students. At the Tiananmen rally, one of the murderous student leaders—a daughter of one of the top generals of the revolution—was given the honor of putting a Red Guard armband on Chairman Mao’s sleeve. Mao changed her given name from Binbin (suave or refined) to Yaowu (be martial). The school where the murder took place changed its name to “the Red Martial School.” Song Yaowu became an instant national celebrity.³³²

Wang Rongfen, who was studying German at the Foreign Languages Institute, observed the similarities between Lin Biao’s speech and Hitler’s speeches at his Nuremberg rallies.³³³ She sent Chairman Mao a letter: “the Cultural Revolution is not a mass movement. It is one man with a gun manipulating the people.” He sent her to prison for life. In prison, her manacles bore points to dig into her flesh. She had to roll on the floor to eat. She was released in 1979, three years after Mao’s death, with her spirit unbroken.³³⁴

Even at elementary schools, which were for students up to age 13, student mobs attacked teachers. The Minister of Public Security instructed the police to support the Red Guards. “Don’t say that it is wrong for them to beat up bad people. If in anger they beat someone to death, then so be it.” Even when Red Guards assaulted the police, the police were not supposed to fight back. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 73-80; Su, at 177. *Cf.* William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (1954).

331. Wang, at 140 (*Geming wu zui, zaofan you li*). In 1939, Mao had said, “All the many truths of Marxism-Leninism, in the last analysis, may be expressed in one sentence: to rebel is justified.” Speech to the Meeting Sponsored by All Circles in Yan’an to Celebrate the 60th Birthday of Stalin. “To rebel is justified” also appeared in the June 1, 1966, *People’s Daily* article that launched the Cultural Revolution. Wang, at 146.

332. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 73-80. The father was Song Renqiong. He was later purged during the Cultural Revolution, and still later brought back to power by Deng Xiaoping. *See Mapping China’s Red Nobility*, Bloomberg, Dec. 26, 2012. In 1989, Song Renqiong strongly supported Deng Xiaoping’s use of deadly force to end the Tiananmen Square democracy protests. The daughter, Song Binbin/Yaowu, later studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and worked for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. In 2013, she apologized for her actions. Her story is among those told in the 2003 television documentary *Morning Sun*.

333. Massive Nazi rallies held in Bavaria, glowingly portrayed in Leni Riefenstahl’s films, most notably the propaganda film, *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*) (1935).

334. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 109.

While murders by students had initially been only in the Beijing area, the lethal mobs spread nationwide as students returned home from the Tiananmen rally. The Red Guards were declared to be reserve forces of the PLA, and the PLA was ordered to assist their travel. For the rest of the year they were given free rail and bus transport plus free accommodations and food. Quite a change from the usual rules against leaving one's registered city or village.

Twelve million Red Guards traveled to Beijing over the next several months, to wait weeks until Mao would appear on a balcony and acknowledge them, in seven more rallies from August 31 to November 26. Hideously overcrowded and filthy trains and buses, and conditions in Beijing produced a meningitis epidemic that killed 160,000. There was no money for antidotes because government spending was oriented to the Cultural Revolution.³³⁵ European governments later donated vaccines.

Although some students just took advantage of the opportunity for free travel and left Beijing to visit scenic or historical places, many others came home empowered. Under state direction, rage mobs roamed the streets, attacking women for bourgeois behavior such as wearing dresses or having long hair. They ransacked homes, especially of the blacks, but also of some reds. Poor street peddlers, barbers, tailors, and anyone else participating in the non-state economy were attacked and destroyed. Many of them were ruined and became destitute. Street names that referenced the past were replaced with communist names. Historic artifacts, public monuments, non-communist historic sites, religious buildings, tombs, and non-communist art were destroyed. So were cats, which supposedly expressed bourgeois decadence, and pigeons, which were bred for racing. (Dogs already been wiped out for sanitary reasons.)³³⁶

Libraries were pillaged, including rare historic manuscripts; "entire sections of libraries—the Chinese, Western, and Russian classics—were often put to the torch in huge outdoor bonfires." Thurston, at 101. *See generally* Rebecca Knuth, *Libricide: The Regime-Sponsored Destruction of Books and Libraries in the Twentieth Century* (2003) (destruction of books as a prelude to mass murder in Nazi Germany, Bosnia under the Serbs, the Cultural Revolution, Tibet under Chinese rule, and Kuwait under Saddam Hussein).

House-to-house searches were conducted to look for concealed arms, books, religious items, gold coins, and evidence of disloyalty. If something was found, the victims were tortured. "Every night there were terrifying sounds of loud knocks on the door, objects breaking, students shouting and children crying. But most ordinary people had no idea when the Red Guards would appear, and what harmless possessions might be seen as suspicious. They lived in fear."³³⁷ Many people preemptively destroyed their books and artwork, lest the Red Guards discover them. Ordinary thieves posed as Red Guards to get in on the looting.³³⁸ Most victims were ordinary people, but party officials, especially those linked to leaders who had previously been purged, were also targeted.³³⁹

335. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 101-114; Zhu, at 140.

336. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 74-84, 94.

337. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 86-90.

338. *Id.*; Chang & Halliday, at 520-21.

339. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 92.

Even under Stalin and Hitler, being educated was not a *per se* offense. A research chemist or a scholar of ancient literature was not at specially high risk. But in China's Cultural Revolution (and even more so in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge 1975-79), being educated or an intellectual or able to speak a foreign language could be cause enough to be killed, tortured, or put into forced labor.³⁴⁰

The gun control program begun in 1949 appeared to have been successful. In Wuhan, the largest city in central China, two thousand black homes were ransacked. The Red Guards found plenty of gold, porcelain, art, and other valuables—but only 22 rifles.³⁴¹

While Red Guards used a variety of improvised arms, their main weapons were simply leather belts with brass buckles, which they used to beat their targets senseless, often inflicting severe injury. Sometimes the victims were forced to lick their blood up from the street.³⁴² Any pedestrian could be accosted by Red Guards, ordered to recite quotations from Chairman Mao, and then punished on the spot for not having memorized enough of them. Daniel Leese, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution* 135 (2011).

What could a person attacked by the mob do? Resistance might be immediately fatal, since the police were not going to intervene. If the victim somehow did manage to resist, then the government, which had almost all the guns, would finish off the resister, or ship her to a *laogai* camp.

All Mao, All the Time

“Soon enough everybody understood that the only acceptable proletarian culture was the cult of Chairman Mao.” Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 96. His picture and words were everywhere—on giant posters and blasted full volume on pervasive loudspeakers.

Under Lin Biao's direction, the army since 1960 had been making soldiers read and learn collections of short teachings by Mao. These became the basis for the *Little Red Book* (*Hong bao shu*), with an introduction by Lin Biao (full title, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*). In 1966, everyone in China was required to buy the Little Red Book. State printers ran out of paper, even though printing of all nonpolitical works had been eliminated. Mao ranked the Little Red Book alongside the works of Confucius and the Bible.³⁴³ In terms of sales, he had a good point. The royalties made Mao the first millionaire in the People's Republic of China. Lowell Dittmer, *Pitfalls of Charisma, in Was Mao a Monster?*, at 72.

The only safe way to dress was in a simple unisex military-like uniform, plus a military cap with a red star, and a Mao badge on one's breast. There were about 5 billion badges produced, sucking up so much aluminum that some other industries were brought to a standstill. See Melissa Schrift, *Biography of a Chairman Mao Badge: The Creation and Mass Consumption of a Personality Cult* (2001); Helen

340. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 259-60.

341. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 89.

342. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 76-77; Chang & Halliday, at 519.

343. Chang & Halliday, at 451, 514.

Wang, Chairman Mao Badges, Symbols and Slogans of the Cultural Revolution (2008).

According to a well-known list of Red Guard rules for everyone:

Every street was to have a quotation from Chairman Mao prominently displayed, and loudspeakers at every intersection and in all parks were to broadcast his thought. Every household as well as all trains and buses, bicycles and pedicabs, had to have a picture of Mao on its walls. Ticket takers on trains and buses should all declaim Mao's thought. Every bookstore had to stock Mao's quotations, and every hand in China had to hold one. No one could wear blue jeans, tight pants, "weird women's outfits," or have "slick hairdos or wear rocket shoes." No perfumes or beauty creams could be used. No one could keep pet fish, cats, or dogs, or raise fighting crickets. No shop could sell classical books. All those identified by the masses as landlords, hooligans, rightists, and capitalists had to wear a plaque identifying themselves. . . .

Spence, Mao Zedong, at 163. Hospitals were forbidden to perform any "complicated treatment." *Id.*

"Keep people stupid," was how Mao had described his policy in 1962. Chang & Halliday, at 486 (citing [Bainan Chao \(Hundred Year Tide\)](#), monthly magazine of the Central Party History Research Center), no. 3, 1999, at 18).

Mao had eclipsed Stalin's and Hitler's cults of personality; not even they had forbidden the classic apolitical literature and art of their nation's culture.³⁴⁴ Even under Hitler and Stalin, there was no harm in playing chess with a friend at home while listening to classical music and chatting about nonpolitical topics. But at the height of the Cultural Revolution, chess, playing cards, and Mahjong were forbidden.³⁴⁵ Listening to music other than CCP songs was not allowed.

As for songs, the most-approved were not about China or communism, but about Mao. For example, since the late 1950s, Mao had been trying to displace the PRC national anthem, [March of the Volunteers](#), with a song about him. Mao liked [The East Is Red \(Dongfang hong\)](#):

*From China comes Mao Zedong,
He strives for the people's happiness,
Hurrah, he is the people's great saviour!
Chairman Mao loves the people,
He is our guide to building a new China.
Hurrah, lead us forward!*

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao would get his wish, and *The East Is Red* took the place of the national anthem about the volunteers. The [author](#) of the actual national anthem died in a Maoist prison.

344. Chang & Halliday, at 488.

345. Thurston, at 125.

For years the Socialist Education Campaign had made sure that everyone sang loyalty songs. For schoolchildren, a soon-to-be pervasive new song was composed in 1966: “Father is dear, mother is dear, But not as dear as Chairman Mao.”³⁴⁶

Under the national socialists in Germany, ordinary greetings such as “Good morning” or “Hello” had to be replaced with a mutual exchange of “Heil Hitler.” See Victor Klemperer, *Language of the Third Reich* (2013) (*LTI: Lingua Tertii Imperii*, 1957) (describing Nazification of public discourse). The same became true in China with “Long Live Chairman Mao”—literally, “Chairman Mao ten thousand years” (*Mao Zhuxi wansui*).

Consumer product names such as “Fairy” or “Golden Pagoda” were forbidden; some existing inventory was allowed to be sold if it had a warning attached, but customers were afraid to buy these products. To stay safe, shops retitled themselves with monotonous names like “Red Guard” or “Red Flag.” Eventually, Mao quotes were printed on almost every object.³⁴⁷

The country had changed greatly in just a few months. Rage mobs can accomplish a great deal when everyone is afraid to fight back.

The pure bloods seemed on top of the world. But in October, the Party Center in Beijing denounced pure bloods who discriminated against other classes. Discriminating was a “bourgeois reactionary line.” Red was the new black. Children of black and white (also called “gray”) families formed their own Red Guards to fight the classic Red Guards. Mao had “realized that the children of the cadre who constituted the Red Guard movement were much less apt to challenge authorities at the highest levels.” Schrift, at 51; Anita Chan, *Children of Mao: Personality Development and Political Activism in the Red Guard Movement* 137-38 (1985).

On November 1, 1966, Mao called for “the masses” to “educate and liberate themselves”—a statement that factory workers treated as permission to revolt against factory bosses, who were CCP cadres. Factory bosses assembled their own organizations of supporters, and fought back, pitting worker against worker.³⁴⁸

Under Mao, the cities were always subsidized by the peasants, as food from the country was expropriated for the cities. Some factory workers had job security, enough food to stay somewhat healthy, and some health care. Many other city workers, including those who had violated the household registration order and had fled the famines in the country, subsisted on the margins, performing temporary labor under miserable conditions. Some of the urban battles pitted these two groups of workers against each other.

In vast and diverse China, many party officials had built their own fiefdoms. These too were attacked by the Red Guards or some other mass faction. Sometimes the officials managed to convince the groups to go attack some black families instead. Or officials raised their own band of Red Guards, or a group with a different name. There were Scarlet Guards (*chi wei dui*), rebels, all sorts of splinter

346. Wang, at 102; Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 297 (*die qin nian qin, buru Mao zhuxi qin*). Composed 1966. See 红色音乐家李劫夫在“文革”中 [Red musician Li Jiefu during the Cultural Revolution] Southcn.com, July 16, 2004.

347. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 95-100; Leese, at 212.

348. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 118-23.

groups, with shifting alliances and enemies. Different army factions got involved as well. Telling who was on the official side became hard, as conflicting signals from party propaganda in Beijing reflected conflicts among the élite running the Cultural Revolution.³⁴⁹

“Seize Power!”

In December 1966, Mao gave a toast: “To the unfolding of a nationwide civil war.”³⁵⁰ Wherever there was violence, all sides insisted that they were the ones truly fighting for Mao Zedong Thought (*Mao Zedong sixiang*). Actually, many were fighting for something much more practical: economic rights. “[A]fter the state organs of power had been shattered by the Red Guards . . . the broad masses of people rose up to take advantage of the chaotic situation. They translated their anti-Mao and anti-communist thinking into concrete actions.” Factory workers went on strike, even though strikes are illegal under communism. Peasants demanded the option of “doing it alone in agricultural production” — their own small farms, not mass communes. Li, *Human Rights*, at 83.

Huge battles were fought in Shanghai, with hundreds of thousands of fighters wielding iron pipes, clubs, and bamboo sticks. Early 1967 brought the “January Storm” (*yiyue fengbao*); a rebel faction captured the city’s newspapers and radio station, formerly the propaganda outlets for the traditional party. Mao telegraphed his congratulations. He publicly urged everyone to “Seize power!” following the Shanghai example.³⁵¹

Things did not always work out as the Red Guards hoped. In February in Qinghai province, a crowd of over a hundred people decided to “Seize power!” by taking over the *Qinghai Daily* newspaper building in the provincial capital, Xining. After they did so, the army machine-gunned them all, not needing to use the flame-throwers that had been brought as backup.³⁵²

Although defense minister Lin Biao was Mao’s toady, plenty of army commanders had different ideas. The CCP and the People’s Liberation Army had always been closely intertwined. In many places, the CCP and the PLA élites lived nearby each other, socialized together, and sent their children to the same schools.³⁵³ The PLA was not amused by violent workers and students. So the army often suppressed the mass insurgents, labeling them as counterrevolutionaries or rightists. In the “February Adverse Current” (*eryue niliu*), some army commanders rounded up January Storm people.³⁵⁴

Then in April 1967, Lin Biao ordered the military not to shoot rebels or to break up mass organizations. Significantly, the army was forbidden to punish raids on military armories. Some persons who in February had been labeled “counterrevolutionary” (a generic term for any political opponent) were released. The war of all against all spread.

349. *Id.* at 101-04, 115-18.

350. *Id.* at 124.

351. Zhu, at 142, 169 n.3.

352. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 134-35.

353. Zhu, at 163.

354. Zhu, at 141, 144-51.

Since the PLA was forbidden to punish raids on its armories, more and more people had firearms. Others fought with clubs, knives, javelins, or spears constructed by attaching scissors to a pole. Electricity lines were cut and water was poisoned.³⁵⁵ Weapons were especially easy to come by in arms manufacturing cities, such as the west's Chengdu and Chongqing (Chungking). There, combatants used grenades, **rocket-propelled grenade launchers**, automatic rifles, and mortars.³⁵⁶

The cycle of violence was intensified by mutual retribution for past actions and by fear that the losing side would end up in prison slave labor camps or (best-case scenario) marginalized and destitute.³⁵⁷ "By June 1967 China was in chaos."³⁵⁸

Nonpolitical crime, from pickpocketing to robbery, soared. Some was perpetrated by Red Guards who had enjoyed the violent sprees of the previous summer.³⁵⁹ Sometimes mobs retaliated by beating the criminals to death. With increasing frequency neighbors decided that now was the time to kill other neighbors over past disputes.³⁶⁰

Even after April, some in the army were still siding with the political incumbents, rather than the movements against them. In July 1967, Mao flew to the industrial, arms-manufacturing city of Wuhan to order the local army to stop fighting the ultra-left. Army general Chen Zaidao refused. That evening, hundreds of soldiers accompanied by tens of thousands of workers carrying iron bars marched on Mao's fortified lakeside villa in Wuhan. A crowd of several hundred broke into the villa compound and beat up one of Mao's top Cultural Revolution lieutenants. Mao was snuck out of the villa at 2 A.M. and fled the city, protected by 200 members of his imperial guard, who had been quickly flown in from Beijing. Once Mao was safe, he had the defiant general Chen brought to Beijing and tortured in front of the Politburo.³⁶¹

Mao concluded that three-quarters of army officers were not politically reliable. But "having sacked most civilian officials, he simply could not afford to create more enemies in what was now his only power base." Lin Biao took the opportunity to fill the very highest ranks with Lin's own cronies, and Mao had to go along.³⁶²

"Arm the Left"

Mao escalated. Mao's fourth wife, Jiang Qing, was deputy chair of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, which Mao had appointed to run the Cultural Revolution. "Why don't we arm the Left?" Mao instructed his wife. She issued a famous statement, "Attack with words, defend with weapons" (*wen gong wu wei*), universally interpreted as authorizing the Maoist masses to fight back against the army.

355. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 139-44; Zhu, at 152.

356. *Id.* at 145; Zhu, at 152.

357. *Id.* at 145.

358. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 147.

359. *Id.* at 147.

360. *Id.* at 147-48.

361. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 149-50; Zhu, at 154-55.

362. Chang & Halliday, at 537-40.

“The Proletariat Must Take Firm Hold of the Gun” (*Wuchan jieji bixu laolao zhangwo qiangganzi*) declared an August 1, 1967, editorial in *Red Flag*. It urged mass organization to seize firearms, pursuant to a historic quote by Mao: “If we do not seize the barrel of the gun, if we do not use the revolutionary armed forces to oppose the counter-revolutionary armed forces, people will never be able to liberate themselves.” The editorial urged violence against “the Chen Zaidao type of person” in the PLA. Zhu, at 158; Michael Schoenhals, “Why Don’t We Arm the Left?”: *Mao’s Culpability for the Cultural Revolution’s “Great Chaos” of 1967*, 182 *China Q.* 277 (2005); Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 151-56.

Defense minister Lin Biao enthusiastically agreed. Some fighters were given guns by the People’s Liberation Army. Others raided factories or armories, acquiring semi-automatic firearms, machine guns, explosives, mortars, and anti-aircraft guns. In areas where the commanders distributed arms to one side, the other side would sometimes seize military arms with the complicity of sympathizers among the soldiers in control of the armory.³⁶³

The arms seizures were getting out of control. A rail shipment carrying Soviet arms to the North Vietnamese Army was stopped and pillaged. At a slave labor camp, prisoners revolted and took weapons from the guards.³⁶⁴ In 1967, peasants revolted in 21 of the 26 provinces.³⁶⁵

In the far west, there was a “Second Tibetan Revolt.” The Cultural Revolution had “unforeseen consequences in Tibet . . . an unprecedented opportunity to criticize and ‘struggle’ against Han cadres and their Tibetan collaborators.”³⁶⁶ In Kham in 1966, the people heard Chinese speaking against other Chinese, and seized the opportunity to rise up. Armed only with swords, they attacked a Chinese garrison and took the rifles and ammunition. “Overnight, the revolt spread to every district in Kham.” However, the guerillas had no time or opportunity to coordinate. They were eventually put down by tens of thousands of PLA reinforcements.³⁶⁷

In the Tibet Autonomous Region, the people rose up in 20 of the 51 districts, and there were also revolts in Amdo.³⁶⁸ The PLA in Tibet split between different Red Guard factions. In 1968, PLA from the Xinjiang military district suppressed the fighting.³⁶⁹ Then in 1969, nomads copying the name of a Red Guard faction in Lhasa “seized power in their area for three months, declaring religious and economic freedom.”³⁷⁰ Revolts in Tibet continued through 1972.³⁷¹

Another problem with “Arm the Left” was that people on all sides sincerely thought themselves to be pro-Mao. Like many Germans under Hitler, many Chinese believed that their far-away leader had good intentions and did not know about the

363. Su, at 200.

364. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 151-56, 174.

365. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 260.

367. Dunham, at 399.

366. Smith, at 68-69.

368. Smith, at 68-69.

369. Smith, at 68-69.

370. Goldstein, at 94.

371. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 260-61.

abuses of local officials. The Chinese said “if only Chairman Mao knew” just as the Germans had said “if only the Führer knew about this” (*Wenn das der Führer wüßte*). Thurston, at 48; Vinzenz Hediger, *Wile E. Coyote in the Bunker: Film, History, and the Haunted Unlife of Adolf Hitler on the Silver Screen*, 76 *Scandia* 99, 108 (2010).

Notwithstanding the vituperation from the media and the instructions of Lin Biao, many army commanders continued to fight back. Rural militias were shipped into the cities to combat the Maoists. PLA units fought each other. The PLA had been willing to support the Cultural Revolution as long as the victims were somebody else, but when the army itself became a target, it defended itself. The PLA had “control of the gun barrel.” So “[w]hen threatened, they had the means as well as the will to block the Maoists’ assaults.” Zhu, at 158-59, 162.

Mao had to retreat. While he previously had played off the PLA and the CCP against each other, they were uniting against him. He had started the Cultural Revolution with the PLA and the Red Guards united against the CCP. But now the Red Guards and the army were fighting, and Mao realized he had to side with the army. “The alternative was to mobilize the rebel forces and the PLA troops still loyal to him to fight an all-out civil war against the joint opposition of the local party and the army elites. This course of action would have been suicidal politically, even if Mao prevailed militarily. Mao apparently was not ready to jeopardize the very existence of the regime he had fought decades to establish.” *Id.* at 159. In the latter half of August, articles in the *People’s Daily* and *Red Flag* suddenly began praising the PLA, which they had excoriated only days before. *Id.*

On September 5, 1967, Mao rescinded “Arm the Left,” except in Shanghai, where Mao’s control was particularly strong.³⁷² Shanghai was a power base of Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing. In Shanghai, Jiang and her allies would build a militia of over a million. Eventually, the Shanghai militia would take over the police function and send out patrols to beat up suspected ordinary criminals, as well as blacks, Four Types, or anyone suspected of independent thought or behavior.³⁷³ The Shanghai militia would play a major role in Chinese politics in the 1970s, as described in Section D.3.k.

Trying to quell the national chaos, Mao called for “great revolutionary unity.” He ordered an end to attacks on the military and authorized the PLA to arrest the rebels. Many people ignored his plea, and also ignored his repeated orders that guns be surrendered.³⁷⁴ In late 1968, Mao told the Albanian defense minister that in Sichuan province (whose population was 70 million) 360,000 arms had been recovered, and many more were still out there.³⁷⁵ “Banditry,” the regime’s euphemism for armed resistance, began to appear on the periphery. Many young men “carried on fighting, finding it more fun than doing boring jobs.” Chang & Halliday, at 543;

372. Su, at 183.

373. Perry, at 208-47.

374. Perry, at 221 n.56; Su, at 196-97; Zhu, at 160.

375. Albania was the sole European communist state that Mao had successfully bribed into allying with him instead of the Soviet Union. Thanks to generous Chinese food donations (while millions of Chinese were dying of starvation) Albania did not have to impose food rationing, giving the country a very high standard of living by communist standards. Chang & Halliday, at 461-62.

Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 225 (“In the countryside, another word for ‘counterrevolutionaries’ was ‘bandits’”); Shih, at 1 (regime’s description of military action against the resistance as “extirpating the bandits”), 6 (use of “bandit” to deceptively claim that resistance to the regime was apolitical).

Continuing into 1968 there were large urban battles with firearms, machine guns, mortars, and **napalm**. It was often impossible to keep up with which side was in or out, or who was really the most pro-Mao. For example, in Anhui province (near Shanghai), the two warring factions called themselves “Wonderful” (*hao pai*) and “Fart” (*hao ge pi*, as good as a fart). Each insisted that the other was a capitalist-roader.³⁷⁶ Everywhere people were “**waving the red flag to oppose the red flag**” (*dazhe hongqi fan hongqi*) — that is, adopting communist symbols and rhetoric to oppose true communism. Who was really entitled to the red flag was impossible to tell. The country was becoming anarchic. Another set of orders from Mao, on July 3, 1968, demanded that everyone “immediately stop armed battles, dismantle forts and strongholds.” He repeated the order on July 24.³⁷⁷

The PLA and militia killings and destruction of rebel areas matched or exceeded the brutality that had been inflicted by the Japanese, according to persons who had been lucky enough to survive both.³⁷⁸ There was still more fighting in the 1969, leading to general defeat of the rebels.³⁷⁹

The PLA Takes Over

Mao’s first few years in power had deliberately destroyed civil society—everything that interposed between the individual and the state. The destruction was insufficient for Mao. The state—that is, the Chinese Communist Party—had proved itself to be an obstacle to Mao’s imposing his own will on the Chinese. Mao had incited the Cultural Revolution, starting with the privileged class of youths he had nurtured, to replace the Chinese Communist Party with mass organizations more responsive to his pure will. But things had gotten out of hand.

The army was the only organization left that was capable of running the country. Over the course of 1968, the Cultural Revolution was turned over to the army, acting as “revolutionary party committees.” “Weapons were turned in, students returned to school, and workers went back on full shifts.” By September 1968, the PLA was in control of 21 of China’s 26 provincial administrations. The result gave Mao part of what he had been trying to achieve with the Cultural Revolution: a system that would immediately carry out his orders, without the bureaucratic layers of the Chinese Communist Party.³⁸⁰

However, the ultra-Maoist mass groups, especially the Red Guards, had been crushed. Despite all the prior purges, most of the officer corps was loyal to its own interests, not to Mao’s. If Mao had been willing or able to incite his armed Left into

376. Or less concisely: “Our seizing power is wonderful” versus “‘Wonderful’? What a load of fart!” Chang & Halliday, at 542; Schrift, at 53.

377. Su, at 200; Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 174-79.

378. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 257.

379. *Id.*

380. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 165-66, 179-84; Zhu, at 5, 142.

guerilla war, they might have been able to fight for years. But in head-on urban battles with the PLA, they were defeated.

Having to yield “to local military pressure, Mao paid a high price. He was forced to sacrifice his most loyal supporters on the revolutionary left and to give the military elites more political power than he ever had wished. His main problems from now on would be getting the soldiers to go back to the barracks and curbing the rapidly rising power of his erstwhile comrade in arms, Lin Biao.” Zhu, at 168.

As the army took over, there were more purges, some for settling grudges, and others just to intimidate the populace. Some of the accused were executed, while many more were sent to slave labor in the *laogai* camps. Various campaigns cleared out the cities, whose population was expensive to support. People were exiled to the countryside for arduous labor in miserable conditions. While some naively volunteered pursuant to Mao’s instructions to “learn from the peasants,” many millions were sent involuntarily. In the countryside, the newcomers were burdensome mouths to feed from an already-scarce food supply. Sexual abuse of them was common. About 70 million educated youths in 1969-75 were shipped out of the cities for hard labor.³⁸¹

A new round of purges began in 1969 and ran through 1971, based on a supposed “May Sixteenth” conspiracy from 1966. (This was the date that a circular had announced the creation of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, which would publicly unleash the Cultural Revolution several days later.) Supposedly, May 16 was also the debut of a secret plot against Premier Zhou Enlai. Although Zhou was himself a member of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, there were others in the group, including Mao’s wife, who hated him and plotted against him. Whatever the intrigue at the top, the persecution of “May Sixteenth elements” did not target Madame Mao but instead large numbers of people who had no plausible connection to any conspiracy; they were tortured into confessing to having joined a conspiracy that they had never heard of before they were arrested.³⁸²

Some political victims had made “rightist” errors while others had made “leftist” ones. Any record that a student had attended one of the 1966 Cultural Revolution rallies in Tiananmen Square was a one-way ticket to forced labor in the countryside. About 3.5 million people who had joined the Cultural Revolution were affected. “The history of communism is, after all, a history of endless purges.”³⁸³

Inner Mongolia was subjected to a particularly savage campaign of genocide and torture of the minority Mongol population. Ethnic groups in other border regions received similar treatment.³⁸⁴

Cultural Revolution warfare had been concentrated in the cities. The Red Guards and other students had mostly stayed out of the countryside, on government orders. In rural areas, mass faction battles occurred mostly in the county

381. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 261.

382. Thurston, at 142-45.

383. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 184-203, 232-34.

384. *Id.* at 189-91.

seats.³⁸⁵ As a result, country people were sometimes freer while government officials were distracted by the national chaos. An underground free economy had again arisen.

On the other hand, there was another round of mass murders of peasants in 1967 through mid-1968. About 1.45 million perished from “collective killing”—defined as the killing of at least ten people at once. The collective killings were primarily rural and were perpetrated almost entirely by the select militia.

The victims were not participants in Cultural Revolution politics. Rather, the targets were the Four Types—always a handy target for political activists of any persuasion. The mass murders were an opportunity for the militia to demonstrate their loyalty to Mao by killing lots of people without needing to be asked. Victims were typically denounced in public show trials that everyone in the village had to attend. Some victims were executed in plain sight to spread terror. Execution methods involved firearms, beating and torturing people to death (always common under Mao), or imaginative procedures, such as marching victims off a cliff. The rural collective killings were a sideline to the Cultural Revolution; they were not ordered by the Party Center. Yang Su, *Collective Killings in Rural China During the Cultural Revolution* (2011).

Post-Mao Chinese government statistics report a Cultural Revolution death toll of 1,728,000, including 237,000 in mass faction battles and 13,500 executed as counterrevolutionaries. For 1962-75, Rummel estimates about 537,000 battle deaths; 1,613,000 killings of noncombatants for political reasons; 118,000 ethnic killings of noncombatants (e.g., Mongols, Tibetans), and 6,000,000 deaths in the *laogai* camps. He estimates 7,731,000 dead, with a range of 549,000 to 32,269,000. The annual homicide rate by government/because of government was 80 killed per 100,000 population. The Cultural Revolution was the least murderous period of Mao’s reign.³⁸⁶ In one sense, the CCP promise that life in 1970 would be much better than 1950 came true.

Settling Back into Slave Labor

As the 1968 PLA crackdown spread nationwide, peasants were once again forced into slave labor under armed supervision. The labor was often a complete waste of effort. The economic slogans of the time were to imitate a model agricultural village and a model industrial town that had supposedly become self-sufficient by relentless work. “Learning from Dazhai” (Tachai) and “Learning from Daqing” (Taching) were frauds. The superficial autarky was orchestrated by the CCP, relying on secret large subsidies from elsewhere.

People were forced to labor under terrible conditions in huge construction and landclearing projects that made no economic or environmental sense, were poorly planned, and immediately failed. All in service of Mao’s declaration that “Man Must Conquer Nature” (*Ren Ding Sheng Tian*).

385. Su, at 209, 224.

386. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 262-63.

Mao's reign was one man-made environmental disaster after another:

- killing all the sparrows while ignoring scientists' warnings that sparrows were necessary to control the insect population;
- deforestation to fuel "backyard" steelmaking furnaces that produced worthless slag, iron, and crude steel;
- cutting down fruit trees, deforesting, and filling in lakes for grain cultivation even though the land was useless for the purpose ("Take Grain as the Key Link");
- poorly built hydropower projects that increased flooding; and
- persecution of scientists who raised warnings about Mao's idiotic mandates.

To Mao, the environment was like the people of China: of no intrinsic value, serving only to be bent to his will. According to Mao Zedong Thought, Mao's pure will, instantiated through slave labor, could overcome the scientific laws of nature and the laws of human nature. See Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China* (2001); Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 220-30. "The environmental dynamics of the period suggest a congruence between violence among human beings and violence by humans toward the non-human world." Shapiro, at 1.

The necessity of survival again fostered an underground economy. It was partially suppressed with the "One Strike and Three Antis" campaign. The campaign's description of what was forbidden was deliberately vague, so as to authorize persecution of people who could not be persecuted for other reasons. Fewer than 1 percent of persons accused were executed; most were instead shipped to *laogai* camps. A large number committed suicide, which was always a common response to persecution under Mao. "The objective was to produce a docile population by transforming almost every act and every utterance into a political crime." Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 235-40.

Mao Religion

With Mao's blessing, the PLA began establishing a new religion for China.³⁸⁷ Starting in the latter part of 1967, most nonwork time was taken up by mandatory nightly assemblies where people had to discuss their personal behavior in light of Mao Zedong Thought.³⁸⁸ Then came the 1968-69 campaign of "Three Loyalties" (*san zhongyu*) and "Four Boundless Loves" (*si wuxian*).³⁸⁹

Statues and shrines of Mao were erected everywhere. Busts or pictures of Mao were mandatory home religious items. Although there was good money to be made, painters often declined the opportunity to paint a Mao icon, since the artist

387. Leese, at 258.

388. *Id.* at 175.

389. Loyalty to Chairman Mao, loyalty to Mao Zedong Thought, loyalty to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line; boundless hot love, boundless faith, boundless adoration, boundless loyalty. Wang, at 124; Leese, at 194, 202, 205. Supplemented by the Four Greats (*si ge weida*): Mao as great teacher, great leader, great commander, and great helmsman. The Four Greats were introduced at the August 1966 Tiananmen rally by Mao's ghostwriter Chen Boda. Wang, at 124.

would be scrutinized and punished for the slightest inadvertent sign of insufficient veneration.³⁹⁰

Upon arising in the morning, everyone had to face their home Mao shrine and “ask for instructions.” The day ended with “reporting back in the evening” (*zao qingshi, wan huibao*).³⁹¹ Mao replaced the “kitchen god” of Chinese folk culture. See Stefan R. Landsberger, *Mao as the Kitchen God: Religious Aspects of the Mao Cult During the Cultural Revolution*, 11 *China Information* 196, 208-09 (1996). In other aspects Mao was portrayed as the [sun god](#).³⁹²

Life was structured around Mao and his words. Before every meal, people had to say grace: “Long live Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party.”³⁹³ If a peasant walked into a store, the clerk was supposed to say “keep a firm hold on grain and cotton production,” and the peasant would reply “strive for even greater bumper crops.” If the customer was a student, the clerk would say “read Chairman Mao’s books,” and the student would answer “heed Chairman Mao’s words.” Wang, at 7; Leese, at 190-91 (describing “loyalty-ficating” of language). “[Q]uotations of the leader came to replace even the most mundane speech acts during a period ranging roughly from March 1968 to April 1969.” Leese, at 192.

“The Cultural Revolution is perhaps the time in the twentieth century when language was most separated from meaning. . . . If you do not mean what you say, because what you say has no meaning beyond the immediate present, then it is impossible to imbue language with any system of values. . . . This led to the overall moral nullity of the Cultural Revolution during its most manic phase.” Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China’s Struggle with the Modern World* 209 (2004). “The intention was to make speech, and especially speech on any subject not ideologically neutral, as nearly as possible independent of consciousness.” George Orwell, *Appendix: The Principles of Newspeak*, in 1984 (1990) (1949).

Maoist life encompassed the body as well as the mind. Instead of “revisionist” sports, the new exercise routine was “quotation gymnastics” (*yulu cao*) — a set of group exercises in which participants shouted Mao quotes related to the motions. For example, in the third set of exercises, the leader would yell “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” The exercisers would make nine thrusting and stabbing motions with imaginary bayonets.³⁹⁴

Even more common were “loyalty dances,” in which individuals or groups stretched their arms to show their “boundless hot love” for Mao, sometimes worshipping him as the sun.³⁹⁵ People began reporting miracles such as healing of the sick and attributing them to Mao.³⁹⁶ Communist temples were erected, based on the historic model of ancestral temples. When buying a Mao item in a store, one could not use the common word for buying, *mai*; instead one would use the

390. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 167-70.

391. Leese, at 195-96.

392. Schrift, at 106, fig. 4.

393. Landsberger, at 208-09.

394. Leese, at 202-04.

395. *Id.* at 204-05.

396. See *The Miracles of Chairman Mao: A Compendium of Devotional Literature, 1966-1970* (George Urban ed. 1971); Leese, at 193-94.

polite verb *qing*, previously reserved for the purchase of religious items.³⁹⁷ The PLA enforcers labeled any nonparticipant in the Mao rites as an “active counterrevolutionary” (*xianxing fangeming*).³⁹⁸

The CCP Party Center supported the new religion, but also had some doubts. Public participation in the worship rituals helped people avoid being politically denounced in “a completely volatile situation dominated by witch hunts.”³⁹⁹ For persons who privately detested Mao, performing the Maoist rites could protect against suspicion of being counterrevolutionary. The Central Cultural Revolution Group was annoyed by the grassroots origins of the religious practices, which reduced the CCRG’s opportunities to control from above.⁴⁰⁰ “These excesses of public veneration underscored Mao’s perception that the cult no longer served the intended function of providing him with an immediate and nonbureaucratic link to the revolutionary masses. Popular reaction had turned into a bewildering array of quasireligious worship, loyalty performances, and cult-symbol exchanges that resisted top-down control.”⁴⁰¹

Starting in May 1969, the Party Center began discouraging “formalistic” rituals and trying to regain control of the Mao brand.⁴⁰² Nevertheless, the cult continued for years. For example, in June 1970, a peasant in Shaanxi province was executed for not having a Mao poster in his hut, and for saying that Mao would not literally live ten thousand years.⁴⁰³

j. Lin Biao

When U.S. President John F. Kennedy delivered his [inaugural address](#) in January 1961, he rephrased an old Chinese saying, and cautioned newly emerging post-colonial states about the perils of communism. Kennedy urged the world’s people “to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.”

In 1969, a new Chinese Constitution proclaimed in its first chapter: “The Communist Party of China takes Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as the theoretical basis guiding its thinking. Mao Tsetung Thought is Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is advancing to world-wide victory. . . . Comrade Lin Piao has consistently held high the great red banner of Mao Tsetung Thought and has most loyally and resolutely carried out and defended Comrade Mao Tsetung’s proletarian revolutionary line. Comrade

397. *Id.* at 210-13.

398. *Id.* at 207.

399. *Id.* at 174.

400. *Id.* at 174, 208.

401. *Id.* at 224.

402. *Id.* at 224-31.

403. *Id.* at 194.

Lin Biao is Comrade Mao Tsetung's close comrade-in-arms and successor." Chinese Const. (1969), ch. 1.

Lin Biao was riding high. Mao had needed the army, and so Mao had needed to give Lin whatever Lin wanted. Because of the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, Mao had, for the first time since the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, lost the support of *both* the PLA elite and the civilian elite.⁴⁰⁴ During the Cultural Revolution, the Politburo had ceased to function, since so many of its members had been purged. In the reconstituted Politburo of 1969, over half the seats were held by the PLA.⁴⁰⁵ The gun commanded the party.

The army ran education. Universities and other institutions of higher education had all been closed, and the key subject of lower education was Mao Zedong Thought. The army ran the economy and the government. The army was also starting to run Mao Zedong himself, Mao thought. Were the soldiers who were everywhere around him telling the PLA about Mao's private conversations and activities?

Mao began to move against Lin. In the spiderweb of CCP politics, Mao was crafty, patient, and duplicitous. Lin was too strong to confront directly, and if Mao tried, the PLA might side with Lin. A first step against Lin was undercutting of the "formalistic" rituals of the Mao religion, and thereby undercutting Lin, who was "the most prominent public supporter of the cult."⁴⁰⁶

In working against Lin, Mao was aided by each of the two major factions in the CCP: the ultra-left, led by Jiang Qing (Madame Mao), and the traditional party, led by premier Zhou Enlai. Both groups wished to reduce PLA power. At a 1970 conference, Mao pulled the rug out from under Lin's campaign to have Mao officially declared to be a "genius." He purged Lin's ally Chen Boda—a former Mao ghostwriter who was one of the most virulent members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group. And Mao blocked Lin's efforts to be named Chairman of the State, a post that had been vacant since Mao resigned it in 1959; after 1959, Mao's only official title was Chairman of the CCP.

In August and September 1971, Mao toured southern China to shore up his support among the southern generals. Lin could see the writing on the wall. Starting in March 1971, Lin Biao's son Lin Liguang started trying to organize an assassination of Mao and an army coup. They planned to bomb Mao's train on its return trip from the south. Mao was too careful to present an opportunity; as always, his travel plans changed suddenly and erratically, so he could not be targeted. Once Mao was safely back in Beijing, Lin and his family tried to flee to Mongolia, dying in a plane crash on September 13, 1971.⁴⁰⁷ Dikötter, Cultural

404. Zhu, at 15, 165.

405. *Id.* at 134-36; Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 545.

406. Leese, at 224-25.

407. Communist Mongolia was a satellite of the Soviet Union, which was hostile to Mao, and presumably would have welcomed Lin Biao as a high-ranking defector.

Revolution, at 241-52; Zhu, at 173-74, 182-84; Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 540-43.⁴⁰⁸

In the ensuing posthumous propaganda campaign against Lin, Mao ordered the release of the evidence against Lin's family, including the son's "571 Engineering Project." In Chinese, 571 (*wu qi yi*) is close to "armed uprising" (*wuzhuang qi yi*). The 571 document called Mao "not a true Marxist but an emperor type of dictator." He "changed the political life of the party and state into the life of a feudal, dictatorial, patriarchal type." Mao was "the present-day Emperor Shih Huang of the Chin Dynasty," inflicting "a feudal dynasty that carries a socialist banner."

According to the 571 manifesto, Mao's theory of "continued revolution" (i.e., the continuation of class struggle even after the original enemy economic classes had been liquidated) meant that the "targets of such a revolution actually were the Chinese people, the army, and anyone who disagreed with them." The Maoists

not only incite cadres to struggle against cadres and masses against masses but also incite armed forces to struggle against armed forces and party members against party members. . . . They manufacture controversies and cleavages so as to achieve their goal to divide and rule, destroying each group, one by one, to maintain their power. They understand that to attack everyone at the same time is suicidal. Thus, each time, he [Mao] uses one force to attack another. Today, he enlists this force to attack that force; tomorrow, he enlists that force to attack this force. . . . He suspects everything and everybody. He has a habitual practice of illtreating others. The men who had worked for him but were later kicked out one by one are in reality scapegoats bearing blame for him.

Zhu, at 190; Li, *Human Rights*, at 86-87.

Mao had expected the evidence against the Lin family to be damning, but many people agreed with the 571 manifesto by Lin's son. Mao had spent a decade building up Lin as *the* expositor of Mao Zedong Thought, and Lin had been Mao's named heir since 1965. Mao apparently did not always hire the best people. The Lin Biao incident stripped Mao of whatever remaining legitimacy he had, in the eyes of many.⁴⁰⁹

The 571 manifesto had accused Mao of being like the First Emperor, Shih Huang. Mao retorted that he indeed was like Shih Huang, and proud of it. The First Emperor and Chairman Mao both hated the influence of Confucianism on the Chinese people.

408. The portrayal of Lin in this essay has followed the standard view of Lin in the West and in China. That view is challenged in Frederick C. Teiwes & Warren Sun, *The Tragedy of Lin Biao: Riding the Tiger During the Cultural Revolution 1966-1971* (1996) (Mao forced Lin into power against Lin's wishes; Lin was not interested in politics and just did whatever Mao wanted, to the extent Mao's will was discernable); Jin Qiu, *The Culture of Power: The Lin Biao Incident in the Cultural Revolution* (1999) (Lin was not an enthusiast for the Cultural Revolution, was targeted in palace intrigue led by Jiang Qing, and did not know of his son's assassination plans). Whatever Lin's inner thoughts, in his public role he was the nation's most avid promoter of Mao Zedong Thought.

409. Zhu, at 174, 188-90, 202-03, 210; Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 242-44.

So starting in 1972-73, the people were ordered to condemn the “reactionary” ideas of Confucius, such as “the people are the foundation of the state,” “depositing riches in the people,” and “in teaching make no class distinctions.” Denunciation of Confucius was coupled with praise of the First Emperor for burning books and for burying scholars alive, because the First Emperor had been engaged in historically progressive class struggle. Li, Human Rights, at 87-88 (citing *People’s Daily*, Sept. 23, 1972, reprinting *Liaoning Daily* article extolling “burning of heretic books and burying alive of Confucian scholars”).

Allegedly, the root cause of the greatest treason ever against Mao was Confucianism. “Criticism of Lin Biao and repudiation of Confucius” went hand in hand (*pi Lin pi Kong yundong*).⁴¹⁰ As the *People’s Daily* put it, “Lin Biao feverishly advocated the doctrine of Confucius and Mencius. His reactionary ideological system was identical to Confucius and Mencius.” Roberts, at 58 (quoting *People’s Daily* editorial, Feb. 2, 1973). Even more so than Confucius, the Confucian philosopher Mencius was an outspoken advocate of revolution against tyrants. See online Ch. 21.A.1.

A subtext of the anti-Confucian campaign was to weaken premier Zhou Enlai, who was considered too pragmatic. Because Confucius had praised the Duke of Zhou as an ideal ruler, anti-Confucian propaganda could denounce “Zhou” and “present-day Confucians” without directly naming the premier.⁴¹¹ The indirect criticism was an example of what the Chinese call “pointing at the mulberry and reviling the ash.” Jiang Qing and her allies did it to Zhou Enlai often.

k. The Militia and the Power Struggles of the 1970s

The Cultural Revolution continued until Mao’s death in 1976, although the severity of repression lightened somewhat after 1971, with ups and downs in different times and regions. Universities began to reopen in 1973. Instead of having to dress in drab loose pants and a shirt, women were allowed to choose a single type of ugly dress authorized by the CCP.

Deng Xiaoping—who had been one of the top two individual targets of the Cultural Revolution—was rehabilitated and brought back into government. He in turn rehabilitated many survivors among the old-line party cadres—the class who had been target of the Cultural Revolution. The return of Deng may in part have been Mao’s effort to build up a political force to balance the army’s dominance.

Violence was reduced, compared to previous years—at least for people who didn’t challenge the system. In November 1974, Muslims in Shadian county (Yunnan province) formed their own militia to protect their mosques from being closed. The group trying to shut the mosques had been armed by the government. The Muslims snatched “guns from the local authorities and created homemade weapons with steel tubes filled with firepower, glass and other materials.” Xian Wang, *Islamic Religiosity, Revolution, and State Violence in Southwest China: The 1975 Shadian Massacre* 41 (M.A. Asia Pacific Policy Studies, Univ. Brit. Col. 2013). The People’s Liberation Army was ordered in, killing 1,600 and razing villages.⁴¹²

410. Li, Human Rights, at 84.

411. Leese, at 241.

412. Dikötter, Cultural Revolution, at 30.

In the post-Lin period, there was a continuing struggle among the PLA, the CCP pragmatists (led by Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping), and the idealistic radicals (the Gang of Four, Jiang Qing and her Shanghai cohorts⁴¹³). Both CCP groups worked together to push the PLA out of day-to-day government administration. Some in the PLA were happy to be able to focus on military preparedness instead.

The civilians were also maneuvering for who would take over after Mao. As noted above, the political base of Mao's wife Jiang was Shanghai. Starting with Mao's "Arm the Left" campaign in 1967, the Shanghai militia had become a force of over a million, running the city, and administering beatings as it saw fit. Although the normal Chinese pattern was for the militia to be integrated in the PLA command structure, the Shanghai militia was not answerable to the PLA. Nor did the Shanghai militia depend on the PLA for arms. Militia-run factories in Shanghai had been repurposed to build militia weapons.

In 1973, the Gang of Four had enough political clout to launch a national campaign for the militia everywhere to copy "the Shanghai Experience." In effect, this meant a militia led by the ultra-left, and not answerable to the PLA. The campaign was fairly successful in large northeastern cities, creating a large armed force responsive to the Gang of Four. But elsewhere, and especially in the rural areas, PLA foot-dragging and outright noncompliance kept the militia under PLA control.⁴¹⁴ A new constitution in 1975 elevated the militia to equality with the army.⁴¹⁵

Mao wanted to reignite the Cultural Revolution, get rid of the revisionists, and put the Gang of Four in charge. But he also did not want to die in prison. The danger posed by the army prevented him from fully pushing his political objectives.⁴¹⁶

When Zhou Enlai died in January 1976, huge, spontaneous, and unauthorized crowds assembled to mourn him. The crowds considered him relatively less totalitarian and oppressive than Mao. Unlike the Tiananmen rallies of the early Cultural Revolution, which originated from the top down, the crowds that gathered to mourn Zhou expressed people power. "The country had not witnessed such an outpouring of popular sentiment since before the communists came to power in 1949." Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 611.

While there were demonstrations at over 200 locations throughout the country, the flashpoint was in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, which saw the largest spontaneous demonstration ever in China.⁴¹⁷ On April 4, Tomb-Sweeping Day (*Qing Ming*), a traditional day for honoring one's ancestors, an immense crowd gathered at the Monument to the People's Martyrs in Tiananmen Square. Erected in 1959, the monument honored Chinese revolutionary martyrs from 1840 onward.

413. The appellation "Gang of Four" was coined by Mao. The members were Jiang Qing, Chang Chung-chiao, Wang Hung-wen, and Yao Wen-yuan.

414. Roberts, at 51-77; Perry, at 247-49.

415. "The Chinese People's Liberation Army and the people's militia are the workers' and peasants' own armed forces led by the Communist Party of China; they are the armed forces of the people of all nationalities." *China Const.* art. 15 (1975).

416. Zhu, at 201-17, 243-45; Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 241-95.

417. Thurston, at 18.

At the monument, poems were read aloud, then transmitted throughout the square by relay teams shouting each line, as the people wrote them down.⁴¹⁸ One poet said:

*In our grief we hear the devils shrieking;
We weep while wolves and jackals laugh.
Shedding tears, we come to mourn our hero,
Heads raised we unsheathe our swords.*⁴¹⁹

The crowds shouted, “People’s Troops are on the Side of the People!” Some protestors wrote big character posters: “The people are no longer stupid as they were before” and “We are no longer afraid of losing heads and shedding our blood.”⁴²⁰

The masses denounced Chairman and Madame Mao, indirectly: “Down with Franco!” (recently deceased Spanish fascist dictator), “Down with Indira Gandhi!” (Indian Prime Minister who had recently overturned democracy and was ruling by decree), “Down with the Empress Dowager!” (Manchu Dynasty ruler of China 1861-1908) — pointing at the mulberry and reviling the ash.

That night, the government dispatched fire engines and cranes to remove the tens of thousands of wreaths deposited in honor of Zhou.⁴²¹ The next day, a worker’s militia was sent to disperse the crowd, but it was hesitant to act, with many members themselves having laid wreaths for Zhou.⁴²² Police and more militia surrounded the square. People could leave but not enter. Some protesters broke into government buildings, destroyed propaganda vans, toppled and burned cars, or attacked security guards and militia.⁴²³

As dusk neared, a final poem was pasted on the monument. Three lines brought the crowd to silence. As they were relayed, no one else spoke. The listeners quickly scribbled the words onto paper. “For the unspoken had finally been said, the thought that had lain barely below the surface had become manifest, the undertow had merged with the current.” Thurston, at 21.

*China is no longer the China of yore
Its people are no longer wrapped in ignorance
Gone for good is the feudal society of Qin Shi Huang.*

Id. “The last of the Tiananmen poems had turned the tide of protest. It was directed now against the party chairman himself.” *Id.* at 22.

That night, the Tiananmen revolutionaries were attacked by the Capital Militia Command Post (a/k/a the “Cudgel Corps”). In Beijing as in Shanghai, the militia were under the command of the Gang of Four.⁴²⁴

418. *Id.* at 15.

419. *Id.*

420. Li, Human Rights, at 173-75.

421. Thurston, at 19.

422. *Id.* at 20-21.

423. *Id.*; Li, Human Rights, at 173-75.

424. Perry, at 249-52; Zhu, at 219-20, 226 n.15; Li, Private Life, at 611-12; Li, Human Rights, at 174-75.

The minister of defense said that over ten thousand in the crowd of a hundred thousand might have been killed; another official said there were only a hundred deaths.⁴²⁵ Newer scholarship argues that the violence lasted only 10-15 minutes; people were beaten bloody but no one was killed. Frederick C. Teiwes & Warren Sun, *The First Tiananmen Incident Revisited: Elite Politics and Crisis Management at the End of the Maoist Era*, 77 *Pac. Aff.* 211, 219 (2004). According to one report, it took hundreds of workers to scrub off the blood.⁴²⁶

On April 7, Deng Xiaoping was purged again. That evening and the next two, the government ordered in large crowds to express their loyalty to Mao. Together they yelled, “Resolutely carry the struggle against the right deviationist attempt to reverse correct verdicts through to the end.” Thurston, at 23. On the Martyrs Monument, “gleaming like a red neon light, was one stain of blood that somehow had been missed.” *Id.* at 24. *Cf.* William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act v, scene 1 (“Out, damned spot! . . . What need fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?”).

I. Post-Mao and the Mao Legacy

Mao died September 9, 1976. People made a show of crying in public, as they had to. Unlike with Zhou, there were many official events commemorating the passing of Mao—and “no comparable spontaneous expressions of grief.”⁴²⁷

Jiang Qing and her Gang had been arming their urban militias, preparing to carry out a long-planned coup.⁴²⁸ With little time to spare, the other side struck first, arresting Madame Mao and her cohorts on October 6, 1976.⁴²⁹

Deng was rehabilitated for a second time in July 1977 and by 1978 he had taken over. “Seek truth from facts,” was his slogan. Although it echoed something Mao had once said, the import was an obvious heresy against Mao Zedong Thought. The new policies shifted emphasis “from judging a policy by the degree to which it is grounded in the tenets of Mao’s thought, and toward measuring its legitimacy by its ability to achieve practical results.” Thomas C. Roberts, *The Chinese People’s Militia and the Doctrine of People’s War 3* (1983).

Over time, the urban militias were brought back under PLA control. The militia—while still select—was removed from intraparty politics and refocused on its classic tasks: labor, controlling the population, and serving as a reserve force in case of a land war. *Id.* at 79-107.

Deng began to open up the economy, while still maintaining substantial state control. Over time, living standards soared. The regime kept Mao’s cult of personality but toned it down, and admitted he had made mistakes. Deng’s enemies had called him the number two Khrushchev of China (Zhou Enlai being number one).⁴³⁰ They had a point. Deng had been a great military leader in establishing a

425. Rummel, *China’s Bloody Century*, at 268; Li, *Human Rights*, at 174-75.

426. Li, *Human Rights*, at 175.

427. Leese, at 244.

428. Zhu, at 217-23.

429. Li, *Private Life of Chairman Mao*, at 624-32.

430. Li, *Human Rights*, at 90.

totalitarian communist state. Like Khrushchev, and unlike Stalin and Mao, Deng recognized that rule by a self-deluded, isolated, irrational, megalomaniac was destructive to the long-term interests of a communist party. Although human rights could be obliterated, human nature and common sense could not.

Mao's Pros, Cons, and Legacy

Today, Mao's defenders argue that, notwithstanding the mass murder, tyranny, destruction of civil society, and his policy of keeping people stupid, he improved living conditions. Actually, caloric intake did not exceed the low pre-Mao levels of the late 1920s and early 1930s until the late 1970s, after Mao was gone and farming was decommunized.⁴³¹

By one analysis, [life expectancy at birth](#) was 43.45 years in 1950, and began to substantially improve when the Great Leap Forward ended, reaching 63.97 by 1976. Another analysis found that life expectancy was over 40 in 1950, 49 in 1957, only 25 in 1960, 61 in 1970, and 65 in 1980. Nicholas Eberstadt, *The Poverty of Communism* 131, tbl. 7.1 (1988) (citing Judith Banister, *An Analysis of Recent Data on the Population of China*, 10 *Population & Dev. Rev.* (June 1984)). The long-term improvement in China was greater than in India.

Mao is also praised as a pioneer in sex equality, and he did make a genuine difference for women. Forbidden to stay home and raise their children, who would instead be raised by the state, young urban mothers worked in factories, whereas working mothers were frowned on socially in Japan and South Korea. Since factory workers were better off than most, the equality that allowed factory work by women made many of them better off compared to the alternatives available under Maoism.

Liberated from childcare, peasant women participated equally in hard labor at gunpoint in the fields. After birth, mothers were permitted about a month before the baby was sent to the communal nursery and the mother back to the fields.⁴³² Since women, on the whole, are physically less strong than men, they earned fewer "work points" from labor, and were therefore paid and fed less.⁴³³

Because of Mao, many women did not need the free state-provided childcare: chronic malnutrition and deprivation of rest caused prolapsed uterus, amenorrhea, and widespread infertility. Dikötter, *Cultural Revolution*, at 264, 269 (conditions in 1972); Dikötter, *Famine*, at 257-58 (during Great Leap Forward). Mao robbed many women of reproductive rights.

Under Mao, birth control policies varied. There were bans on birth control, then free distribution of birth control, then laws raising the marriage ages, requiring four or five years spacing between a first and second child, and allowing a third child only with a permit. Thomas Scharping, *Birth Control in China 1949-2000: Population Policy and Demographic Development* 47-50 (2003).

Starting in 1979, the CCP reduced the permissible number of births per woman to one. If a woman had already given birth to a child at any time in her life, abortion was often mandatory for a second pregnancy. *Id.* at 119-22. The policy led

431. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 215.

432. Chow, at 237-38.

433. Li, *Human Rights*, at 135.

to tens of millions of abortions, some of them voluntary and many coerced, including by physical force. *See, e.g.,* Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 271 (describing the “Clean out the Stomach” forced abortion program in Henan Province, due to 3,000 over-quota pregnancies there). *See generally* [Population Research Institute](#) (research organization focused on population control as means of interference with reproductive rights, including in China).

Sex-specific abortion of females became very common.⁴³⁴ Infanticide also was practiced, although data are hard to come by, and it was presumably more frequent in rural areas, where it was easier to conceal.⁴³⁵ From 2000 to 2010, data from China's National Bureau of Statistics indicates 66.88 million girls born and 79.52 million boys. Weida Li, *China's Sex Ratio Disparity Increases*, GBTimes, Sept. 5, 2018. The figures indicate over 10 million sex-selection abortions in the decade, and perhaps also reflects female infanticide for births that were never officially recorded. In 2016, the birth cap was raised back to two, if the woman obtains permission from her work unit.

Mao is credited, by some, for ending China's “century of humiliation” — the period starting in with the First Opium War (1839-42) when foreign powers bullied China, extorting territory and unequal trade concessions. Really though, Chiang Kai-Shek and the Nationalists did more to end the century of humiliation. Much larger than the communist army, the Republic of China army defeated the warlords. The Republic's military did far more than the communist military to drive back the Japanese invasion.

China became a global power, and hundreds of millions of Chinese escaped extreme poverty not because Mao lived but because he died. Freed from Mao's crazy strangulation of economic life, China has risen swiftly.

As a territorial conqueror, Mao was among the greatest in Chinese history. Whatever one thinks about the legal status of Tibet and Xinjiang, both areas were in fact self-governing in 1949. Both areas had been self-governing for most of their history, including recently. After Mao was finished, Tibet and Xinjiang were under very strong control from afar.

An enduring, although diminished, Mao legacy has been the *laogai* work camps—renamed, but still in operation, enslaving millions. Rummel estimates that after Mao the camp population was reduced to about 5 million, and conditions improved, so that *laogai* camp deaths in 1976-87 were a comparatively low 720,000. As the government was discovering, keeping slaves alive was economically sensible, because they could produce export goods at very low labor cost. The total of mass killing in 1977-87 was 874,000, with most of the non-camp deaths from persecutions in Tibet and other ethnic areas.⁴³⁶

Today in Xinjiang, over a million Muslims are held in concentration camps. Adrian Zenz, *Xinjiang's New Slavery: Coerced Uighur Labor Touches Almost Every Part of the Supply Chain*, For. Pol'y, Dec. 11, 2019. *See generally* Nick Holdstock, *China's Forgotten People: Xinjiang, Terror and the Chinese State* (2019); Debasish Chaudhuri, *Xinjiang and the Chinese State: Violence in the Reform Era* (2018); Ethnic

434. Scharping, at 291-98.

435. *Id.*

436. Rummel, *China's Bloody Century*, at 273.

Conflict and Protest in Tibet and Xinjiang: Unrest in China's West (Ben Hillman & Gray Tuttle eds. 2016); Michael Dillon, Xinjiang and the Expansion of Chinese Community Power (2014); Gardner Bovingdon, The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land (2010).

Post-Mao, freedom of thought and inquiry in China has waxed and waned, with waning in recent years as Xi Jinping has made himself dictator for life and demanded that all aspects of life in China be directed by the CCP. Human rights activists and the lawyers who defend them are kidnapped, held incommunicado, and tortured—sometimes for years. *See, e.g.*, The People's Republic of the Disappeared: Stories from Inside China's System for Enforced Disappearances (Michael Caster ed., 2d ed. 2019). The CCP employs technological surveillance beyond anything Mao could have dreamed. *See, e.g.*, James Griffiths, The Great Firewall of China: How to Build and Control an Alternative Version of the Internet (2019). *Cf.* Jude B. Blanchette, China's New Red Guards: The Return of Radicalism and the Rebirth of Mao Zedong (2019); Nicholas R. Lardy, The State Strikes Back: The End of Economic Reform in China? (2019).

Tiananmen Square

In 1989, democracy demonstrators began to threaten the one-party state. Beginning in mid-April, they demonstrated and camped in Tiananmen Square. Against the armed force of the People's Liberation Army, they knew their only hope was the moral force of nonviolence. *See* Timothy Brook, Quelling the People: The Military Suppression of the Beijing Democracy Movement (1998).⁴³⁷

Deng Xiaoping declared martial law on May 20. The evening before, the PLA had been sent in to clear the protesters. But as soon as PLA forces were spotted moving into Beijing, huge crowds assembled to block them. The PLA had not been given orders to shoot if necessary, and so the army was blocked.

The people of Beijing had come out *en masse*, and they stayed out *en masse*, fortifying their city against invasion by the standing army. Street barricades were constructed with overturned buses, bicycles, cement blocks, or whatever else was at hand. A spontaneous network spread the word on how to immobilize a vehicle column: use gravel to stop the lead vehicle, let the air out of its tires, and then remove or cut the ignition wires.

A few days later, the PLA pulled its forces back outside Beijing, leaving many stranded vehicles behind. The PLA began preparing for a second assault. Inside Beijing, tactical knowledge continued to disseminate. For example, if a whole armored column cannot be stopped, surround and stop the final third of the column. Then as the reduced vanguard moves forward, isolate and halt its rear third, and so on.

While the students were concentrated in Tiananmen Square, the city itself was defended by people of all backgrounds and classes. New citizen militia self-defense forces, with names such as "Dare-to-Die-Corps," vowed to defend the students at all costs. The people desperately hoped that the People's Liberation Army would never obey orders to fire on the people. With many military personnel stuck in

437. This subsection is based mainly on Brook.

immobilized caravans, there were plenty of opportunities for friendly conversations, and some soldiers vowed never to harm the people. But most of the soldiers who would soon attack Beijing never had an opportunity to interact with the people, and were told by their officers that the protesters were just bunch of hooligans who were endangering public safety.

The possibility that some military units might actually fight for the people was apparently considered a serious risk by the regime. The military deployment aimed at Beijing included anti-aircraft rockets—of no use against land-based protesters, but handy in case some of the air force switched sides.

On May 30 the democracy protesters at Tiananmen Square, now numbering over a million, raised a statue of the Goddess of Liberty. She directly faced and confronted Mao's giant cult portrait hanging in the square.⁴³⁸ Around the city the masses were singing with new meaning the global communist anthem, *The Internationale*.

*For reason in revolt now thunders and at last ends the age of cant.
Now away with all your superstitions.
Servile masses arise, arise!
We'll change forthwith the old conditions and spurn the dust to win the prize. . . .
On our flesh too long has fed the raven.
We've too long been the vultures' prey.
But now farewell to spirit craven.
The dawn brings in a brighter day . . .
No savior from on high delivers.
No trust have we in prince or peer.
Our own right hand the chains must sever,
Chains of hatred, greed and fear . . .
Each at his forge must do his duty
And strike the iron while hot.*

The PLA senior officer corps was not sympathetic to the protesters. They “owe[d] their power and allegiance to Deng Xiaoping’s faction within the Communist Party. Their allegiance [was] not abstract; most of them personally served in Deng’s Second Field Army during the 1940s.” Brook, at 206.

On June 3-4, the PLA followed orders from the CCP leadership.⁴³⁹ This time, use of deadly force was authorized. Soldiers attacked the people with AK-47 automatic rifles and other machine guns, plus “metal bars, nail-studded clubs, garottes and whips.” Brook, at 202. The PLA had infiltrated plainclothes soldiers, posing as civilians, into the Tiananmen area. They were on standby waiting for delivery of firearms. The street barricades did stop some movement by PLA forces, but many

438. Wu, at 109-10.

439. Not everyone. “Maj. Gen. Xu Qinxian, leader of the mighty 38th Group Army, said the protests were a political problem and should be settled through negotiations, not force. . . . In the end, General Xu agreed to pass the orders to his officers, but not to lead armed troops into the capital. He was arrested, expelled from the party, and served four years in prison.” Andrew Jacobs & Chris Buckley, *Tales of Army Discord Show Tiananmen Square in a New Light*, N.Y. Times, June 2, 2014, at A1.

of the barricades were knocked away by armored personnel carriers running at full speed. As the noose tightened around Tiananmen, the students decided to surrender. Most were allowed to leave peacefully through one exit.

Most fatalities were not in Tiananmen Square, but in the city, as the PLA shot and rammed its way through the people. The highest estimate of city-wide fatalities of the PLA attack is ten thousand, according to a secret British diplomatic cable sent the next day. *Tiananmen Square Protest Death Toll "Was 10,000,"* BBC News, Dec. 23, 2017. The Chinese government claims only a few hundred. Preliminary estimates by the Red Cross and the Swiss Ambassador suggested about 2,600 or 2,700. Brook, at 155.

"It is difficult to imagine how the power of Deng Xiaoping and [premier] Li Peng might have been shored up without the Army's intervention, though what the outcome might have been had the Army remained in its barracks is anyone's guess. . . . The regime as it stood on June 4 existed by dint of armed force." *Id.* at 204. The party controlled the gun.

Conclusion

Suppose that on October 1, 1949, every Chinese home contained a good fire-arm, ample ammunition, and inhabitants determined to use it against anyone who tried to take their gun or enslave them. If so, there could have been many deaths in China, with neighbors or families shooting each other in violent quarrels that were fatal because a firearm was present. Perhaps an armed populace would have caused chaos, and led to something like the warlord period of the early twentieth century or the warring states of 475-221 B.C.

In worst-case scenarios, there might have been millions of deaths, but perhaps many fewer than the 86 million who died because of Mao's reign. When governments were busy fighting each other in the warlord period, there was much less killing than when Mao was the only government. All governmental energy could be concentrated on Mao's war on the people. Only a government that is much stronger than the people has the capability to kill on such a scale.

The one-party state confiscated guns starting in 1949. As Mao and others accurately said, communists can rule only if they alone control the gun. Post-1949, to the extent that the Chinese or Tibetan people were able to keep or obtain arms, they caused the tyrants much trouble, and sometimes blunted oppression. In 1967, when Mao said, "Arm the Left," the masses did obtain arms, and they brought the Mao regime close to collapse within a few weeks. To maintain communist rule, China today remains a one-party state with prohibitory arms laws.

NOTES & QUESTIONS

1. Around the world, many constitutional provisions exist to prevent tyranny and military rule, or to keep one man from having absolute power. Some of these constitutional provisions are discussed in the global constitutional survey in Part A. The U.S. Constitution has been described as a tyranny-control mechanism. Lawrence Tribe, *American Constitutional Law* 19, 306 (3d ed. 2000) (citing Rebecca I. Brown, *Accountability, Liberty, and the Constitution*, 98 Colum. L. Rev. 531, 570

(1998) (“the people did not establish primarily a utility-maximizing constitution, but rather a tyranny-minimizing one”). In response to the abuses of monarchs, the United Kingdom’s constitution adopted provisions to prevent tyranny and military rule. Chapter 2.H. Many of the British protections influenced the U.S. Constitution. *See* Chapter 2. If you were designing a constitution to prevent what happened during Mao’s reign in China, what provisions would you include? Conversely, if you wanted to ensure that the leader of a revolutionary vanguard could enforce his vision with as little interference as possible, what kind of constitution would you create? For either scenario, how would you make sure that your constitutional provisions are actually put into effect?

2. Lily Tang Williams was born in Chengdu (southwest China) shortly before the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. She recalls:

Citizens were not allowed to have any guns or they would be put into prison, or worse. Chinese people were helpless when they needed to defend themselves. I grew up with fear, like millions of other children—fear that the police would pound on our doors at night and take my loved ones away, fear that bad guys would come to rob us. Sometimes I could not sleep from hearing the screaming people outside. . . .

There were many stories of local people defending themselves with kitchen knives and sticks. Women were even more helpless when they were attacked and raped. I was molested as a college student once while walking home at night. It was common then.

When it came to dealing with the Chinese government and police brutality, there was nothing we could do. They had guns, while law-abiding citizens did not. . . .

After I went to law school, and later joined a law-school faculty, I was depressed to know that what we learned and taught in school and what was reality were such different things. The society ruled not by law but by men.

Citizens still cannot buy firearms today. I remember that when I traveled to Guangdong province for business in 1997 and 1998, the residents called the local police “gangsters.” Whenever the police showed up, the residents would hide.

After I joined the law-school faculty in Fudan University, I had to be careful about what I said in the classroom and during the party’s political-study time. My boss in law school even intruded into my private life, telling me that I received too many letters; I was too social. I should not go to my boyfriend’s parents’ house for dinner and spend the night. . . .

I tried so hard to come to the U.S. for personal freedom, including the freedom guaranteed by the Second Amendment: the right to keep and bear arms, which makes me feel like a free person, not a slave. I felt empowered when I finally held my own gun. For the first time in my life, I truly knew I was free.

I think the Founding Fathers of this country were very wise. They put that in the Constitution because they knew that a government could become either powerful or weak and that the citizens’ last defense is the ability to bear arms to protect themselves against tyranny and criminals.

The guns are not just for sports, hunting, and collecting; it is our fundamental right to bear arms and use them for our self-defense.

Lily Tang Williams, *Guns Against Tyranny*, Nat'l Rev. Online, Sept. 7, 2013.

3. "The liberation of the masses is accomplished by the masses themselves. . . . Revolution or people's war in any country is the business of the masses of the country and should be carried out primarily by their own efforts; there is no other way." Lin Biao, *Long Live the Victory of People's War: In Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of Victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japan* 38 (1965). How do undemocratic regimes, including Mao's, attempt to prevent the masses from liberating themselves? What can the masses do in response?

4. In response to public demands for modernization, the Manchu Dynasty in its final years had allowed the creation of elected provincial assemblies. Although the dynasty expected the assemblies to be powerless advisory boards, they played an important role leading the revolution that overthrew the Manchu and established the Republic of China. Spence, *Mao Zedong*, at 12. Online Chapters 21.C.3.b and D.2.a discuss the importance of "intermediate magistrates" in medieval and later Christian revolutionary theory: a just and prudent revolution against tyrant should be led by officials who rank in-between the tyrant and the people—for example, the nobles, local governors, assemblies, and so on. Chapter 4 describes the essential role of colonial/state governments as leaders in the American Revolution. Chapter 5.C.1 presents James Madison's argument in *Federalist* 46 that no government opposed by the people could survive if it were resisted by a well-armed population led by state governments or their equivalents. How did the Mao regime attempt to prevent resistance against the central government led by local governments or other intermediaries?

5. According to a critic of the CCP regime, "leaders coming to power with the help of rifles must rely on rifles as a principal source of strength for consolidation of power." Li, *Human Rights*, at 17. The American government of 1776 and the Chinese government of 1949 were both established by rifles. (To be precise, Americans relied more on muskets than on rifles. Ch. 3.E.) Compare and contrast the Mao regime's policy of consolidating power by attempting to create a government arms monopoly with the American policy of consolidating power by constitutionalizing and subsidizing widespread arms ownership.

6. Dr. Lobsang Tensing was three years old when he was brought to India by his father, a Chushi Gangdruk resistance fighter. Reflecting on the days of the Cultural Revolution, he said, "I've learned since then that, in American universities at the time, Mao Tse-Tung was very popular among the students. Why was that? Did no one tell them how many millions in Tibet and his own country he killed? Maybe they were just as ignorant of us as we were of them." Dunham, at 401. What do you think accounts for Mao's popularity among some people who consider themselves to be progressive?

7. "To rebel is justified." Under what conditions is this statement correct?

8. Should the people be stronger than the government, or vice-versa?

9. After reading the last two essays by Professor Kopel on Europe and China, do you think that an armed populace is necessary to deter political tyranny? If the U.S. Constitution did not protect the right to keep and bear arms, would its other provisions be sufficient to deter tyranny? Which ones?