

- (iv) **We can no longer rest comfortably on the assumption that such behavior is a freak of history** which was eliminated by the victory of the forces of light at the end of the Second World War. Neither can we blame all genocide on fascism, on barbarism, or on religious belief. Uncomfortable as it is, we have to accept that genocide and the potential for genocide is part of the human condition. And that means part of us.

To an extent we do not like to acknowledge, the political landscape which we inherit has been shaped by war, and war and genocide have always been close companions. The sacking of cities was not invented in the second millennium AD, but in the fourth millennium BC. Victorious armies celebrated in the classical epics of Greece and Rome had no compunction about 'putting to the sword' entire populations identified as alien and hostile to the conquering powers. And what of ourselves - our own recent and glorious history? What would have been the outcome had Winston Churchill been indicted for war crimes in connection with the systematic incineration of the city of Dresden in Germany in 1944, at a time when it was known to be packed with tens of thousands of refugees fleeing from the Russian onslaught in the East?

And what of the United States? How did it come about that there were 50 million Indians in North America at the beginning of the expansion to the West, and only 100 000 at the end? And, in much more recent history how close was the collusion between the USA and genocidal regimes in Central America where crushing the communist menace was seen as the paramount security objective of US policy?

- (v) **War is about identity – such as imposing a dominant identity through conquest, breaking free from a dominant identity through wars of liberation.** War and genocide are as old as civilization. The history of civilization as seen from outer space would be a turmoil of competing empires, cultures, identities, periodically devouring each other and amalgamating, and then exploding in fragments. The motive power of this turmoil has been war, and it has frequently been accompanied by the shadow of genocide.

Genocide is the flip side of an affirmation of identity. When tribal identity is at stake there is an almost irresistible biological force which causes the warring tribes to perceive the enemy as alien - as not really belonging to the same species, but fundamentally evil or corrupt and therefore to be destroyed. They are usually given dehumanizing hate names like Huns (Germany) in the Second World War, or 'Slants' (Vietnamese) in the Vietnam War. Such feelings are potentially present in us all.

- (vi) **This is however just one half of the picture. The age of the empire has abruptly come to an end.** The world is shrinking in size through the