



Genocide*

R.J. Rummel

SUMMARY: 1. Introduction. 2. What is genocide? 3. Jurisdiction over the crime of genocide. 4. What is the origin of the term? 5. History of the crime of genocide. 6. Genocide as a sociological concept: a) *the legal definition*; b) *the common definition*; c) *the general definition*. 7. Genocide in history. 8. Causes and conditions of genocide: a) *institutions of government*; b) *context*; c) *motives*; d) *stages*. 9. Bibliography.

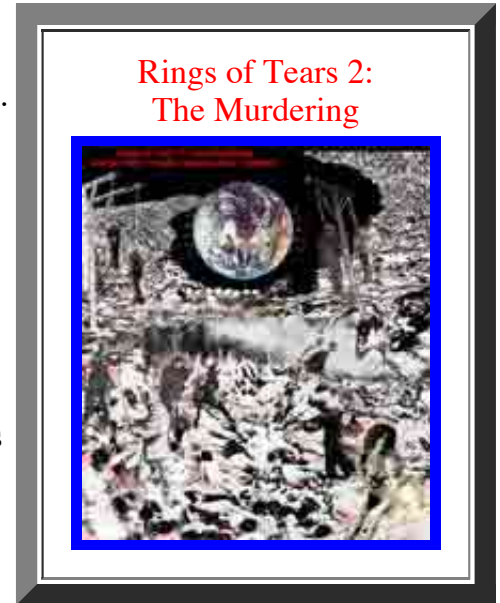
1. INTRODUCTION

Genocide is generally considered one of the worst moral crimes a government (meaning any ruling authority, including that of a guerrilla group, a quasi state, a Soviet, a terrorist organization, or an occupation authority) can commit against its citizens or those it controls. The major reason for this is what the world learned about the Holocaust, the systematic attempt of German authorities during World War II to kill all and every Jew no matter where found-to destroy Jews as a group. This murder of between 5 to 6 million Jews became the paradigm case of genocide and underlies the word's origin. As the world also learned about other genocides, there was an international attempt through the United Nations to make genocide an international crime and to bring its perpetrators to justice. Thus in 1948 it approved and proposed the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (UHCG), and most recently states signed into being the *International Criminal Court* (ICC). As a crime, the UHCG defined genocide as the intention to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such. The ICC accepts this definition, further elaborates it, provides broader jurisdiction, and can subject individuals regardless of status or rank to prosecution.

Noteworthy is the fact that the ICC now covers not only genocide, but crimes against humanity that include, aside from genocide, government murder, extermination campaigns, enslavement, deportation, torture, rape, sexual slavery, enforced disappearance, and apartheid.

Genocide is also a subject of social science and scholarly study, but its legal definition does not easily allow for empirical and historical research. For this reason the definition of genocide for research purposes has, in essence, been of two types. One is the definition of genocide as the intention to murder people because of their group membership, even if political or economic. A second definition, which may also be called *democide*, is any intentional government murder of unarmed and helpless people for whatever reason.

Taking both social definitions into account, governments have murdered probably around 174 million people during the 20th Century. Most of this killing, perhaps around 110 million people, is due to communist governments, especially the USSR under Lenin and Stalin and their successors (62 million murdered), and China under Mao Tse-tung (35 million). Some other totalitarian or authoritarian governments are also largely responsible for this toll, particularly Hitler's Germany (21 million murdered) and Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government of China (about 10 million). Other governments that have murdered lesser millions include Khmer Rouge Cambodia, Japan, North Korea, Mexico, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Turkey, Vietnam, and Tito's Yugoslavia.



Fundamentally, genocide is a product of the type of government a country has. There is a high correlation between the degree of democratic freedom a people enjoy and the likelihood that the government will commit democide. Modern democratic governments have committed virtually no domestic genocide. Those governments that commit the most genocide have been totalitarian governments, while those that committed lesser genocide have been partially or wholly authoritarian and dictatorial.

Regardless of type of government, the likelihood of genocide increases during their involvement in war, or when undergoing internal disruptions, as by revolution, rebellion, or foreign incursions. Such provides the cover and excuse for genocide. Regardless of war or peace, the motive for genocide may be to deal with a perceived threat to the government or its policies, to destroy those one hates or envies, to pursue the ideological transformation of society, to purify society, or to achieve economic or material gain.

Assuming a nondemocratic society, domestic genocide goes through eight stages, which are the classification of peoples into different categories, the symbolization by naming or characterizing them, dehumanization of members of the group, organizing to murder or exterminate members of the group, polarization of the moral distance between groups, preparation for a campaign of extermination, the actual genocide, and after the fact a denial that such was carried out.

2. WHAT IS GENOCIDE?

Genocide is foremost an international crime for which individuals, no matter how high in authority, may be indicted, tried, and punished by the International Criminal Court (ICC). According to Article 6 of the ICC Statute, This crime involves, "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part,

a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

There are a number of things to note about these acts.

(1) The *perpetrator* is not necessarily a state's government or its military, but may be an international organization, such as a UN peacekeeping one, NATO, or a terrorist or guerrilla organization, among others.

(2) Regardless of under what authority genocide is done, it is formulated, planned, and conducted by individuals, and it is *individuals* that the ICC will prosecute for the crime of genocide. Unlike the International Court of Justice that only adjudicates disputes between states, the ICC is a criminal tribunal that will indict *individuals*, issue international warrants for their arrest, try, and punish them. This is made explicit in Article 27: "This Statute shall apply equally to all persons without distinction based on official capacity. In particular, official capacity as head of state or government, a member of a government or parliament, an elected representative or a government official shall in no case exempt a person from criminal responsibility under this statute, nor shall it, in and of itself, constitute a ground for reduction of sentence."

(3) The perpetrator's *intent* (purpose, goal, aim) is critical. According to the Report of the *Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court (PCICC)*, the ICC may infer such from "conduct took place in the context of a manifest pattern of similar conduct directed against that group or was conduct that could itself effect such destruction," (Article 6a) including "the initial acts in an emerging pattern" (Article 6 Introduction).

(4) The limitation of genocide to only *national, ethnical, racial or religious groups* is to groups that one is born into. These may be called *indelible* groups. In the case of a religious group, while one may choose to leave a religious group as an adult, it is rarely done and one may nonetheless remain identified with the religious group by virtue of physical characteristics, as for Jews. The crime of genocide *does not* apply to the intent to destroy political, ideological, economic, military, professional, or other groups. Thus, the mass murder of perhaps a million or more "capitalist roaders," "rightists," and counterrevolutionaries during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-69) would not be genocide. Neither would the systematic murder of tens of thousands of communists and leftists by death squads in Latin American during the 1960s to 80s. The rationale often given for excluding such groups is that one joins or becomes a member of them as a matter of choice, and the nature and membership in such groups is not as clear as it is for indelible groups.

(5) In the definition of genocide, the term "as such" is important. It means that the defined groups are by intention *explicitly targeted* for destruction, and such destruction is not the unintended outcome, byproduct, or spillover of the intent to achieve some other goal, such as in defensive operations or attacks on military targets during a war or rebellion.

(6) Also critical is the word "destroy." The acts that are carried out with this intent are carefully defined in (a) to (e), above. They exclude attempts, for example, to eliminate an indelible group from a territory by *ethnic cleansing* (that which involves their forced or coerced removal), or the destruction of the *culture* of a group, as by forced education of their children in a different language and customs. While "culture" is unmentioned in the articles of the ICC's Statute and the Report of the PCICC, and may well be included as the case law of genocide develops, "ethnic cleansing" would seem to be a crime against humanity in the Statute. Under Article 7.1.d, it is unlawful to deport or forcibly transfer a population.

(7) The "in whole or in part" means that there is no *lower limit* to the number of people on which these acts may be committed. It is genocide even if any of the Acts (a)-(e) are on *one person* with the intent described.

(8) Genocide is generally believed to involve the murder of indelible group members. But the crime does not. Acts (b)-(e) make clear genocide may also involve the intent to destroy a group *by means other than killing* one or more of its members.

(9) In Act (b) "serious bodily or mental harm" may include acts of *torture, rape, sexual slavery, apartheid, or other inhuman or degrading treatment*. (PCICC, ft. 3) That these inhumane acts, among others, were explicitly included in the ICC Statute is a major advance in genocide criminal law.

(10) In Act (c) "conditions of life" may include "deliberate deprivation of resources indispensable for survival, such as food or medical services, or systematic expulsion from homes." (PCICC ft. 4)

(11) The term "forcibly" in Act (e), "is not restricted to physical force, but may include threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention, psychological oppression or abuse of power; or taking advantage of a coercive environment." (PCICC ft. 5).

(12) Finally, it must be noted that there are many other crimes that do not fall under the definition of the crime of genocide that are also subject to prosecution by the ICC. Under Article 7 such are systematic murder, extermination of civilians, enslavement, torture, rape, forced pregnancy, political persecution, and forced disappearances.

3. JURISDICTION OVER THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE

In 1998, 120 countries voted to adopt the treaty establishing the ICC. With its Statute signed by 139 states and ratified by 76, the ICC formally came into existence on July 1, 2002 at The Hague, in the Netherlands. It is a permanent court, independent of the United Nations, and intended to cover the world. In the Preamble to the Statute the State Parties agreed to the Statute, while:

"Affirming that the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole must not go unpunished and that their effective prosecution must be ensured by taking measures at the national level and by enhancing international cooperation, . . .

Determined to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes and thus to contribute to the prevention of such crimes,

Recalling that it is the duty of every State to exercise its criminal jurisdiction over those responsible for international crimes,

Determined to these ends and for the sake of present and future generations, to establish an independent permanent International Criminal Court in relationship with the United Nations system, with jurisdiction over the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole"

This shows a clear international desire that the crime of genocide not go unpunished regardless of where it occurs.

When fully organized in 2003 the ICC will comprise eighteen judges and a prosecutor selected by the State Parties to the Statute. Cases may be brought before the court by the parties, by the Security Council of the United Nations, or by the prosecutor. The prosecutor cannot undertake an investigation on his own without the agreement of two judges of a three judge ICC panel. Such an investigation can be based on information from any reliable source, including individuals.

The ICC has automatic jurisdiction over the nationals of State Parties, and over nationals of countries that are not parties to the Statute "if either the state of the territory where the crime was committed or the state of nationality of the accused consents." Thus, the nationals of states that are not parties to the Statute and who committed genocide on the territory of states that are also not parties to the Statute may go unpunished.

Another limitation on jurisdiction is that the trial by domestic courts for genocide takes precedence if carried out in good faith (the domestic criminal law of over 70 states, with some modifications of the definition, make genocide a domestic crime). And prosecution of genocide in domestic courts is becoming more frequent. Therefore, although the scope of the ICC is far reaching, it still has limited jurisdiction. Clear cases of genocide may go untried and unpunished, as it did under the Genocide Convention of 1948 for Saddam Hussein's systematic destruction of the Iraqi Kurd minority in 1988, during which he used poison gas on them.

4. WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE TERM GENOCIDE?

While attempts to destroy groups has been very much a part of human history, such were usually identified, if at all, either as by a description of the action ("Jinghiz Khan set out to wholly destroy the Tanguts in china in 1226-1233") or by subsuming the act under some very general concept, such as massacres, mass murder, put to the sword, barbarism, or inhumanity. Even the attempts by the international community to develop humanitarian law during the 19th and early 20th Centuries wholly focused on war crimes and crimes against humanity during war. Various Hague treaties and the Geneva Conventions, for example, made it an international crime to murder POWs, indiscriminately kill or target noncombatants, sink unarmed passenger ships, and the like. Moreover, there were occasions when states applied pressure or threatened military actions against other nations to stop massacring their nationals or coreligionists, as when the major European Powers in the late 19th Century threatened action against the Ottoman Empire because of its massacres of Christians.

None of the Hague treaties or Geneva conventions mentioned genocide, nor were the massacres the Powers tried to prevent called genocide. There was a simple reason for this that was recognized by Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain. During World War II, when the horrible scope of the Nazi extermination of the Jews became known, Churchill recognized that this was "a crime that has no name."

The jurist *Raphael Lemkin*, a Polish scholar of international law, coined the legal concept in 1944. He fled the German occupation of Poland in 1939 for Sweden, and at the end of World War II, he moved to New York to

lobby the United Nations for an international genocide convention. He subsequently taught law at Duke and Yale Universities and was nominated four times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1933 Lemkin delivered a paper at an international meeting in Madrid in which he focused on the historical destruction of racial, religious or other social groups. He called for an international convention that like that against slavery and piracy would make international crimes out of the destruction of groups, which lacking a better term, he called "Acts of Barbarity."

He was not satisfied with this very broad term, and it went nowhere in subsequent international law. Then, years later he came upon Plato's use of the Greek word *genos* for a "race," or "tribe." The idea naturally occurred to Lemkin to add the Latin *-cide*, which means "killer" or "act of killing" in Latin, as in homicide or suicide. Thus was born "*genocide*."

At the height of Holocaust, and with that in mind, Lemkin wrote his 1944 book on, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, which was the first public articulation of the concept. In it he proposed the international regulation of genocide—the "practice of extermination of nations and ethnic groups."

Lemkin played an important role in the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal trials of Nazi war criminals. He also lobbied at the UN during its debate on genocide, which concluded with the General Assembly resolution that "genocide is a crime under international law which the civilized world condemns, and for the commission of which principals and accomplices are punishable."

5. HISTORY OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE

The legal application of the term genocide first occurred in the indictment of the Nazi war criminals in the 1945-46 Nuremberg Tribunal. They were indicted for "War Crimes" (Count Three), which included the "deliberate and systematic genocide; viz., the extermination of racial and national groups, against the civilian population of certain occupied territories in order to destroy particular races and classes of people, and national, racial, or religious groups, particularly Jews, Poles, and Gypsies." Following the aforementioned UN resolution of genocide, the question of an international genocide convention was referred to the UN Economic and Social Council. Their debate and deliberation ended in the 1948 UNCG, which came into force in 1951, and since then has been ratified by 133 states.

The UN discussion and debate on genocide and final consideration of its definition focused on the horrors of the Holocaust, and in preventing or punishing future Holocaust like occurrences. For this reason, infused as it is with the memory of piles of corpses, gas ovens, and helpless men, women, and children in long lines being led to gas ovens or to face machine guns, genocide has been considered among the worst international crimes.

The UNCG's definition of genocide is the same as the ICC's Acts (a)-(e), above, although the clarifications and elements added to the definition by the PCICC have gone far to clarify what the crime means in practice. For example, as mentioned, even if the act involves one person it is genocide, and torture, rape, and sexual violence are explicitly genocide if involving the intent to destroy an indelible group in whole or in part.

Only states may be parties to the UNCG and a tribunal may hold trials for the crime of genocide (Article 6) in the state in which genocide was committed, "or by such international penal tribunal as may have jurisdiction with respect to those contracting parties which have accepted its jurisdiction." Only parties to the UNCG may initiate cases of genocide under the UNCG. When such cases are left up to states, international and domestic

politics play a prime role. And for this reason, there has been no case of genocide initiated under the UNCG by a State Party, even though there are many possible cases, such as by Burundi (1972), Cambodian Khmer Rouge (1975-79), Iraq (1963-), Myanmar (1962-), Nigeria (1967-70), Rwanda (1994), Serbia (1990s), Sudan (1956-), and many others. Moreover, many cases of genocide have been committed by non-parties, or before they ratified the UNCG, such as by Angola, China, Congo (Kinshasa), Indonesia, Pakistan, Paraguay, and Sierra Leone.

In order to deal with the glaring cases of genocide and war crimes, the United Nations has resorted to setting up ad hoc Tribunals. So far only two are in existence, one the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for the Rwandan genocide of 1994. It has been successful in finding Mayor Jean-Paul Akayesu, former Prime Minister Jean Kambanda, and businessman and militia leader Omar Serushago, guilty of genocide, among other crimes. Kambanda has been found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity and sentenced to life imprisonment. Moreover many other high officials have been detained and are on trial, including the former ministers of education, health, information, foreign affairs, civil service, and commerce and industry. Since this was an internal domestic matter, a crime committed against their own people during a domestic conflict, their prosecution sets an important precedent for the application of international humanitarian law. Moreover, many states cooperated with the ICTR, including complying with ICTR arrest warrants, thus setting additional precedents.

The other tribunal is The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which was established in 1993 with regard to serious violations of humanitarian law. Genocide is among the crimes it has authority to persecute. Seven individuals are now serving sentences, and three have completed their sentence and ten have been provisionally released. In 1999 the Tribunal issue a warrant for the arrest of Slobodan Milosevic, former President of Yugoslavia, and four of his associates for genocide and crimes against humanity. Milosevic is now standing trial before the Tribunal.

The United Nations had also made attempts to set up similar tribunals for the Cambodian Khmer Rouge genocide and other crimes against humanity, and similarly for genocide and other crimes against humanity of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front, among other groups, and Indonesia's genocide in former East Timor (1975- 98). For one reason or another these have either been unsuccessful or partially successful, as in the hybrid national-international Special Court for Sierra Leone.

In the future the activities of these tribunals may be folded into the ICC or the ICC will be given exclusive jurisdiction. In effect, the UNCG has now been replaced by the ICC's Statute.

6. GENOCIDE AS A SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPT

Aside from it being a crime, genocide is a subject of research by social scientists and scholars. They ask such questions as to the history of genocide, its dynamics and stages, and its conditions and causes. If we are to eradicate or reduce genocide in the world, such research is essential. It is not enough to try to deter it by legal punishment. We must also understand why it occurs. However, the legal definition of genocide in the UNCG and ICC is too broad in including very different kinds of behavior, such as murder, mental damage, preventing births, removing children from a group, and so on.

Yet, the legal definition also is too narrow in another way. It does not include the intent to destroy political, economic, and other non-indelible groups. Much killing by governments has been for to destroy other than indelible groups. It has been manifestly murder, and the intent to commit murder is inherent in the act itself. For example, soldiers lining up civilians against a wall and shooting them to death without a fair trial is

manifestly government murder. Such has been the mass murder of hostages by the Nazis, the murder of Kulaks during Stalin's collectivization campaign in the 1930s, Mao's killing of "counterrevolutionaries in the 1950s and 60s," "the forced disappearance of leftists by death squads in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, and Honduras, among others in the 1970s and 80s; and the Cambodian Khmer Rouge's mass murder of former government military officers and officials from 1975 to 1979.

The progress of our knowledge of genocide depends fundamentally on the clarity and significance of our concepts. Especially, these concepts should refer to real world behavior and events that can be clearly and similarly discriminated regardless of the observers and their prejudices. For if any area of social study is laden with predispositions and biases, it surely has to do with the who, why, when, and how of government murder.

For these reasons, genocide scholars have tried to develop their own definitions of genocide that would better fit their understanding of such government murder. Below are four definitions that have a following among researchers.

"Genocide is a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator." (Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn)

"Genocide in the generic sense is the mass killing of substantial numbers of human beings, when not in the course of military forces of an avowed enemy, under conditions of the essential defenselessness and helplessness of the victims." (Israel W. Charny).

"Genocide is sustained purposeful action by a perpetrator to physically destroy a collectivity directly or indirectly, through interdiction of the biological and social reproduction of group members, sustained regardless of the surrender or lack of threat offered by the victim." (Helen Fein)

The "concept of genocide applies *only* when there is an actualized intent, however successfully carried out, to physically destroy an *entire* group (as such a group is defined by the perpetrators)." (Steven T. Katz)

Across the law oriented and scholarly literature, genocide is defined explicitly or implicitly in three ways.

a) *The legal definition*

That of the UBCG and ICC, as clarified in the report of the PCICC, and given above by Acts (a) - (e).

b) *The Common Definition*

The intentional killing (murder) by government of people because of their group identity. Regardless of the legal definition and doubtlessly influenced by the Holocaust, ordinary usage and that by some researchers have tended to wholly equate it with the *murder and only the murder* by government of people due to their specified or perceived group membership, which for some researchers may include political and other groups. This way of viewing genocide has become so ingrained in the public mind that it seems utterly false to claim genocide for nonlethal mental or physical conditions imposed on a group.

Note that by this definition, the destruction of the group need not be intended. To kill Jews en masse because they are Jews, Christians because they are Christians, Chinese because they are Chinese would by this common definition be genocide. On this there is confusion, however, for while researchers may mention in their explicit definition that the destruction of the group is intended, in actual application they often include as genocide cases for which this intention is not made explicit (such as for the Stalin made Ukrainian famine and deportation of minority groups, Indonesia's mass murder in East Timor, and the killing fields of Khmer Rouge Cambodia), while the murder of people by virtue of group membership is clear.

c) *General Definition*

Any intentional killing (murder) of unarmed and helpless people by government. In some usage and especially among some researchers (see Charny's definition, above), genocide has been so defined to fill a void in the legal and common definitions. They mean it to cover the mass murder of people for reasons other than their group membership, such as the mass murder of POWs, political critics, and violators of draconian rules; that during rape or sexual enslavement; that in the process of ideological purification; or that in order to simply fulfill a government death quota (as in the Soviet Union under Stalin in the 1930s, or by North Vietnam in the 1950s). None of such murders are genocide according the legal and common meanings.

The problem with the generalized meaning of genocide is that to fill one void it creates another. For if genocide refers to all government murder, there is then no name for the murder of people because of their group membership, or the intent to destroy a group in whole or in part? It is precisely because of this conceptual problem that the new term *democide* (from the Greek *demos* for "people") is useful. It means murder by government or ruling authorities, and replaces the generalized definition of genocide, thus leaving the sociological concept of genocide to specifically refer to the murder of *people because of their group membership*.

One of the great advances in international and humanitarian law of the ICC Statute is that it now explicitly defines *murder* and *extermination* as international crimes, whether in time of war or peace. Article 7.1 of the Statute includes the intentional "murder" and "extermination" of one or more persons as "'crime[s] against humanity' when part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack." Of special importance, "extermination includes the intentional infliction of conditions of life, inter alia the deprivation of access to food and medicine, calculated to bring about the destruction of part of a population." (Article 7.2.b)

Murder and extermination by governments are within the general definition of genocide-democide. Therefore, the ICC Statute meets the extensive criticism of the UNGC that it was too narrow and should have included the murder or extermination of people for reasons other than the attempt to destroy indelible groups, although not under the crime of genocide. In effect, the ICC now covers almost all cases of democide, with the exception of the murder of political opponents or others (such as that of a pesky reporter) that is not part of the widespread or systematic attack on the population.

7. GENOCIDE IN HISTORY

Throughout history hundreds of millions of people have been so murdered by their governments or rulers. This because they were hated; the wrong ethnic group, race, religion, or nationality; got in the way; were perceived a threat or enemy; on a whim; or for no reason at all. A conservative accounting would put the murdered as around 133 million, a number whose size was only limited by the small population of the world. By contrast, pre-20th Century war dead may have been about 40 million; the Black Plagues during the fifth to

the 20th Century may have killed 102 million.

Just a few examples will have to suffice. In China as one emperor succeeded another and as one imperial war devastated the population, tens of millions were murdered. In the Taiping Rebellion (1851-64) alone, upwards of forty million were killed, the vast majority likely murdered. The Mongols, Jinghiz Khan a particular ruthless killer among them, devastated large sections of Persia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Russia and China—perhaps murdering through the 14-15th Centuries as many as 30 million people (about 13 percent of the world's population). Then, of course, there was slavery which may have accounted for the murder of about 17 million African blacks; and the murder of the Indians of the Americas, another 13 or so million. These are just the most notorious examples, but then there were the less deadly only in their lesser number of victims, such as in the murder of Christians by the Romans, the Christian Crusades, the Aztec sacrifices, the Spanish Inquisition, the witch hunts, the frequent anti-Jewish pogroms throughout Europe, and so on.

By the 20th Century the human population had multiplied. At the time of the Mongols the world population was about 400 million. In 1900 it was about 1.2 billion, which rose to 6.1 billion by mid-2001. With many more people to kill, governments murdered many more people. In the 20th Century alone, the toll probably exceeded all those murdered before, likely an incredible 174 million. Possibly even around 340 million. For perspective on this, it is as though the world suffered a catastrophic nuclear war in slow motion. The conservative count of 174 million murdered is four times the number killed in combat in all domestic and foreign wars during the century, including World Wars I and II. This many corpses placed head to toe would ring the earth about four times.

The worst murdering government was that of the Soviet Union, where Lenin, Stalin, and their successor may have killed around 62 million citizens and foreigners. Beginning in 1923, the Communist Party of China under Mao Tse-tung and his successors may have accounted for 39 million Chinese. The Nazis under Hitler carried out the Holocaust against the Jews, which everyone knows about, but lesser known is their other murders, which including the Jews amount to about 21 million murdered. Virtually unknown is that the Chinese Nationalist government, while in power from 1928 to 1949 under Chiang Kai-shek, murdered some 10 million Chinese. There were lesser murdering governments that while they killed a million or more people, managed to keep the total under 10 million. Just to name them, with the years and approximate millions murdered in parenthesis: Japan (1937-45: 6), Cambodia Khmer Rouge (1975-79: 2), Turkey (1909-18: 1.9), Vietnam (1945-87: 1.7), North Korea (1948-2002: over 2), Poland (1945-48: 1.6), Pakistan (1958-87: 1.5), Mexico (1900-20: 1.4), Russia (1900-17: 1.1), and Yugoslavia under Tito (1944-87:1). Well over a hundred other governments murdered their share in the tens or hundreds of thousands in this 20th century blood bath. All of this killing would now be a crime under the ICC,

How much of this is the crime of genocide, however? Those cases that most clearly would be such crimes are the Holocaust costing 5-6 million Jews killed, of course. Both the UN Tribunals for Rwanda (overall about, 500-750 thousand Tutsi killed in 1994) and Yugoslavia (about 25,000-100,000 murdered in Bosnia-Herzegovina) have found that genocide had occurred and have meted out punishment. Some other major cases the fit or come close, with murdered in parenthesis) are the 1909-23 mass murder of Armenians, Greeks, and other Christians by the Turkish regimes (about 2.1 million Armenians and 347 thousand Greeks), Cambodian Khmer Rouge 1975-79 murder of Buddhist monks, Cambodian-Vietnamese, Muslims, and other minorities (541,000); 1904-07 German murder of Hereros, Hottentots, and Berg-Damaras of Namibia (72,000), 1967-87 Burundi murder of Hutus (150,000), World War II Croatia's murder of Serbs and Jews (655,000), Iraq's 1966-88 murder of Kurds and southern Shiites (over 100,000).

If we use the common definition of genocide, then there are many more cases, that added to those that fit the legal definition, may amount to around eighty million murdered by governments. Some of the major cases would be Stalin's forced 1932-33 famine in Ukraine that murdered about 5 million; Communist China murder of 375,000 Tibetans, Sinkiang Muslims, and other minorities; West Pakistan's 1971 mass murder of over a million Bengalis and Hindus in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh); Indonesia's 1965 mass murder of 509,000 communists and ethnic Chinese and 1975-98 murders of over 150,000 in East Timor; Sudan's continuing murder since 1955 of Southern Christians and Black, now totaling over 1 million killed; and throughout the world the mass murder of tens of millions of indigenous people and colonial natives.

8. CAUSES AND CONDITIONS OF GENOCIDE

Social scientists and scholars have generally organized their understanding of genocide in terms of the political structure within which it takes place, the context in which genocide occurs, the motives of the perpetrator, the nature of the victims, and the stages through which genocide passes.

a) *Institutions of government*

It is clear from empirical and historical research that democide, including genocide (however defined), are facets of totalitarian systems, and to a lesser extent of authoritarian ones. The degree to which people are not democratically free increases the likelihood of some kind of domestic genocide or democide, as in totalitarian Stalin's Soviet Union, Hitler's Germany, and Mao's Communist China; or fascist Chiang Kai-shek's China, Franco's Spain, and Admiral Miklos Horthy's Hungary; or dictator Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Idi Amin's Uganda, and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's Turkey. Those governments that commit virtually no domestic genocide, or other government domestic murder or extermination campaigns, are the modern democracies that recognize civil liberties and political rights. To predict where genocide is likely to occur, look first at the totalitarian governments, and next at the authoritarian ones.

b) *Context*

Whatever the political institutions of a government, the possibility of genocide sharply increases when it is involved in international or domestic wars. The Holocaust is one clear example. There was the mass murder of Jews before 1939, but not as a government policy to murder all Jews wherever they were or came under German control. That policy did not come into existence until Germany was well into World War II. Similarly with the mass murder of Armenians by the Young Turk government. During World War I, the Turk's alliance with Germany and the Russian invasion of Eastern Turkey provided the Young Turks with the excuse to purify Turkey of Armenians and Christians once and for all. Similarly with Stalin's deportation of ethnic/national minorities, such as Germans, Greeks, Meskhetians, Tartars, Ukrainians, and others during World War II that caused the death of around 750,000 of them. Perhaps a million or more were thus murdered during the Mexican Revolution from 1910-20. And other examples of genocide being executed during military incursions, civil wars, or the fight for independence are the genocides by Angola, Burma, Chile, both Congos, Colombia, El Salvador, Indonesia, Iran, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Syria, Yugoslavia (Serbia and Croatia), and so on for many others. War has always been an excuse, cover, or stimulus for genocide and mass murder.

c) *Motives*

There has been considerable research on why a perpetrator should want to destroy a group or, if not destroy the group as such, murder people because of their group membership. Motives are often complex and

intertwined, but one can usually pull out among the mix a major motive.

One such motive is *to destroy a group that is perceived as a threat to the ruling power*. Such, for example, was the 1970 parliamentary elections in Pakistan that showed the political power of East Pakistan and threatened the control over it by West Pakistan, and the power of the military government. They thus militarily seized East Pakistan and murdered over a million Bengali leaders, intellectuals, professionals, and any Hindus that the military were able to capture.

Such was also the case with the strong resistance of the Ukrainian farmer to Stalin's program of collectivization in 1931-32 coupled with the threat of Ukrainian nationalism to communist control. So, when what would have been a mild famine hit the region in 1932, Stalin magnified the famine many fold by seizing food and its sources (livestock, pets, seed grain, shooting birds in the trees, etc.) and boycotting the import of food to Ukraine. Even visitors to Ukraine were searched and food taken away from them before they entered the Soviet Republic. About 5 million Ukrainians were starved to death.

And such was the case when the Rwandan Hutu majority government undertook to murder all Tutsi within their reach at the time when there was turmoil resulting from a major 1991 incursion of the Tutsi expatriate Rwandan Patriotic Front in the northern part of the country.

A second motive is deeply emotional and *involves the destruction of those who are hated, despised, or conversely are envied or resented*. The genocide of Jews throughout history and in particular the Holocaust was fundamentally an act of religious and ethnic hatred mixed with envy and resentment over their disproportionate economic and professional achievements. Similarly with the genocide of the Armenians in Turkey, 1915-18, where Armenians enjoyed wealth and professional status far beyond their numbers, but also were hated as Christians in a Moslem society.

A third motive for genocide is the *pursuit of an ideological transformation of society*. Such have been the genocides and democides carried out by communist societies, for example, where those resisting or perceived to be enemies of the ideology are murdered, such as landlords, Kulaks, nationalists, "right-wingers," and "counterrevolutionaries."

A fourth motive is *purification, or the attempt to eliminate from society perceived alien beliefs, cultures, practices, and ethnic groups*. "Ethnic cleansing," "waste disposal," or "prophylaxis," are terms for this. Examples are the systematic attempt of Mao Tse-tung and Stalin to eliminate disbelievers from their communist societies; the attempt to do the same by Christianity during the Middle Ages; the elimination of Christian groups and Moslem "blasphemers" in many current Islamic countries such as in Iran and Saudi Arabia; the ethnic cleansing that the Serbians practiced in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s; and the war that the Myanmar (Burmese) military have been carrying out against the Karen and other ethnic groups.

And a fifth motive is that of *economic gain*. Thus, rapacious colonial powers or individuals (as of Belgium King Leopold who personally owned the Congo Free State) mass murdered tens of millions in their colonies who got in the way, resisted the rape of the colony's wealth, or were worked to death; and similarly for the mass murder of Indians in the Americas that continues to this day. And thus many millions were so murdered in the process of capturing, transporting, and maintaining slavery,

d) Stages

Then there are the stages through which the causes and conditions for genocide develop and gradually end in

manifest genocide, as developed by Gregory H. Stanton. Assuming that the government is authoritarian or totalitarian, such stages are as follows.

1. *Classification*: People are typed, categorized, and classified into different groups, such as whites, blacks, Asians; or into Christians and Jews; or into communists, leftists, or rightists.

2. *Symbolization*: Different groups are given names, such as Chinese, Jews, Hindus, or Marxists." Particular clothes, (like a Turban), food eaten (like rice), physical characteristic (like long noses), or behavior (like inscrutable) may become ways of stereotyping the group's members. Classification and symbolization are common to all societies and while necessary for genocide to occur, do not foretell that it will; or that the next stages will follow.

3. *Dehumanization*: Members of the out-groups are dehumanized, as in calling them apes, monkeys, cockroaches, parasites, rats, vermin, and the like. In this way, members of the out-group are made to appear clearly outside of "our" moral universe. As vermin and such, members of the out-group have been stripped of the moral in-group protection against extermination.

4. *Organization*: Officials, sympathetic in-group leaders, and intellectuals organize to repress, murder out-group members, or entirely destroy the dehumanized group. Weapons are stacked or handed out; militia, security forces, or military are selected and trained; preliminary plans are made.

5. *Polarization*: Officials, extremists, propagandists, or demagogues undertake a systematic campaign to maximize the social, psychological, and moral distance between "us" and "them." In this stage, moderate intellectuals and leaders are silenced either through intimidation, beatings, arrests, and outright assassination.

6. *Preparation*: All is ready for genocide and the final step is to tag those to be killed. They may be forced to wear identifying clothing, symbols on their clothing, or be segregated in ghettos. Lists of those to be killed may be prepared for killing squads, and the out-group may be systematically deprived by law and weapon roundups of any weapons. Those who might lead the resistance to genocide, such as young males, may be conscripted into the military and segregated for subsequent execution, or simply jailed.

7. *Genocide*: For whatever motive, the final decision is made to attack and destroy those in the out-group, or to destroy the group as such. It may be justified as a righteous campaign to exterminate vermin or cleanse the society of filth, to recover ancient greatness or save the nation's race, to revenge past wrongs, and so on.

8 *Denial*. The final stage is the perpetrator's denial of their genocide. They destroy or hide the relevant official evidence, burn bodies, leave unmarked graves, or invent a reasonable rational for the killing ("they were in rebellion," "were killed during the civil war," or "were helpmates to our enemies."). Moreover, the perpetrators may harass those who claim that a genocide occurred. The most coherent and far reaching official denial today is that of the Turkish government that the murder of over a million Armenians during World War I was genocide. According to the Turks, they died as a result of a civil war, an invasion by Russia, and the attempt of the Young Turk government to deport potential and actual hostile Armenians to a different part of the country for their own protection.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chalk, F., and K. Jonassohn. *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analysis and Case Studies*, New Haven 1990.

Charny, I. W. (Ed. in Chief). *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, Vol. 1-2. Santa Barbara, California 1999.

Charny, I. W. (Ed.). *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, Vols. 1-2, New York 1988, 1991.

Charny, W. (Ed.). *The Widening Circle of Genocide: Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, Vol. 3, New Brunswick, New Jersey 1994.

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide at: [Convention](#)

Fein, H. *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective*, Newbury Park, California, 1993.

Heidenrich, J. G. *How to prevent genocide: a guide for Policymakers, Scholars, and the Concerned Citizen*, Westport, Connecticut 2001.

Horowitz, I. L. *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power*. New Brunswick, New Jersey 1997.

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. at: [ICTY](#).

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. United Nations web site at: [ICTR](#)

Jongman, A. J. *Contemporary Genocides: Causes, Cases, Consequences*. Wassenaarseweg 52, 2333 AK, Leiden 1996.

Katz, S. T. *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective: The Holocaust and Mass Death before the Modern Age*, New York 1994.

Kuper, L. *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*, New Haven 1981.

Lemkin, R *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. Washington, DC 1944

Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court. at: [PCICC](#)

Rummel, R. J. *Death By Government*. New Brunswick, New Jersey 1994 at: [DBG](#)

Stanton, G. H. *The Eight Stages of Genocide*, Washington, D.C. forthcoming.

Statute of The International Criminal Court. at: [ICC](#)

Totten, S., W. S. Parsons, and I. W. Charny (Eds.). *Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views*, New York 1997.

*Forthcoming in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*

You are the  visitor since 11/23/02

Return to [top](#) of page.