THE ETIOLOGY OF GENOCIDES

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One of the most enduring and abhorrent problems of the world is genocide, which is neither particular to a specific race, class, or nation, nor rooted in any one ethnocentric view of the world. Genocide concerns and potentially affects all people. Some people have found refuge in the idea that the Holocaust was particular to the inhuman Nazis. Thus, all barbarous activities perpetrated by these subhumans had to be judged by different standards. However, evidence suggests that the many who participated in the extermination of a people were not sadistically inclined.1 Israel Charny argues that in many societies "traditions of humanitarian concerns for victims" coincide with "the role of killer . . . or of accomplice to other more vicious genociders."2 Often democratic institutions are cited as safeguards against mass excesses. In view of the treatment of Amerindians by agents of the U.S. government, this view is unwarranted. For example, the thousands of Cherokees who died during the Trail of Tears (Cherokee Indians were forced to march in 1838-1839 from Appalachia to Oklahoma) testify that even a democratic system may turn against its people.

It is tempting to exaggerate the role of individuals, to blame leaders for leading their citizens to genocide. But is it not the case that citizens and leaders are able to make choices? Although powerful elites in a democratic society are able to inject their political preferences into the democratic process, sometimes not consistent with the preferences endorsed by the majority, that likelihood is far greater in a totalitarian system. But the capabilities for implementing ruthless decisions are always hampered or aided by the decisions made in countless bureaucracies. Thus, all people associated with the decision-making process lend their
own motives, rationalization, and legitimation to the genocidal outcome. Although most of these people are not directly involved in executing their victims, their ability to halt the process makes them equally responsible for the executions. Clearly, the decision to destroy a certain people is a product of the many involved, and although some decisionmakers are more important than others, the role of the "helpers" surely facilitates the larger choice which delivers others to death.

Throughout the course of history genocides or massacres have been directed against specific groups in the context of larger political aims. Thus, the Nazis' aim of eliminating "foreign" elements from within by targeting Jews, Gypsies, Communists, and the mentally handicapped for annihilation was advanced by stressing mystical qualities of the dominant group. Similarly, the Turkification efforts, aided by the cry for "holy war" of the Young Turks, may have led to the destruction of the Armenians. A more recent example is Kampuchea, where under the leadership of Pol Pot all potential political adversaries were eliminated, which included the children of those perceived as reactionary elements. Though some massacres could be explained as acts of violence in the course of widespread mass hysteria, most genocides are devoid of the emotional climate which is conducive to a compulsion to murder those who are perceived as enemies of the dominant interests. In contrast, murderous leaders are voted into office, are allowed to propagate their pathological ideas, and often have ample time to plan and meticulously execute genocidal policies. What environment allows for organized officially sanctioned violence? What enables individuals to shed their responsibilities and become part of the murderous machine? In the absence of that passion which sometimes kills, how do "normal" people become vicious killers of children, old and infirm people, and the many others who have died in the genocides of modern times?

The following analysis investigates the conditions under which some genocides have taken place. The theoretical framework is provided by the author's previous efforts to shed light on why states engage in genocide.3

ASSUMPTIONS AND PROPOSITIONS

Scholarly persuasion has it that the state is the ultimate obstacle to a just world order, while others see ideological identity or class solidarity as the one true path to that envisioned order. Some attempts to overcome these predominant modes of analysis in international relations, such as the Club of Rome's "doom project," have met with criticism and sometimes ridicule. It is not my purpose to assess in detail the ecologists', realists', or Marxists' contribution to the analysis of international relations. Instead, this modest effort attempts to incorporate various ele-
ments of different modes of analysis into a framework which allows for
an assessment of why past genocides have occurred and why future ones
will occur. Ecological challenges and the international security dilemma
have greatly contributed to the erosion of the state as the central actor in
the world. In contrast, the durability of the state is demonstrated through
its expanding role in providing social services to its citizens. The often
conflicting roles of the state as provider and entrepreneur have some-
times led to increased elite domination internally or increased military/
economic adventurism abroad. Here elite domination refers to people
who hold the controlling positions in the state structure; in other words,
they are the political elite. Under exceptional circumstances this elite
domination may lead to genocide. The following identifies the condi-
tions conducive to the occurrence of genocide in national societies.
National societies are those coincidental with the emergence of the mod-
er state system during the early seventeenth century. This does not
mean that genocides are confined to modern times. But "historical"
genocides are of lesser importance to my argument, which claims that the
"legitimate" authority structure, i.e., the state, is the predominant culprit
in genocides (for an extended discussion on the subject, see Chapter 2).

One of the emphases of my theoretical argument is on structural
change as exemplified in the concept of national upheaval. National up-
heaval is an abrupt change in the political community, caused, for ex-
ample, by the formation of a state through violent conflict, when national
boundaries are reformed, or after a war is lost. Thus, lost wars and the
resultant battered national pride sometimes lead to genocide against
groups perceived as enemies. Post-colonial and post-revolutionary re-
gimes are prone to internal violence during times of national consolida-
tion, when competing groups/tribes fight for leadership positions.

Structural change is a necessary but not sufficient condition to pro-
mote the likelihood of genocide. A second factor leading to the develop-
ment of genocide is the existence of sharp internal cleavages combined
with a history of struggle between groups prior to the upheaval. The
stronger the identification within competing groups the more likely that
extreme measures will be taken to suppress the weaker groups. Polari-
zation is usually intensified by such factors as the extent of differences in
religion, values, and traditions between contending groups, and their
ideological separation. There are numerous examples from past geno-
cides in which group polarization provided the background to genocides.
Gentiles versus Jews, Muslims versus Hindus, Fascists versus Com-
munists, Germans versus Gypsies, whites against blacks and Indians—
such are the genocides of Nazi Germany, Bangladesh, Uganda, German
Southwest Africa, and countless others.

A third factor triggering genocide against national groups is the lack
of external constraints on, or foreign support for, murderous regimes.
At present, lack of international sanctions and/or interventions against
massive human rights violators is the norm rather than the exception. Unless national interest combined with the ability to interfere dictates intervention, few efforts are made to ameliorate the suffering of local populations.

Who are the genociders? Here genocide is defined as public violence—by some political actor—aimed at eliminating groups of private citizens. Sometimes genociders are state officials, e.g., soldiers, police, or special Einsatzgruppen; sometimes genociders are less openly linked with state power, e.g., death squads. Usually genocide is the conscious choice of policymakers, one among other options for repressing (eliminating) opposition. However, the likelihood of genocide occurring is rare compared to the likelihood that officials will use sporadic violence and/or torture to repress opposition. Thus, we have to differentiate between sporadic violence used against opposition groups, i.e., state terrorism, and systematic, Draconian attempts to eliminate or annihilate them. Additional incentives to settle scores through lesser means are the avoidance of regime instability and/or sometimes the threat of regional/international sanctions or other forms of interference. Genocide is not just another policy instrument of repression; genocide is the most extreme policy option available to policymakers.

International wars are not genocides, because victims have no specific group identity and are often unintended, i.e., civilians. The crime of fighting an aggressive war, though outlawed as an instrument of international policy, is sometimes used as a coercive means to bring about structural changes in the target state, not to eliminate the total population. More difficult is the distinction between civil strife (wars) and genocides—civil wars are contributing factors to the possible occurrence of genocides but are not genocides themselves. In civil wars the legitimate authority structure is weak and is opposed by strong opposition forces. Again, as in wars, though atrocities may become a pattern on both sides, the intent to destroy the opposition in part or as a whole is the crucial variable in determining the onset of genocide. Burundi is a good example, one in which civil war eventually turned into a genocide, given an array of other contributing factors, such as previous tribal rivalries, and lack of regional and international intervention.

In addition, my definition of genocide differs from the official definition (Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide/Declaration by the General Assembly of the United Nations, Resolution 96, dated December 11, 1946, article 2) insofar as it broadens the scope of the victims and perpetrators. Thus, political opponents are included in my definition, though they lack the formal legal protection of the Convention on Genocide. The official definition includes those acts leading to the physical destruction of the group when "such acts are committed with intent to destroy, in whole or part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group," but says nothing about political
groups. The Kampuchean mass slaughter under Pol Pot (1975) testifies to the need to include political opponents in the definition, thereby allowing the Kampuchean tragedy to be properly called genocide and thus to enjoy the unfortunately limited protection of the Convention. Political victims are not political as in contrast to religious or ethnic victims; rather, it is their political affiliation which singles them out as victims, not their ethnic identity. Thus, a Jew in Stalin's Russia who opposed Stalin would have been a likely victim during the murderous campaigns of the 1930s because he opposed Stalin, not because he was a Jew. Furthermore, in my conception the Holocaust is the ultimate instance of genocide, rather than a unique event defying comparison. Only through comparison with other similar or dissimilar cases of genocide can we begin to understand what triggered that monstrous episode. This is not to deny Holocaust survivors and victims their place in the conscience of humanity; rather, it is to remind us of our special responsibility to its millions of dead children, women, and men in finding ways to anticipate and eliminate future holocausts.

What follows is an analysis of information about twentieth-century governments which have engaged in genocidal activities. It describes the systemic properties, external environment, and internal conditions of states at the time of genocide. It is based on the cases listed in Table 3.1, a list which is by no means complete. What is attempted here is only the beginning of a systematic ordering of specific cases into categories. The cases are selected because they are relatively recent and well known, and because information is readily available about them; thus, their analysis should foster the kind of international reaction envisioned in the United Nations Charter. The cases may also make it possible to test the plausibility of my argument that national upheaval and prior internal struggle, combined with lack of constraints in the international environment, are conducive to genocide. It should be noted that the estimated numbers of victims vary greatly, often because "statistics" were not kept (with the exception of the Holocaust) or because population data were inadequate or dated. However, I do not believe that the number of victims makes a great difference: the important factor is that they were the victims of genocidal policies.

**TYPES OF NATIONAL UPHEAVAL**

Genocide happens in different types of political society—what types of society? The classification scheme follows from the theoretical framework and distinguishes between types of societies formed after major national upheavals. The task of differentiating among societies with ongoing fundamental political change is difficult. Obviously a successful revolution with clearly defined ideological goals is much more likely to
Table 3.1
Some Twentieth-Century Genocides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Perpetrators</th>
<th>Victims' Identity</th>
<th>Estimated Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German SW Africa</td>
<td>1904</td>
<td>German troops</td>
<td>Herero</td>
<td>65,000⁠¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottoman Empire</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Young Turks/ Kurds</td>
<td>Armenians</td>
<td>800,000-1.8 million²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1941-45</td>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>Jews, Gypsies</td>
<td>5-6 million³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1955-72</td>
<td>Sudanese army</td>
<td>Southern Sudanese</td>
<td>500,000⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1965-67</td>
<td>Vigilantes</td>
<td>Supposed Communists</td>
<td>200,000-500,000⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1967-70</td>
<td>Other Nigerians</td>
<td>Ibos</td>
<td>2-3 million⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>East Pakistan army</td>
<td>Bengalis</td>
<td>1,247,000-3 million⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Tutsis</td>
<td>Hutus</td>
<td>100,000-200,000⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>1968-72</td>
<td>Paraguayans</td>
<td>Guayaki Aché (Indians)</td>
<td>1,000⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Timor</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Indonesian army</td>
<td>Timorese</td>
<td>60,000-100,000¹⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampuchea</td>
<td>1975-79</td>
<td>Khmer Rouge</td>
<td>Kampucheans</td>
<td>740,800-3 million¹¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1976-78</td>
<td>Sections of Ugandan army</td>
<td>Ugandans</td>
<td>500,000¹²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2. For an extended discussion see Helen Fein, "A Formula for Genocide: Comparison of the Turkish Genocide (1915) and the German Holocaust (1939-1945)," *Comparative Studies in Sociology*, 1 (1978); A. D. Sarkissian, *Martyrdom and Rebirth* (Published by the Armenian Church of America; New York: Lydian Press, 1978).
Table 3.1—Continued


lead to a restructuring of society than anticolonial rebellions with "re-
formist" goals. In other words, the greater the changes affecting society 
through new governments, the likelier it is that genocidal policies are 
implemented to insure total obedience. Thus, the extent of structural 
change is a major factor underlying my typology.5

Revolutions are a type of national upheaval. Revolutions always in-
volve the overthrow of the ruling political elite and aim at bringing about 
fundamental social change.

Anticolonial rebellions, which are similar to separatist conflicts, are a 
type of national upheaval. Anticolonial rebellions are internal struggles 
with mass participation, directed against the ruling foreign power, seek-
ing autonomy. In the case of separatist conflicts, the major struggle 
takes place between two movements, one trying to break away, the other 
to prevent it.

CoupS may constitute a type of national upheaval. Coups involve the 
total or partial replacement of the ruling elite and lack mass participation. 
Thus, coups which involve the total replacement of the ruling elite are 
more likely to induce fundamental social change.

A special case is a takeover by duly elected or appointed political elites 
who endorse extreme ideologies (right-wing or left-wing). There is no 
abrupt structural change, but rather a move to exert total control. Such 
changes may lead to the creation of a climate in which people are ab-
solved from making personal judgments and are rewarded for their total 
obedience to authority.

Another crucial factor in the development of genocide is the existence 
of sharp internal cleavages. In some societies internal violence is a way 
of life,6 and some societies are preconditioned to accept political violence 
(coups, for example) because they frequently do occur (for example, in 
Bolivia). However, genocide needs more than reinforcement through 
societal acquiescence. Genocide is a product of state policy, with an in-
volvement and commitment of massive resources, and is only marginally 
beneficial to people involved in the process.

National upheaval always intensifies internal cleavages. Depending 
on the preferences of policymakers, some groups may become targets of 
genocidal policies. Groups which are most "different" from the domi-
nant group are more likely to become targets than those which more 
closely resemble the dominant group. Thus, groups different in religion, 
culture, wealth, education, and/or ideology have a greater chance to be 
singled out for genocide. Economic preponderance by some groups may 
be enough to induce genocidal policies against them. These cleavages 
usually pre-exist, but in some cases they are introduced by the new elite. 
Thus, for example, the targeted group may involve all those opposed to 
the new regime (Kampuchea), or rich peasants (Communist Russia).7

The structural precondition of national upheaval combined with so-
cietal receptiveness for internal violence targeted against "most different"
groups may pave the path to genocide, but a third condition may ultimately provide the final incentive for the occurrence of genocide. Here we are talking about external support for either the genocider or the target group. Sometimes the genociders are foreign powers, for example, colonizers; sometimes genocidal elites enjoy support/protection from powerful neighbors. In modern times the overt or covert support of one of the superpowers is a warrant for the survival of regimes involved in repression or genocide. In other cases, states may neither condemn nor praise other states engaged in internal repression. The state in question may be too unimportant to warrant international attention, thus enjoying the kind of freedom which comes from lack of automatic sanctions in cases of extreme human rights violations.

Support of a different kind may come for the genocidal target. Thus, fellow religionists or ethnic groups may induce their governments to intervene on behalf of the potential victims. A more limited kind of support may come from international organizations in the form of protests or boycotts. In some cases irredentist movements elsewhere may lend military support.

**COMMON ELEMENTS IN DIFFERENT GENOCIDES**

The merits of this theoretical argument can be demonstrated by analysis of the characteristics of cases of genocide categorized according to their political circumstances.

**Post-War, Post-Imperial Genocides**

The Holocaust is undisputably the most abominable instance of modern genocide; however, it has many structural, societal, and external similarities with lesser genocides. Hitler's rise to power, though by constitutional means, came in the wake of a worldwide depression. The post-war economic crises and the inability of the new democratic government to cope with massive unemployment and extreme currency inflation greatly strengthened the radical left and the extreme right. Fear of a Communist takeover led to the bare victory of the National Socialist Party, and the "Enabling Act" left Hitler with dictatorial powers, which he used to bar any opposition. (See Chapter 10.)

The emergence of the nationalist movements of the "Young Turks" came in the wake of a disintegrating Ottoman Empire. A prior rebellion in 1908, which briefly restored a constitutional monarchy, led to a coup in 1913 and the total takeover by the Young Turks under their leader, Enver Pasha. During the Balkan wars (1912-1913) the Ottoman Empire lost almost all its territory in Europe, which left the new nationalist movement with little sympathy for the national aspirations of the
remaining ethnic minorities in Turkey. (See Chapter 11.)

Both countries—Turkey and Germany—did experience a major re-structuring of their respective governments following loss of territory in war and a rapid succession of different versions of government. The German Empire was replaced by a democratic government, which lacked the strength to unite the warring factions of Communists and Monarchists. In Turkey the Sultan was briefly replaced by a constitutional Sultan, who, however, was in no position to halt the nationalist movement of the Young Turks, who tried to propel Turkey into the twentieth century with sweeping reforms. The national upheavals following the takeover by both nationalist movements had disastrous consequences for some ethnic/religious minorities in both countries—Armenians in Turkey and Jews and Gypsies in Germany.

The annihilation of Jews and Gypsies in Germany and the genocide against Armenians in Turkey followed a similar pattern. In both countries domination of the state apparatus by a tightly controlled political elite was complete. Both the Young Turks and the Nazi movement introduced a kind of myth, exalting the likeness of the dominant group, i.e., "Aryan"-Germans and Turks. Germanization and Turkification both emphasized pureness of race and common cultural/ethnic and religious values. Thus, all "real" Germans were to be Christian, Aryan, and non-Communist, as all Turks were to be Muslim, Turkoman, and pro Young Turk. Both Jews and Armenians were easy targets, for they were different in religion, "racial" heritage, and culture. The age-old division between Christians and Muslims and Christians and Jews accelerated receptiveness for a renewal of a crusade against infidels and the people of the book. The readiness to massacre Jews and Armenians was not new to either society. Sporadic violence or planned massacres had taken place prior to both genocides. But the Holocaust and the Genocide of 1915 against the Armenians were exceptional, because they were premeditated acts by policymakers to eliminate a people. Why?

I have argued that once preconditions such as structural changes, lack of external constraint, and internal cleavages combine, the stage is set for genocide. In both cases external constraints were either nonexistent or too late and too little to halt the slaughters of thousands of innocent victims. Neither meager German protest in 1915 (Turkey's major ally) nor an international boycott by World Jewry did much to stop impending disaster. Russian threat of intervention against Turkey was superseded by World War I, similar to Allied lack of intervention due to World War II. International sympathy for Jews was virtually nonexistent, evidenced by the refusal of other countries to grant entry permits to fleeing Jews. Armenians fared little better in the wake of competing nationalist movements elsewhere in Europe and the impending Russian Revolution, and the making of new alliances culminating in World War I.
The Etiology of Genocides

But neither structural change nor external conditions fully explain why policymakers decide to eliminate or annihilate a people rather than engage in sporadic violence, i.e., why they resort to genocide rather than state terrorism to suppress opposition. Internal conditions may provide the final clues to why states engage in genocide. Often the strength of a new government greatly depends on its ability to mobilize mass support. Often divisions within culturally heterogeneous societies are overcome by declaring one group responsible for the other's misfortunes. Sometimes that is the case in socialist revolutions, where capitalists serve as scapegoats for the misery of the workers. Turkification and Germanification both served to unite people in their pride of belonging to a people, both inheritors of a long history, i.e., heirs of the Holy Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Armenians may have been a legitimate threat to the Young Turks because they were collectively organized and demanded limited autonomy within the new state. Jews, however, were no threat to the Nazis; they were neither politically organized nor particularly visible as a group—Germany boasted a more assimilated "enlightened" (non-religious) Jewish population than most other European countries. Yet Nazi propaganda had singled out the Jew from its beginning. If Jews in Germany were at all special as a group they were so because of achievements in the professions. A disproportionate number of them were doctors, scientists, literary greats, and artists. Leading lights of Marxism/Socialism included many Jews, e.g., Karl Marx, Rosa Luxembourg, Ferdinand Lassalle, and Eduard Bernstein. Why did the Nazis single out the Jews? Anti-Semitism has long been part of European history. It was probably the single most appealing prejudicial doctrine available to the Nazis, who were trying to consolidate their power. Different groups in Germany may have had different animosities, but the Jews offered more value as scapegoats than other groups such as Gypsies or Communists. Communists were after all "genuine Germans," whereas Gypsies were too small in number and not a settled people. The successful merchant image of the Jews spelled competition for the average shopkeeper in Germany; the dominance of Jewish scientists may have caused envy among their colleagues; legendary Jewish international finance connections added to the image resented by others. The liberal image of artists residing in the capital did nothing to persuade the provincial German that the Jew was part of their world. Hitler's claim that Marxism/Communism was after all a Jewish invention thus was easily absorbed into an ideology offering an escape for many. The Jews had something for everyone, and those enlightened enough to realize the demagoguery thought that Hitler could be controlled. Once the Nazis realized the appeal of anti-Semitism, propaganda made full use of it. Nazis, once in power, fulfilled their promises to put people to work and "clean" the towns of Jews. Once the Nazis realized that the
world was not eager to take "their" Jews, the "final solution" was to take care of the Jewish "problem." Who was to stop the murderous engine? In 1944 the Germans, their cities bombed, were losing the war, yet the death camps were working to full capacity.

Killing the Jewish population of Europe may have been the rational choice of the Nazis, yet the utility of doing so was utterly irrational. The costs of keeping the camps going despite the war effort were immense. Thousands of people were involved in killing Jews; trains transporting Jews had priority over those aiding the war effort. The fanatic pursuit of "finishing the job" was part of the robot-like performance of those selected to serve the "higher cause" of Nazi ideology.

Post-Colonial Genocides

The genocides of Southern Sudan, Biafra, Bangladesh, Burundi, and East Timor all took place following massive internal rebellions. Bangladesh, Biafra, East Timor, and the Southern Sudan sought to secede—from Pakistan, Nigeria, Indonesia, and the Northern Sudan, respectively. Bangladesh was successful; Biafra, East Timor, and the Southern Sudan were not. In Burundi the Hutus tried unsuccessfully to throw off the minority rule of the Tutsis. All five genocides happened in the wake of colonial liberation. In each case euphoria over liberation soon gave way to a reemphasis of existing cleavages.

The Northern Sudanese, Muslims who claim Arab descent, saw their future tightly bound to the Arab world. For the Southern Sudanese, mostly Negroid, animist (though including many Christians), and multi-ethnic, the traditional societies of East Africa seemed a more likely ally. The racial division is somehow arbitrary, since many Northerners who claim to be Arabs are Negroid in appearance and many Southerners called Negroid have non-Negroid features. More important, Southern economic development was grossly inferior to the North. It was no surprise that the politically and economically powerful (and more populous) North should dominate the South after independence in 1956. Thus, domination by the British was replaced with domination by the North. Even before independence came to the country the South revolted against the North, which resulted in the slaughter of many thousands of innocent people.

Nigeria after independence in 1960 was united under a federal system. But unity was fragile among the three dominant ethnic groups, the Hausa-Fulani (about 15 million), the Yoruba (about 10 million), and the Ibos (about 10 million). The three were different in language, religion, and social organization. The Ibos who became the targets of genocide, were mostly Christians and animists, in contrast to the Hausa-Fulani, who were Muslim and organized in the traditional Arab way under a strong central authority. Adding to the problem was the Ibos' domi-
nance in education and industrialization. The North, with a high illiteracy rate and a largely agrarian economy, nevertheless controlled the federation by sheer weight of numbers (the total Northern region numbered about 35 million people). The Ibos who attempted to secede in 1967 capitulated to the federal government of Nigeria in 1970. During the years of warfare hundreds of thousands died either in battle, during massacres, or by starvation.

The process of decolonization in India brought the division of India and Pakistan, strongly fostered by religious cleavages. Pakistanis were largely Muslims, and most Indians were Hindus; intermingling between the two groups was prohibited because of the caste system of the Hindus. Caught between the two groups were the Sikhs, who were divided between the emerging states of India and Pakistan. Before partition the Sikhs were embroiled in a "holy war" against the Muslims. Communal strife during this time took on mass proportions as an estimated 1 million people lost their lives. Upon partition Pakistan was divided into West and East Pakistan, separated by 1,000 miles of India. As in the Sudan, one region, West Pakistan, was considerably more industrialized, whereas the East was predominantly agricultural. In addition to economic domination, political domination was secured by a bureaucracy consisting largely of West Pakistanis. Negotiations for greater autonomy for the East in 1971 ended in massive retaliations by the West Pakistani government. During the following months genocidal policies were implemented which resulted in the indiscriminate deaths of men, women, and children numbering well over 1 million.

Burundi became independent in 1962 after years of extended rebellions against Belgian authorities. The country has a majority of Hutus—about 85 percent of the population—ruled by a minority government composed of Tutsis, who make up about 15 percent of the population. This domination by a minority was over 400 years old, established when the warrior Tutsis invaded the country from Ethiopia. Three aborted coups in 1965, 1969, and 1972 against the unwanted minority government led to severe reprisals by the Tutsis and in 1972 to genocide against the Hutus which claimed about 200,000 lives.

East Timor was a Portuguese colony which was to become independent in 1978 but preempted that step in 1975 by unilaterally declaring independence. The people are largely of Malay and Papuan stock, with a majority of Christians and some Muslim minorities. Past rivalries were confined to interparty conflicts. The most popular party, FRETILIN, which enjoyed 60 percent of the popular vote, was anticolonial and anti-Indonesian and was thought to be left-leaning. Two other parties, APODETI and UDT, called for union with Indonesia. This division erupted into violence during August 1975. Indonesia immediately reacted by initiating a blockade against East Timor and subsequently invaded the country in December 1975. With the help of UDT and
APODETI forces, independence was exchanged for union with Indonesia; the invasion resulted in looting, torture, and slaughter, with the result that nearly 10 percent of the population was killed.\(^\text{12}\)

In all five cases foreign intervention significantly added to the success or failure of the secessionist movement. The intervention by India in December 1971 ended the genocidal massacres and also secured the independence of the new state of Bangladesh. Not so typical was the international support given to Nigeria/Biafra. China, France, Portugal, Israel, and South Africa supported Biafra, while Great Britain and the Soviet Union supported Nigeria. The latter "alliance" was probably due to Britain's effort to curtail growing Soviet influence in Nigeria. Biafran support came in the midst of conflicting European and big-power politics (e.g., France's oil interest in Biafra and China's tensions with Moscow), while Israel mostly confined its support to humanitarian relief efforts. The United States paid lip service to a united Nigeria. The Organization for African Unity (OAU) also supported Nigeria.\(^\text{13}\) The Southern Sudanese enjoyed almost no support from outside sources, while Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Kuwait, East Germany, and the Soviet Union were said to have armed the North. In Burundi, no international action was taken to halt the massacres, although protests through diplomatic channels were plentiful. So, for example, the OAU supported the Burundi government, as did China, North Korea, and France. The greatest concern was shown by the former colonial power, Belgium, which early on protested against Burundi's genocidal policies. East Timor received verbal support from Australia and Portugal, and Indonesia received military support from the United States, while others claimed ignorance about accusations of genocide in East Timor. In all cases United Nations actions were confined to humanitarian relief efforts.\(^\text{14}\)

**Post-Coup and Post-Revolutionary Genocides**

The genocides of Kampuchea, Uganda, and Indonesia took place after a revolution in Kampuchea, after a coup in Uganda, and after an attempted coup in Indonesia, each conflict causing massive internal upheaval.

With the deposal of Prince Norodom Sihanouk in 1970 a relatively tranquil period ended in Cambodia. Increased involvement in the Vietnam War led to increased turmoil in the Khmer Republic. Forces of the Khmer Republic fought the Khmer Rouge in a civil war, which ended in the takeover by the Khmer Rouge Communists in 1975 and the establishment of Democratic Kampuchea. From 1975 to 1979 the Khmer Rouge expelled all foreigners and instituted one of the bloodiest regimes known in the twentieth century. Under the leadership of Pol Pot the urban population was sent to the countryside to become part of the "new" productive forces. He designated as expendable all those unable
The Etiology of Genocides

to perform the task. Pol Pot's "Marxist" revolution was but a peasant uprising against the feudal class represented by the townspeople. Though his fury was mainly directed against townspeople, former collaborators including loyal peasants were also eliminated; thus, all perceived as opposing the regime were targets of genocidal policies. The failure of the regime was sealed with the invasion by Vietnamese forces in 1979; Vietnam is still occupying the country.

In January 1971 Idi Amin overthrew Milton Obote of Uganda in a coup, setting in motion a regime which ruled with unprecedented brutality. Amin, the dictator of Uganda who is often compared with Hitler, during his first three months in office was responsible for the deaths of 10,000 civilians and 2,000 soldiers. Like Pol Pot, Amin immediately chose to expel all foreigners from the country. His genocidal policies extended to all perceived as opposing his regime. His henchmen were members of his own tribe, the Kakwa, Nubians inside Uganda, and mercenaries from the Southern Sudan. In the effort to consolidate his power, Amin was responsible for the slaughter of an estimated 500,000 people. His regime ended with an invasion by Tanzanian forces in 1979, leaving behind a legacy of tyranny.

On October 1, 1965, six Indonesian generals and a lieutenant were murdered in an uprising against President Sukarno. Although the truth may remain forever a secret, the events were thought to be Communist inspired and/or initiated. In a predominantly Muslim society, the Communist party was something of an enigma (membership estimated at 10 million or one-quarter of the adult population). The short-lived uprising was crushed a few days later and led to the systematic slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Communists over a period of two years. Participating in the slaughter were soldiers and civilians trained for the purpose. Some officials of the Suharto regime later explained the slaughter as the "people's revenge," suggesting a spontaneous mass reaction to avenge the death of some of their leaders—hardly convincing in light of the fact that the slaughter continued over two years.

International support for the revolutionaries in Kampuchea came from Vietnam and China, while the regime was supported by American arms and aid. The faltering United States effort in Vietnam led to an abandonment of the pro-American Lon Nol regime, which enabled Pol Pot to take over. The subsequent fall of the Pol Pot regime was in part due to the growing antagonism between China and Vietnam, eventually leading to the invasion by the latter, whereupon Pol Pot fled to China. Uganda's Amin received full support from Libya but was criticized by the leaders of Tanzania, Zaire, and Zambia. By and large, however, the OAU remained silent about the indiscriminate killings of Ugandans. Only after Uganda invaded Tanzania did Tanzania respond with a counterinvasion. Supported by renegade Ugandan soldiers, the invasion successfully removed the murderous regime, and Amin fled to Libya. In Indonesia
the coup was thought to be inspired by Peking, though no direct link with China could be detected. American sympathies went to the Suharto regime. In all cases the United Nations did little other than express its dismay and verbally condemn these flagrant violations of human rights.

**Genocides of Conquest**

During the imposition of German colonialism in what is today Namibia, the Hereros became the target of genocidal policies. In the early 1970s "the International League for the Rights of Man, joined by the Inter-American Association for Democracy and Freedom, charged the government of Paraguay with complicity in genocide against the Guayaki Indians."18

In the short-lived colonial history of the German Empire (ending in 1918), early efforts of peaceful colonization in Southern Africa were soon replaced by measures which reduced the indigenous people to serfdom. The Hereros, a pastoral people noted for their large cattle herds, saw themselves slowly stripped of their land by German settlers. From 1903 to 1907 they revolted against the German colonizers—with devastating results. Successful at first, the Hereros were eventually defeated by superior technology and firepower. Thousands lost their lives in the actions following the uprising. The Germans "hunted them down like wild beasts all during 1905."19 An estimated 65,000 Hereros lost their lives.

The Guayaki (Aché) Indians, a hunting and gathering people, were targets of genocide when "modern" Paraguayans encroached upon their traditional lands. During 1974 the Paraguayan government was blamed for allowing the slaughter, torture, and enslavement of the Indians by hunters and slavetraders.

International action was negligible in the first case. Wars against native Africans warranted no attention from other colonizers. There was some international attention given to the Aché Indian case, and verbal condemnation of Paraguayan policy eventually resulted in some response by the government.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In all the cases considered here genocides were preceded by some attempt to change the existing power structure. It should be obvious that any attempt to change existing power relations carries a certain amount of risk for the challenger. Though most potential revolutionaries accept the calculus of losing some lives, genocide would be an unacceptable risk to anyone.
Successful rebellions (Kampuchea, for example) more often resulted in massive internal upheavals than did failed attempts (Indonesia, for example). Moreover, unsuccessful coups often resulted in the slaughter of those affiliated with the rebelling faction, for example, in Indonesia and East Timor. Evidently governments utilize genocidal policies to eliminate the opposition in an attempt to maintain the existing power structure. In some cases these processes may extend to include attempts to annihilate a people, i.e., a holocaust. This does not mean that holocausts result in more deaths; it simply means that the pursuers seek the total destruction of a people rather than their partial destruction. The difference is especially apparent in cases where the victims belong to the political opposition—often the slaughter stops short of family members. The child of a Communist may not necessarily become one himself, but the child of a Jew cannot escape his/her Jewishness, as a result often becoming the victim of a holocaust. Utilizing genocide to eliminate political opposition thus appears to be a more rational choice than the attempt to annihilate a people. As such, policymakers sometimes make the argument that political victims are legitimate targets of governmental violence which aims to prevent further violence, e.g., future civil war. In contrast, one may argue that ethnic/religious victims are illegitimate targets of governmental violence because they have neither the means to fight back, nor do they compete with government, and thus are truly innocent of any wrongdoing. But what is at stake is not the characteristics of the victim group, but the motives of the perpetrators. The killing of a people for attempting to change the existing government structure cannot be based on the collective character of a group, simply because not everybody is involved in the struggle. The only public offense which warrants the execution of an individual is the murder of another (in some societies even murder does not result in death). Excluded from this principle are killings done in the process of war, although many people view war and the resulting human carnage as an unacceptable means of international interaction. In cases of no war and where no individual crime has taken place, any killing either done by or conspired in by public authorities against a group of people is a crime.

The theoretical argument advances the proposition that structural challenges result in upheavals, polarize existing internal cleavages, and—with external help or the lack of it to either the dominant group or the rebelling faction—sometimes lead to genocide. In all cases cited above the genocides were preceded by challenges to the dominant power strata. In all cases genocidal processes were accelerated through the polarization of internal cleavages. The most distinct cases are those of the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, and Burundi, where the groups were targets of prior discrimination and/or random violence, and also were easily identified by differences in culture, religion, and ethnicity. The Southern
Sudan, Biafra, and Bangladesh similarly saw incidences of random violence and/or repression against target groups who were culturally, ethnically, and/or religiously different. In East Timor, Kampuchea, and Indonesia the victim groups shared similar ethnic characteristics with the dominant group, but, though prior internal rivalries existed in all cases, the victims were considered enemies mainly because of their political affiliations. Uganda is something of a special case, because victims were neither clearly political enemies nor did they belong to one specific religious or ethnic group. The killings, although systematic, seemed to be instituted to consolidate the despotic power of a tyrant, similar to the "Enabling Act" which gave Hitler the license to kill. The genocides against the Hereros and the Aché Indians were policies designed to extend the control of the dominant "civilization." In the case of the former, the Germans encountered a new type of warfare in the guerrilla tactics of the Hereros, which they responded to in kind. Thus, random incidents of "savagery" by the Hereros led to their wholesale, systematic slaughter by the Germans. The Achés, although part of the same racial stock as their persecutors, were culturally separated from the dominant stratum of Paraguay. Malign neglect by the government led to their genocide, perpetrated by those acting on behalf of the dominant interest, in a march toward their version of civilization.

In all cases external support for either the dominant group or a rebellious faction added significantly to the success or failure of the undertaking. The Herero genocide is the exception, probably because the slaughter of "savages" in 1904 by the colonizers was more acceptable then. Today, the "savages" of the past are replaced by either the Untermenschen or enemies of the dominant group. Nowadays, the drive toward civilization is replaced by the search for a better world, in which those perceived as standing in the way of "progress" are liquidated.

If we are able to explain past genocides and thus to anticipate future genocides, the next logical step is their prevention. International organizations such as the United Nations have failed to halt the use of genocidal policies by sovereign states. Internal bickering and competing interests have prevented the effective use of international diplomacy to prevent or stop genocides. Yet, the emergence of numerous private organizations, in combination with a few U.N. efforts, gives the impression that something may yet be done.

NOTES

1. For an extended discussion see Israel W. Charny, How Can We Commit the Unthinkable? Genocide: The Human Cancer (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), and Herbert C. Kelman, "Violence Without Moral
The Etiology of Genocides


2. Charny, op. cit.


11. Ibid.

12. This discussion draws in part upon an unpublished paper by Christian C. Mattioli, "Invasion and Genocide in East Timor," Department of Political Science, Northwestern University, 1983.


