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The War on Terror is currently represented in International Relations and beyond as a conflict between political and social formations for which the security and promotion of human life is an abiding concern and an enemy dedicated to the destruction of the political and social conditions for the flourishing of human life. Not simply an enemy that is motivated against the interests of common humanity, but an enemy which in being so driven, is ready to resort to subhuman tactics, and which therefore requires, paradoxically, a less than human response in defence of the integrity of human life. Hence the declaration by liberal regimes and the mobilisation of their societies for a war of fundamentally illiberal proportions and dimensions. A war deemed to require the permanent mobilisation of entire societies against an enemy which threatens their security from within. A war against an enemy which like a parasite living off its human host, breeds in the most vulnerable areas of liberal societies, waiting for the moment to release a pathological violence upon its otherwise oblivious prey. A war which requires the development of new and evermore intensive techniques with which to monitor the movements and dispositions of the life of liberal societies themselves because it is there that the enemy festers and will emerge to such devastating effect.

To challenge such broadly disseminated understandings this book develops a biopolitical analysis of the War on Terror. Examining this war biopolitically means attempting to think more rigorously about the actuality of relations between the problems of life and politics which are constitutive of it. In developing this analysis it is especially important that we subject to critique the claim firstly that liberal regimes do indeed exist for the security and promotion of human life, and secondly that the terrorists now targeting liberal societies are themselves devoid of human causes and aspirations. In essence, and as will be argued, this is not a war in defence of the integrity of human life against an enemy defined simply by a contradictory will for the destruction of human life. It is a war over the political constitution of life in which the limitations of liberal accounts of humanity are being put to the test, if not rejected outright. It is certainly true that the future of humanity is at stake in this conflict, but only in the sense that any resolution of it will depend on our abilities to learn to question the limits of existing understandings of what constitutes human life and its political potentialities. The instigation of such a line of questioning is integral to the biopolitical analysis developed in this book.

As a struggle over the political constitution of life this war entails a substantial genealogy. It can be traced back, at the very least, to the origins of liberal

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regimes, which from their inception in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have sought to govern life with a view to the elimination of the problem of war from within and between societies. The development of the liberal project of peace has, of course, met with serial resistances throughout modernity. Yet the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union led many to declare that its central aims had been fulfilled. Today, in the context of the War on Terror, the original dilemmas of liberal modernity are being posed anew and in evermore forceful terms. Why is it that a political project dedicated to solving the problem of war and the creation of peace has culminated in the declaration of a war bereft of temporal or spatial parameters? Why is it that a political project which seeks to sever the relation of society to war now requires a social state of permanent mobilisation for war? What accounts for the ferocity with which human societies and subjects attempt to protect accounts of life inimical to liberal conditions? What is to be done about such obvious and immediate failings of liberalism to convince life to submit itself to humanist dominions?

Responding to these dilemmas requires not only that we analyse the ways in which liberal regimes have sought and failed historically to martial life in the interests of liberal peace, but that we pose anew the problem of what life is and may become once released from the shackles that liberal regimes attempt to bind it with in the name of peace. As this book argues, it is our failing to establish the political grounds from which to pursue meaningful responses to such urgent problems that accounts currently for the prevalence of the form of resistance to the liberal project known as Terror.

This book examines these problems through the development of a conceptual framework derived from the works of a group of thinkers uniquely provisioned for such a task. Indeed the formulation of the problem of relations between war, life, and politics on which the analysis turns would not be possible without them. The works of Michel Foucault and other major political and social thinkers influenced by him are among the most under-utilised and yet over-abused resources of International Relations theory. Work within International Relations influenced by Foucault has generally been accused of irrelevance to disciplinary concerns. In this book I explain the critical importance of Foucault for a problem that is absolutely central to the discipline of International Relations. That is the problem of war and the political mechanisms through which societies have attempted to mitigate it. Through Foucault it is possible to pose questions and develop modes of analysis of the relations between war and the development of liberal societies that take us some way beyond the ordinary limits of studies derived from existing traditions of IR. Indeed, traditional theories of International Relations are in the process found to be constitutive of the very problems of war and its relations to the development of liberal modernity which International Relations is tasked to solve.

Not only is it the case that Foucault's work has been under-utilised in the

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development of theoretical accounts of problems of war and peace in International Relations; the importance and complexity of the problem of war for the development of liberal modernity has been otherwise neglected in broader areas of social and political theory. Even in the secondary literatures which attempt to cash in on the specificities of Foucauldian accounts of modernity there has been an unwarranted neglect of the centrality of the debate on war to Foucault's work and others influenced by him. This book redresses that neglect by also offering an account of that debate as it has developed between Foucault and other thinkers whose work approximates to his; specifically Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Jean Baudrillard, Paul Virilio, and latterly Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.

For many, Foucault's work is associated with the decline in the power of collective political subjects, with an increasingly limited horizon of political possibilities, even with the disenchantment of the political itself. In contrast this book aims to make clear the importance of his work for our capacities to recognise how this crisis came about. How it was that liberal regimes developed the means with which to seize, shape and condition the life of their societies to such depoliticising effect. And, crucially, the importance of his work for our ability to recover the vital capacity to think and act politically in circumstances when, as will be explored in this book, the most basic expressions of thought and human action are being targeted for new techniques of surveillance and governance.

Throughout the tradition of Foucauldian thought explored within this book there recurs a question and problem. Not just that of how to explain the ways in which liberal regimes have failed to overcome the problem of war in the development of their projects of peace in promotion of human life. And certainly not that of how we might better equip liberal regimes with the means to suborn life more fully. But that of how life itself, in its subjection to governance, can and does resist, subvert, escape and defy the imposition of modes of governance which seek to remove it of those very capacities for resistance, subversion, flight, and defiance. In each of the chapters that follow I have sought to delineate the specificities of different accounts of what life is and can become in spite of, and mainly because of, its subjection to techniques of governance which aim at reducing it to states of docility, plasticity and logistical order. As we will see, the formulation of and response to this problem is dealt with differently by each of the Foucauldian thinkers that I engage with in the book. Foucauldian thought is not monolithic and the debates being engaged with here are far from settled.

The bulk of the book itself was written in a summer of immense uncertainty, fear, and unrest. During July 2005 I took pleasure in participating in the mass social protests against the imposition of global liberal regimes of governance which took place in and around the summit of the G8 in Scotland. In spite of the immense evidence for powers of hope and the strength of desires for transformation on display during that week, it was impossible not to be struck, and

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in a certain sense impressed, by the ease with which the entire event was policed, and by the precision with which the conflict between life and law was mediated and ultimately stifled. In turn, this experience of the densely mediated and subdued forms which much of political action tends to assume today was thrown into stark contrast by the 7 July Terror attacks in London, occurring as they did on the first day of the summit proper. Clearly, there exists today a disjunctive terrain between the political imaginaries and practices of the different adversaries and enemies of liberalism. It is imperative that we traverse that terrain thoughtfully if a more substantial alternative to the liberal way of life is to come about.

The writing of this book in the aftermath of the Terror attacks in London has also been an unsettling experience. The fashioning of new laws dedicated to the diminishment of freedoms of political thought and expression within the United Kingdom, and the threat of draconian punishments for those who are declared to break those laws, is inevitably making the task of political critique that much more precarious. In an earlier era Foucault himself described the task of the practice of criticism as that of 'a matter of making facile gestures difficult'. Today, in contrast it might be said, the task is the recovery and defence of the art of critique in the context of regimes against which the most facile gesture is made at risk of being sequestered as a source of insecurity and threat.

Although much of this book was written over the summer of 2005, the ideas that feed it, and the earlier research works that inform it, have a longer history. The basic idea of developing a Foucauldian account of the problem of war and its relation to liberal modernity began with the writing of a PhD thesis under the supervision of Michael Dillon. To him I am profoundly grateful for his unruly governance. Without his encouragement and faith the project would doubtless have assumed a different and more limited form. I am also grateful to David Campbell and Scott Wilson for their comments and suggestions on the thesis manuscript which helped give the project a new impetus in the process of deciding how to transform it into a book.

Most of the chapters which make up the book began life as research articles written towards the end of or shortly after the thesis. Each in turn has been substantially altered and shaped as it has been made to discover its calling as part of a greater whole. The first chapter draws in part on my article 'War, Liberalism and Modernity: The Biopolitical Provocations of *Empire*' in the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* (volume 17, number 1, April 2004), 63–79. The second chapter is informed in part by 'Life Struggles: War, Discipline and Biopolitics in the Thought of Michel Foucault' in *Social Text* (volume 86, Spring 2006), 127–52. The third chapter draws on 'The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: A Critique of the Return of Imperialism Thesis in International Relations' in *Third World Quarterly* (volume 26, number 2, 2005), 237–52. And the fifth chapter developed originally as 'Architecture, Al Qaeda, and the World

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Trade Center: Rethinking Relations between War, Modernity and City Spaces after 9/11' in *Space and Culture* (volume 7, number 4, November 2004), 396–408. Early drafts of each of these chapters were also presented at British International Studies Association conferences at the University of Birmingham and at the University of Warwick; the Security Bytes conference at Lancaster University; the International Studies Association conference in Montreal; the Cities as Strategic Sites Conference in Manchester; the Centre for Rights, Justice, Violence and War Seminar Series at Sussex University; the Centre for the Study of Democracy Seminar Series at the University of Westminster; a European Liberty and International Security workshop in Montreal; the Political Studies Department workshop on International Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London; the International Security and Global Governance workshop on Security and Violence in the Contemporary Age at Birkbeck College. I thank the organisers of those events for inviting me to talk as well as the participants for their comments. Particular thanks are due to Claudia Aradau, Benjamin Arditì, Tarak Barkawi, Shane Brighton, Dave Chandler, Martin Coward, Patrick Deer, Stefan Elbe, Michael Hardt, Laura Junka, Mark Laffey, Matteo Mandarini, Randy Martin, Andrew Neal, Louiza Odysseos, Andrew Schaap, Jeremy Valentine, and Rob Walker, for commenting on early drafts of these works. None of them, that said, should be held responsible for the arguments and analysis made here.

I am indebted also to the students who sat in on my graduate course 'War, Power and Modern Societies: Foucauldian Perspectives' which I taught at the University of Sussex in the spring of 2005. The conversations and debates generated by the seminars were tremendously helpful when it came to sitting down and writing the text. Sussex provided me with a near to ideal intellectual environment in which to write this book, and I am grateful to all who engaged me during my time there. Particular thanks to Joel Duncan and Ben Trott for their camaraderie over the summer.

I am very grateful to the editors of the 'Reappraising the Political' series, Jon Simons and Simon Tormey, whose advice, encouragement and support has meant very much to me, and whose detailed comments on the manuscript helped tremendously in its revision. Thanks also to the team at Manchester University Press for all their help in preparing the manuscript for publication.

Thanks also to the many others with whom I have shared friendships over the last year. Particular thanks to the artist Keith Farquhar, who is a great friend, and also a unique interlocutor and collaborator. Parts of our work 'Immanent War, Immaterial Terror ...', *Culture Machine* (2005), also finds its way into this text at various points, it being a condensed expression of the central argument of the book. The work also exhibited as part of Keith's show at NYEHAUS in New York in the autumn of 2005.

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