STATISTICS OF DEMOCIDE:
Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900

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We owe respect to the living; to the dead we owe only truth
----Voltaire. *Oeuvres* Vol. I, p. 15n

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IMPORTANT NOTE: Among all the democide estimates appearing on in this book, some have been revised upward. I have changed that for Mao's famine, 1958-1962, from zero to 38,000,000. And thus I have had to change the overall democide for the PRC (1928-1987) from 38,702,000 to 76,702,000. Details here.

I have changed my estimate for colonial democide from 870,000 to an additional 50,000,000. Details here.

Thus, the new world total: old total 1900-1999 = 174,000,000. New World total = 174,000,000 + 38,000,000 (new for China) + 50,000 (new for Colonies) = 262,000,000.

Just to give perspective on this incredible murder by government, if all these bodies were laid head to toe, with the average height being 5', then they would circle the earth ten times. Also, this democide murdered 6 times more people than died in combat in all the foreign and internal wars of the century. Finally, given popular estimates of the dead in a major nuclear war, this total democide is as though such a war did occur, but with its dead spread over a century.

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In the associated volume, *Death by Government* [1], I described fourteen cases in which since 1900 a regime murdered or is suspected of murdering over 1,000,000 subjects and foreigners. Four of these regimes, the Soviet...
Union, communist China, Nationalist China, and Nazi Germany, each killed 10,000,000 or more unarmed and helpless men, women, and children.

I also gave some descriptive statistics on these and all 204 other cases of democide (genocide, politicide, massacres, extrajudicial executions, and other forms of mass murder) by state and quasi-state regimes, and non-state groups. These revealed democide's incredible magnitude in this century and well showed the close relationship between the extent of a regime's totalitarian power, or Power in short, and democide. My conclusion was that Power kills, absolute Power kills absolutely.

In 1986 I began this work on democide in order to complete tests of democracy as inherently a structure of non-violence and positive peace. I had shown in previous work that democracies do not make war on each other, and that the more liberally democratic--the more freedom people have--the less their foreign and domestic collective violence.[2] Democracies as a sphere of peace has by now been well established in the literature,[3] as has the negative correlation between democracy and domestic violence, such as riots, coup d'etat, revolutions, and guerrilla warfare.[4] The one controversial finding is that democracy is inversely related to foreign violence. As a side product of this work on democide I will present findings in chapter 21 to further substantiate this relationship.[5]

As of 1986 what remained to be tested was an often asserted negative relationship between democracy and murderous government violence against citizens or foreigners. Moreover, it also made good theoretical sense that the less liberally democratic and more totalitarian a regime, the more people it murders. Unfortunately, good comparative data on democide for testing this did not then exist.

Accordingly, after a preliminary pilot study,[6] I applied for a grant from the Unites States Institute of Peace to pursue the data collection and testing of the relationship between democide and democracy. This I was granted for two years, subsequently renewed for another three.

Collecting data on democide was an horrendous task. I soon was overwhelmed by the unbelievable repetitiveness of regime after regime, ruler after ruler, murdering people under their control or rule by shooting, burial alive, burning, hanging, drowning, starvation, flaying, beating, torture, and so on and on. Year after year. Not hundreds, not thousands, not tens of thousands of these people, but millions and millions. Almost 170,000,000 of them, and this is only what appears a reasonable middle estimate. The awful toll may even reach above 300,000,000, the equivalent in dead of a nuclear war stretched out over decades.

I found that so much of this killing was unknown or ignored by so many that I decided to publish part of the data and case studies of the worst of the megamurderers as separate volumes. Thus I wrote Lethal Politics on the Soviet Union, China's Bloody Century on Nationalist and communist China, and Democide on Nazi Germany.[7]

In Death by Government I focused case studies on the lesser megamurderers, such as the Cambodian Khmer Rouge, the Pakistan military in what is now Bangladesh, Japan's military fascists in World War II, and Turkey's Young Turks in World War I. However, space was not available in that book to also present all the estimates, sources, and calculations that underlie the case studies and their democide totals.

That is in part the purpose of this book. Here I do two things. First I list all the relevant estimates, sources, and calculations for each of the case studies in Death by Government, and all additional cases of lesser democide for which I have collected data. This is a total tabulation, with the result that some of the tables are over fifty pages long. The value of this is the listing of each source, its estimate, and comments qualifying the estimate. From these others can check and evaluate my totals, refine and correct them, and build on this comprehensive set of data. These data are presented and annotated in chapter 2 for pre-20th century democide, in Part 1 for the megamurderers, and in Part 3 for the United States and lesser murderers.

The methodological underpinnings for this collection has been given in previous books[8] and I will not repeat this here. I will simply note that I recognize how error full, approximate, and politically biased so many of these estimate may be. I have tried to approach the best overall estimate of democide for a regime, therefore, by determining its best upper and lower bounds, which are given for all estimates tabulated here. The estimates themselves are what appear to me to be the most reasonable or probable within these low-high bounds. Thus my
estimate for the Filipinos murdered by the Marcos regime of the Philippines, 1972-1986, is 15,000, which is bounded by a possible low democide of 10,000 and high of 25,000. That is, Marcos is responsible for the murder of 10,000 to 25,000 Filipinos, most likely 15,000.[9]

Second, having finished collecting all these data and completing the major case studies, I finally could systematically test the assumed inverse relationship between democracy and democide. That is the substance of this book. I detail the tests in Part 3 and summarize them in the introductory chapter. My conclusion is that the diverse tests are positive and robust, that the less liberal democracy and the more totalitarian a regime, the more likely it will commit democide. The closer to absolute power, the more a regime's disposition to murder one's subjects or foreigners multiplies. As far as this work is concerned, it is empirically true that Power kills, absolute Power kills absolutely.

NOTES


2. See Rummel (Understanding Conflict and War, particularly Vol. 4: War, Power, Peace; "Libertarianism and International Violence"; "Libertarianism, Violence Within States, and the Polarity Principle"; and "Libertarian Propositions on Violence Within and Between Nations: A Test Against Published Research Results").


4. For collations of these results, see Rummel ("Libertarian Propositions on Violence Within and Between Nations: A Test Against Published Research Results", 1996).

5. I have given a detailed consideration of this question in Rummel ("Democracies ARE less warlike than other regimes", 1996) and find empirical analyses generally support the proposition that democracies are less warlike than other types of regimes.


9. See table 15.1 [table 15.1E], lines 2687-2747.

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