University of Rhode Island
DigitalCommons@URI

Senior Honors Projects | Honors Program at the University of Rhode Island

5-2006

Genocide: A Humanities Prospective

Linda Nico
University of Rhode Island

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog

Part of the Asian Studies Commons, Other Languages, Societies, and Cultures Commons, Politics and Social Change Commons, and the Race and Ethnicity Commons

Recommended Citation
Nico, Linda, "Genocide: A Humanities Prospective" (2006). *Senior Honors Projects.* Paper 25.
http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/25

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at the University of Rhode Island at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu.

Introduction:

Genocide has been appropriately called the "crime of crimes." The severity and brutality related to genocide are so intense that they are considered more heinous than a crime against humanity. It is an offense that uses basic ethnic, social, and religious characteristics of a group to target populations for death. There are many facets of genocide that need to be properly addressed, including motivation of perpetrators and the responsibility of the public. It is only through the thorough researching of these topics that there can be any hope of avoiding these atrocities in the future.

The crimes of genocide are a culmination of the absolute worst facets of humanity, and because of this, it is the responsibility of those who study the humanities to analyze its roots in hopes of a future where prevention of such acts is possible. In the last century, little note has been given to the study of genocide. History has made some significant contributions regarding the Holocaust, but done little in other cases. The study of philosophy has made an effort to answer the world's great questions, but few have taken up the challenge of genocide. Maybe most importantly, it is the responsibility of those who study political science to address genocide so policy makers can effectively punish it. If these scholars work together, they can address all aspects of this terrible crime. It is only through thorough investigation that such an unimaginable crime can be understood and prevented.

History:

The term "genocide" was formulated by Raphael Lemkin in 1943 to describe the events of the Jewish Holocaust. Lemkin argued that terms in existence could not adequately describe the horrors of the Holocaust. In his "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe", published in November 1944, he used the Greek "genos" (race) and the Latin "cide" (kill) to distinguish the actions of Nazis from other forms of mass killing. His definition of genocide was "a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups." Other writers of the time referred to the actions of the Third Reich as "mass murder" and "massacres", but Lemkin felt that these terms did not demonstrate the brutality, severity, and motivation of the crimes being committed against "Poles, Russians and Jews."[1]

In 1948, the term 'genocide' was adopted by the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. The Convention devised specific criteria for the classification of violence as genocide. The standards for genocide include: "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."[2] This definition is far more specific than that which Lemkin had described more than a decade earlier.

---

[1] Lemkin, Raphaël. "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress," Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944

[2] Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, New York, December 9, 1948, Resolution 260 (III) Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, Part I (A/810), p. 174.

Though the term genocide was first published describing the Holocaust, this was not the first occasion in which it had occurred by its current definition. Although he may have been the first use of the term, Lemkin had not been witness to "new conception" as he described it.[3] Some have argued that the first recorded genocides are those described in the bible, the Egyptian treatment of the Israelites who in turn committed genocide against the Canaanites. Similar events occurred from medieval to present day, though the past century has seen an unimaginable amount of mass killings.

Labeling the deaths of thousands of Armenians as genocide has been under debate since the inception of the term. Some argue that the original motivation behind Lemkin's creation of the expression was the violence perpetrated against Christian Armenians in Turkey during WWI. The Turks and Armenians lived in relative harmony for centuries until a rise in nationalism sparked violence at the turn of the century. Smaller instances of violence and maltreatment of Armenians culminated on in 1915. It was then that the Young Turks began the mass killing of ethnic Armenians that eventually took over a million lives.[4]

The Ottoman government has been steadfast in its position that the deaths of Armenians during WWI were not genocide but rather casualties related to the war. Those who label these actions genocide do not see such a simple conclusion. Christian Armenians were specifically targeted, some miles away from any battles. The Turkish government has spearheaded a strong campaign of denial of any culpability in the deaths of Armenians, an effort that has lasted nearly a century. This denial has come in various forms. The leaders of post-war Turkey blamed criminals, corrupt officials and even the

---

[3] Lemkin, Raphaël. "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress," Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944.
[4] http://www.armeniapedia.org/index.php?title=Armenian_Genocide

Kurds. Later the focus was placed on the harsh conditions of war, which they argued caused the deaths of more Turkish lives than the loss of Armenians. The government has spent large sums of money to discourage the use of the term "genocide" in relationship with the Armenian people.

It is not only government officials who deny the genocide, but also a small few in the academic world. Guenter Lewy, professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts, argues that this is one instance that has been mislabeled. In his "Revisiting the Armenian Genocide" he describes the case for terming this mass killing as genocide is on shaky foundation. He describes the arguments as pillars. The first pillar is the conviction of Young Turks leaders in the years following the massacres. In 1919-1920, the post-war Turkish government had different officials court-martialed for offenses against Greeks and Armenians. Some believe that the Young Turks were targeted with the brunt of the guilt, scapegoats for the entire Turkish population. Lewy disputes the reliability of military documents of the time.

His second "pillar" is based on the actions of a group called the Teşkilat-i Mahsusa or Special Organization.[5] Vahakn N. Dadrian, a strong supporter of using the term, places a strong amount of blame on this group. He explains their culpability "The Ittihadist [Unionist] leaders redeployed the brigand units for use on the home front internally, namely against the Armenians. Through a comprehensive sweep of the major cities, towns, and villages, containing large clusters of Armenian populations, the Special Organization units, with their commanding officers more or less intact, set to work to

[5] Lewy, Guenter. "Revisiting the Armenian Genocide" The Middle East Quarterly, Fall 2005 Volume XII No 4

carry out Ittihad's blueprint of annihilation."[6] Lewy rejects Dadrian's assertions, explaining that his conclusions are often based on assumptions made regarding the Special Organization.

In Lewy's third pillar, he describes the last piece of "evidence" that supporters like Dadrian use to argue for the usage of genocide, the memoirs of Naim Bey. The book *Memoirs of Naim Bey,* compiled by Armenian Aram Andonian, is not only the personal account of the time, but also a compilation of government/military documents that implicate Minister of the Interior Talât Pasha giving direct orders to kill Armenians. There is a strong debate regarding the reliability of Naim Bey's documents. After the release of the book, many believed that Bey had written the memoirs to make amends for his actions, but Andarian later admitted that he paid Bey for his contributions. He admitted that Bey was an alcoholic and a gambler which has put Bey's credibility under attack. The authenticity of the documents given to Andarian has not been tested. Translations were made of the documents, but the originals have been lost. Lewy and others argue that the documents were not lost, but rather they were destroyed to save the papers from scrutiny[7].

This debate centers on the idea that the motivation of extermination was not the original intent of the Young Turks. The motivation factor is Lewy's major argument, but it is not enough to fully exonerate the Turks. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians were forced out of Turkey. This forcible deportation (into the Syrian desert) resulted in starvation and ultimately death. In the first documented genocide of the Jews in Europe,

---

[6] Dadrian, Vahakn. "The Role of the Special Organization in the Armenian Genocide During the First World War," Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia During the World Wars, ed. P. Panayi, (Oxford Press, 1993) 54.
[7] Lewy, G.

motivation was obvious. The Nazis used specific propaganda to incite hatred of Jews. In the case of Armenians in Turkey, pre-meditation cannot be proved. It seems that in this case, as well as other subsequent debates regarding genocide, each situation is compared to the Holocaust. The Holocaust was a very specific kind of genocide. The Nazis maintained records, had a specific routine, and used propaganda to reach their goal of extermination of the Jews, this meticulous nature is not common in other cases of genocide. The genocide in Rwanda was a culmination of underlying hostility towards ethnic Tutsis, does the lack of premeditation make this any less legitimate? The strongest supporter of the Armenian side seems to be the European Union, which has stipulated that Turkey must admit to the genocide before membership can be granted.[8]

Philosophy:

The increase in instances of genocide in the 20th century has reopened some philosophical debates regarding the concepts of good and evil. The intensity of violence related to genocide makes it an unfathomable crime. Just as historians trace instances of genocide back to biblical references, some philosophers have done the same with the motives for genocide. Stephen T. Davis explored the story of the first murder. Cain and Abel, sons of Adam and Eve, both gave offerings to the Lord. The Lord "gave regard" to Abel for his offering from his flock, but yet gave Cain no credit for his gift of the yield of his crops. Cain became enthralled with jealousy over the Lord's reaction to Abel's gift, and killed him. This, by biblical standards, is the first instance of murder. The same drive that pushed Cain to break the Lord's law has been the motivation for many who

[8] "Beginning to face up to a terrible past". Economist, 4/9/2005, Vol. 375 Issue 8421

commit different acts of genocide. Davis argues that this is an understood example of extreme hate and that because such strong hatred can be traced back to the beginning of human existence it should be no surprise that humans are capable of such horrible violence.[9] This jealousy can be traced through many different instances of genocide. Nazi Germany blamed financial misfortune on Jews just as Hutu's blamed their status on the Tutsi population.

This surge in genocide has reawakened the debate about moral/ethical relativism. This philosophical theory revolves around the ideas of right and wrong. The theory of moral relativism states that there cannot a universal morality. Each civilization is different, so each community must decide on a moral code that they will abide by. In the 20th century, many different communities chose a moral code that accepted and even exalted ethnic mass killing. As cases of genocide are usually committed against the ethnic minority, moral/ethical relativism justifies the mass killings. Nazi Europe acknowledged genocide as not only tolerable, but what was necessary.

The debate regarding the existence of God has been thrown open with the increase in instances of genocide. Richard Rubenstein is one of the most notable Jewish philosophers to broach the subject of post-Holocaust Judaism. His book *After Auschwi*tz describes a world that can no longer believe in a God of the covenant. His main argument is that in a world where the Jews can be directly targeted for genocide, they cannot also be God's "chosen" people. His work, also referred to as *The Death of God,* has brought up the ideas of Epicurus. The ancient philosopher had a strong theory regarding the existence of God. He explained:

---

[9] Davis, Stephen T., "Genocide, Despair, and Religious Hope," Genocide and Human Rights: A Philosophical Guide, ed. John K. Roth (New York, NY, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005) 35-45.

> *God either wants to eliminate bad things and cannot, or can but does not want to, or neither wishes to nor can, or both wants to and can. If he wants to and cannot, he is weak -- and this does not apply to god. If he can but does not want to, then he is spiteful -- which is equally foreign to god's nature. If he neither wants to nor can, he is both weak and spiteful and so not a god. If he wants to and can, which is the only thing fitting for a god, where then do bad things come from? Or why does he not eliminate them?*[10]

Rubenstein's dilemma goes beyond the question of any God, and focuses his efforts on the Jewish God.[11] In the Old Testament of the Bible as well as the Torah, the Jews stand out as the chosen people. Rubenstein argued that this aspect of God was not true, or that the covenant was broken. He writes "a God who tolerates the suffering of even one innocent child is either infinitely cruel or hopelessly indifferent."[12] Rubenstein explains that the holocaust is of many different instances in which the God of the covenant has been disproved. He also argues that no Jew who fully appreciates the gravity and reality of the Holocaust can maintain a true belief in the Judeo God.

There are many who disagree with Rubenstein's assertions. Stephen T. Davis contends Rubenstein's argument with what he calls "the Genocide Argument for the Existence of God." Davis explains his theory using very simple logic. Genocide is generally considered to be morally wrong. This morality is agreed upon in almost all cultures and therefore proves the theory of moral relativism to be wrong. If there is no moral relativism, then their must be a moral right. If there is a moral right or a way

---

[10] Inwood, Brad and L.P. Gerson, ed. "The Epicurus Reader," (Hackett Publishing, 1994.)
[11] Braiterman, Zachary. "`Hitler's Accomplice'?! The Tragic Theology of Richard Rubenstein" in *Modern Judaism* (17, 1997).
[12] Rubenstein, Richard L. "After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism" (Indianapolis, 1966).

things "ought to be" then life must have a plan. If life has a plan, there must be a life planner, namely God. Davis concludes that because of the nature of genocide, a victim's only possible reparation is in the after-life. He explains his theory "if God does not exist, a genocide-free world is the best for which we can hope…there is no hope whatsoever for any experience of reparation or even joy by the victims of genocide. They are gone forever."[13] Davis believes that it is only in belief in God that the world can cope with genocide.

Political Action in Rwanda:

The responsibility for the lives of genocide victims does not lie solely on the shoulders of those directly committing the crime, this blame must also be shared with those who have the power to stop such actions and choose not to. After the Holocaust, world leaders proclaimed "Never again!" in reference to mass ethnic killings, however, the memory of this proclamation soon faded.

The lack of action on the part of the United States, during the genocide in Rwanda, constitutes one of the most costly and embarrassing peacekeeping failures in American history. The United States knowingly and intentionally sat by idly during the massacre of nearly 1 million Rwandan citizens. An important question in this situation is what led U.S. decision makers into such a course of action, or inaction as the case may be. It is crucial to determine whether the obvious lessons from this tragedy have been taken to heart by the American government, military, media and people.

The political turmoil that had engulfed the government of Rwanda erupted when, on April 6, 1994, a plane carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down

[13] Davis, Stephen T. p 40-44.

by a rocket launcher as it was landing in the Rwandan capital, Kigali. It was perceived that this action was taken by violent extremists in order to stop the implementation of the Ashura Accords, a peacekeeping plan for the two countries. Many forecasted the beginning of savage ethnic cleansing, and they were correct in their predictions[14].

Starting on April 7, many of the early Tutsi victims found themselves specific, not random, targets[15]. Lists of targets had been prepared in advance. Radio stations broadcasted names, addresses, and even license plate numbers of those sought. Tens of thousands of Tutsi fled their homes in panic, were snared and butchered at checkpoints. UN peacekeeping forces merely watched from the sidelines, with the claim that stopping the slaughter would have breached their "monitoring" mandate.

Rwandan Tutsi who tried to seek shelter and safe haven in churches were killed, as well as pregnant women in maternity clinics. This massive ethnic cleansing was driven by the inciting influence of Radio Rwanda, fueling the killings with encouragements such as, "The grave is half full. Who can help fill it by morning?" Other broadcasts encouraged violence against those Hutu who would not hurt their neighbors, exclaiming: "If you see a Hutu not participating, they should also die." During this time of great fear, the people of Rwanda had faith that the UN and American forces stationed in Rwanda to keep the peace would act to stop such atrocities. On April 8, Clinton made a statement to the press about Rwanda, saying,

> ... I mention it only because there are a sizable number of Americans there and it is a very tense situation. And I just want to assure the families of those who are there that we are doing everything we possible can to be on top of the situation to

[14] Whitelaw, Kevin and Lisa Stein, "AN EYE BLIND TO MURDER," U.S News and World Report, 4/12/2004, Vol. 136, Issue 12

[15] Rauch, Jonathan. "NOW IS THE TIME TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT RWANDA". National Journal; 4/21/2001, Vol. 33 Issue 16.

take all the appropriate steps to try to assure the safety of our citizens there.[16]

Over the following two days, France and Belgium sent troops to rescue their citizens. American civilians were soon airlifted out. No Rwandans were rescued, not even those employed by Western governments in their embassies, consulates, and as intelligence gatherers. By April 9, the day that evacuation of foreign aid workers began, estimates of the number dead in the capital alone exceeded 10,000. On April 21, despite the growing "casualty" rates (at this point over 100,000) and the growing piles of bodies in the streets, the UN Security Council voted to cut peacekeeping forces from approximately 5,000 to 270 men.[17]

Hutu militiamen, soldiers, and citizens used firearms, machetes, and garden implements to murder 800,000 Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu. Little care was given to the disposal of bodies. Some were shoved into landfills, others left in the streets. Human flesh rotted in the sunshine. In churches, bodies were dispersed with scattered hosts. At the end of the genocide, lasting little more than 3 months, 937,000 Tutsi were missing (either killed or fled). This figure is known as result of a census taken of ID cards.[18] With such high death counts in such a short period, this may be the fastest genocide in recorded history.

Because of the extreme brutality and savagery of these acts the choice of American officials to ignore the problem has since come under much scrutiny. During and after the genocide, different officials gave different reasons for a lack of action on the part of the American government. There have been many justifications made by those

---

[16] White House Press Release. "President's Remarks to the Press Pool" April 8, 1994.
[17] US Department of State, cable number 099440, to US Mission to the United Nations, New York, "Talking Points for UNAMIR Withdrawal", April 15, 1994. Confidential.
[18] Packard, Gabriel. RWANDA*:* CENSUS FINDS 937,000 DIED IN GENOCIDE. New York Amsterdam News, 4/8/2004, Vol. 95 Issue 15

who were in power at the time, justifications which on the surface may seem strong but are quickly razed under any scrutiny.

One explanation given was that the violence in Rwanda was not genocide, but rather a civil war. The Clinton administration faced so much criticism with the actions taken in Somalia that it was decided that the military was not get involve itself in civil disputes. Though this explanation seems reasonable, it does not hold up to scrutiny. When looking at the definition of genocide as listed in the Genocide Convention of 1948, the situation in Rwanda met the criterion as specified in the document. This included the several different criteria of the definition such as killing, causing bodily harm, causing harmful conditions to bring about physical destruction, etc. These events must happen to a specific ethnic group and must be committed with a serious intent to decimate the entire group. The motivation to exterminate the group is obvious from the broadcasts that provoked the violence which some say is comparable to propaganda used in the Holocaust. In a legal analysis of the American responsibility for action in Rwanda this last criteria is met as "international organizations, foreign diplomats and indigenous eye witnesses have reported systematic executions….they are ethnic Tutsis, have Tutsi characteristics…"[19] The CIA secretly categorized the situation in Rwanda as a genocide as early as April 23 in a National Intelligence Daily report, which was sent to hundreds of policy makers, including the president.[20] The acknowledgement of genocide and subsequent actions (or inaction) surmount to a clear violation of the Genocide Convention.

---

[19] Donoghue, Joan. Draft Legal Analysis, Office of the Legal Adviser, Department of State, drafted by Assistant Legal Adviser for African Affairs Joan Donoghue, May 16, 1994

[20] National Intelligence Daily, Saturday, April 23, 1994: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB117/Rw34.pdf

In his apology to the people of Rwanda, given in 1998, Clinton stated, "It may seem strange… but all over the world there were people like me, sitting in offices… who did not fully appreciate the depth and speed with which you were being engulfed by this unimaginable terror". Some evidence has been produced that validates his ignorance argument. Upon reading an article about the U.S.'s blind eye to genocide, he sent copies of it around with comments in the margins like, "Is what he's saying true", "How did this happen?" and "I want to get to the bottom of this"[21]. However, evidence to the contrary is persistent and impossible to ignore. Many agree that in order for the President and his administration to be truly uninformed about the ongoing genocide, they would have had to ignore public reports, internal, and international intelligence. It does not seem plausible that these top officials could have overlooked all intelligence reports that made reference to the violence. One such report was a cable that was sent to the United Nations Security Council in New York on the first day of the killings, April 7. The report, written by UN Mission to Rwanda Commander Romeo Dallaire, described the "savage ethnic cleansing" that was taking place.[22]

Others argue that because of the swiftness of the violence, the government and military were not given enough notice to prepare and execute a military plan. Without sufficient time before the conflict it would be unreasonable to expect the military to act. Though this may seem to be a suitable reason for inaction, and though the military may be organizationally limited by its need for ample planning time it is not a realistic answer

---

[21] Power, Samantha. "Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States Let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen". Atlantic Monthly. September 2001, Vol. 288 Issue 2

[22] Dallaire, General Romeo. "Request for Protection for Informant", Facsimile to United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, to Maj. Gen. Maurice Baril, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, January 11, 1994.

in the Rwanda case. Commander Dallaire had sincere worries about such an event. He warned international governments of an impending genocide as early as January 11, 1994 (3 months before killings began). In a since declassified fax that was sent to the UN headquarters in New York, Dallaire explained that Hutus had provoked Belgian soldiers in Rwanda. It is speculated that this was done in order to scare the Belgian government into removing troops (which did subsequently). He also went on to inform the UN that he had strong evidence that troops were mobilizing who were ethnically motivated.[23] Warnings came from within the State Department as well. Prudence Bushnell, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Bureau of African Affairs, sent word of impending violence. She correctly predicted that following the death of Rwandan President Habyarimana would likely result in a "wide spread violence."[24] With this three-month warning, one would expect that the military had a sufficient amount of time to prepare for an active peacekeeping operation.[25]

One obvious motive for American inaction in Rwanda is that the United States feared peacekeeping missions. Because the Rwandan Genocide occurred within months of the deaths of peacekeeping troops in Somalia, this incident made the Clinton administration wary of taking on new military actions. This strengthened the US preference towards negotiation rather than military action. After the failure of the Ashura Accord negotiation efforts between Burundi and Rwanda, the US government, seeing no

---

[23] Dallaire, General Romeo. "Request for Protection for Informant"
[24] Bushnell, Prudence. "Death of Rwandan and Burundian Presidents in Plane Crash Outside Kigali," Memorandum to to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, April 6, 1994.
[25] Dallaire, General Romeo. "Request for Protection for Informant"

alternative, removed all peacekeeping forces. Negotiations would not have reasonably changed the end result of a conflict. As negotiations had failed and military actions were not an option, some argue that decision makers had no other alternatives. In reality, another option had been discussed: jamming radio signals. As most of the propaganda fueling the genocide was being distributed over the airwaves, it would be within reason to stop such transmissions by jamming the signals. The US government and military had the means to employ such a maneuver, but some felt it was too expensive.

It is only when you address the decisions made by the US government through a cost/benefit analysis that you find any explanation for Rwanda. Decision makers seek to accomplish four tasks: accurately identify the problem that confronts them; take into account the key factors that bear on the problem; critically examine alternative courses of action; and make a choice that will wisely maximize benefits and minimize costs. In such a case, one must weigh the costs of action versus the benefits if the mission were to be successful. In order to account for the costs for a humanitarian relief effort in Rwanda one must include the monetary costs, military casualties and political backlash. The benefits in this case would be stopping genocide, gaining credibility for the administration and protecting human rights.

Addressing the monetary costs was a major concern to Clinton Administration when handling the Rwandan situation. The U.S. Congress already owed over $1/2 billion in unpaid UN dues and peacekeeping costs. They had adopted a firm policy on staying out of risky and expensive peacekeeping missions. A mission in Rwanda would carry an enormous price tag and the Clinton administration already faced a recession. In some cases, there are economic gains to be won in assisting in a peace-building mission. This

was not a possibility for Rwanda as their only natural resources were coffee and tea, of which the world market was already flooded.

Monetary concerns were so important to the administration that even after a plan was devised which required no U.S. troops, the economic costs stopped action. One such plan called for the use of US tanks to get the troops into Rwanda. The Department of Defense would not begin to implement the plan until they had been paid for the use of their machinery. There was also an investigation into the jamming of radio signals to stop the spread of Hutu propaganda. This prospective action was turned down because of monetary costs.[26]

Another potential cost of a peacekeeping operation is the loss of American lives. This was a particularly real and moving threat after the loss of 18 American lives at Mogadishu, during the failed peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. Such a cost is hard to quantify. Troops had been stationed there for approximately 10 months. A violent outbreak left 73 soldiers wounded and 18 dead.[27] Because of this, Clinton's foreign policy decisions were closely followed. He had faced extreme criticism from the Republican Party and, with reelection to think of, he was wary of upsetting an already outraged public. When looking at the effect of the Somalia tragedy had on Clinton's foreign policy choices, it is hard not to see a similarity to the problems Kennedy faced after the Bay of Pigs. Public reactions to the Bay of Pigs greatly influenced Kennedy's caution in future foreign decisions, specifically his caution to take active precautions in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Clinton's caution can easily be related to that of Kennedy

---

[26] Memorandum from Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security, National Security Council, "Rwanda: Jamming Civilian Radio Broadcasts", May 5, 1994.

[27] http://www.parascope.com/articles/1296/gamble.htm

except for one important flaw: Kennedy's caution may have saved thousands while Clinton's decision may have cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

The third potential cost, to the Clinton administration particularly, would have been political backlash. Clinton focused on the potential backlash of a Somalia-like result in Rwanda. He took a risk of backlash from foreign governments. This inaction was validated by the world as the right choice. This led decision makers to believe that their inaction would still be acceptable.

One benefit to intervening on behalf of the Tutsi would be for the Clinton Administration to gain credibility with their constituency. However, in the case of the genocide in Rwanda, there was no public interest. NBC, ABC and CBS all gave more airtime to the kneecapping of Nancy Kerrigan by Tanya Harding than to the ongoing genocide at the time. Therefore, the motivation to act in order to please the public was minimal.

The most controversial benefit of sending troops into Rwanda would be to protect the basic human right to live. The problem with this benefit is that it was not given much weight, due to the apathy of the American people. Americans did not relate to the citizens of Rwanda as they did in more western influenced troubled countries like Bosnia. This has become a theme in foreign policy; those who we understand culturally are protected while "strange" cultures are not. In a discussion among military officials at the outbreak of the killings, General Wesley Clark was quoted saying: "Is it Hutu and Tutsi, or Tutu and Hutsi."[28] This type of attitude is also consistent with a political theory political science that refers to the idea of technocrats. This term refers to a society whose values have been altered by the vast technology with which they identify, a society with

[28] Power, Samantha. "Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States Let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen".

less concern for human life than money and power. Stephen Krasner pointed out, in an article about bureaucracies that, "The failure of the American government to take decisive action in a number or critical areas reflects not so much on the inertia of a large bureaucratic machine as the confusion over values which afflicts the society in general and its leaders in particular."[29]

Looking back at list of pros and cons that the American government faced when mulling over the decision to take a stand against genocide in Rwanda or to permit it to happen, one fact becomes ultimately and painfully apparent: human life, particularly that of the Tutsi people, held no meaningful value in the eyes of the American government.

Following the Genocide

Following the determination of "genocide" and the release of the number of casualties the U.S. government did try to express its remorse at failing to act in such a crucial situation. Clinton's Administration attempted to make apologies, and excuses, for our lack of action in the face of genocide. They finally admitted that it was genocide and that we should have taken action, not only under the 1948 Genocide Convention, but as compassionate citizens of the world. In March 1998, Clinton traveled to Rwanda and spoke to the Rwandan people. He, in an emotional speech stated, "We have come today partly in recognition of the fact that we… did not do as much as we could and should have done."[30] Congress also passed a law that, now, affords the U.S. the right to jam the radios of sovereign nations, if they are being used to incite violence.

---

[29] Krasner, Stephen D. Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland) *Foreign Policy*, No. 7. (Summer, 1972).
[30] Bennet, James. **"**Clinton declares U.S., with world, failed Rwandans**".** New York Times; 03/26/98, Vol. 147 Issue 51108, pA1.

However, one aspect of the governmental response that, some feel, has been lacking is the failure of the United States to hold a formal inquiry to their actions, or lack there of, in Rwanda. Congressman Don Payne, of California, made it clear in the meeting of the House Committee of International Relations that the creation of a Commission of Inquiry on Rwanda is critical for the truth to come out. Other countries, such as France, have even conducted their own inquiries, but were still barred access to the U.S. Government's "classified" files.

Samantha Power, a Harvard professor on governmental public policy, showed her disgust at our current system, at the same meeting. She pointed out that there are no congressional investigations for sins of omission and barely – and only after fierce pressure – hearings for sins of commission.[31] Without a sense of accountability for their actions, what is supposed to motivate decision-makers to make the best decision, and not just the easiest?

The lessons that one would expect the government to learn from the travesties in Rwanda have not been applied. Since this genocide ended, there have been similar conflicts in East Timor and Sudan. The United States has chosen a similar path of referring to such conflicts as consisting of "acts of genocide"[32]. No accountability or responsibility for such horrific actions in the international community has occurred. The most tragic part about this arrogant disregard for the lives of humans throughout the world is a lack of public outcry and media coverage. The news time used to cover such events has been minuscule, and written coverage has seemed like an afterthought. What the American government and people fail to see is that as they ignore the political hotbed

[31] Power, Samantha. "Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States Let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen".
[32] Jehl, Douglas. "U.S. aides avoid labeling horror". New York Times. 6/10/94, Vol. 143 Issue 49723.

that is Africa, they may be ignoring a breeding ground for a new generation of terrorism. Indecision in the United States is equally, if not more important, than decision. For each event that we do respond to, there are countless others that are ignored. In the long run will the US be remembered for those events they ignored? Maybe not, but the culmination of disregard will create a reputation of inhumanity that may find its way into the history books of the third world.

The Rwandan genocide case is an important one, as it has been the first to have persecutors of the genocide tried in the UN International Criminal Courts. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established on November 8, 1994. The tribunal is made up of 25 member judges from Europe, Asia, and Africa. It is in this tribunal that the format for future genocide trials is being created. The tribunal has faced many different obstacles and criticism, but takes on the significant responsibility of showing the world that participation in genocide will be punished.

To date, the ICTR has tried 26 people accused of various forms of genocide and crimes against humanity. The ICTR has clearly outlined the crimes that are within their jurisdiction to prosecute. The crimes included are genocide (as described in the Genocide Convention of 1948), conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, attempt to commit genocide and complicity in genocide. The ICTR may also prosecute those who commit the following crimes against humanity: extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, rape, imprisonment, deportation, persecution based on political, racial and religious grounds and other inhumane acts. The ICTR can also prosecute those accused of violating the Geneva Convention which could

include a variety of acts ranging from pillage to execution. [33] This range of jurisdiction has opened the limits of the definition of genocide, allowing for the punishment of those who commit crimes against a political group.

Of those tried, punishments have ranged from 10 years to several life sentences. One major point of controversy amongst survivors is the lack of a death penalty option for punishment. Many believe that no number of life sentences can be appropriate in convictions on genocide. In many cases that have been tried on a local level, the death penalty (legal in Rwanda) has been used as a punishment.[34]

Another important factor in the punishment of criminals in Rwanda is the position of the perpetrators. Many of those who have been tried are government officials. Others are community leaders (see table 1). Many of these leaders did not commit any active crimes, but are still sentenced to multiple life sentences. The ICTR has put major responsibility on those who encourage the violence of genocide. This responsibility is not given to those in political positions, but also to the media. Major figures in the broadcasting industry have been tried, convicted and sentenced to prison terms for their promotion of hate propaganda. The ICTR's recognition of the liability of non-active participants in genocide is an important step towards analyzing the roots of the problem.

Though the ICTR has made major efforts towards punishing major offenders, it has still only grazed the surface of the problem. The trials of a few dozen criminals has taken over ten years, and thousands of victims still look for some sort of reparations. The process of bringing justice to Rwanda has become a time consuming effort. This time

---

[33] STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA

[34] Meernik, James: "Proving and Punishing genocide at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda," International Criminal Law Review, Volume 4, Number 1, 2004.

has discouraged many, but it is evidence of progress towards an efficient system of justice to address these types of crimes.

The blood of millions has been spilled through acts of genocide. While it was easy for leaders to say "Never again" in regards to the Holocaust, following through with the task has not been a successful priority. Academics and policy makers have been paralyzed by the daunting task of analyzing and preventing genocide. Most find it easy to just ignore the issue entirely. By not addressing this evil, they not only find some responsibility in the casualties of genocide, but they also avoid confrontation with the flaws of humanity. Those who choose not to use the term in reference to different massacres not only do so to circumvent accountability but also deny that the wickedness that epitomized the Nazi regime is still alive in communities around the world.

Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel described the responsibility: "We have been entrusted with an awesome legacy, and we are being judged by invisible friends, brothers, teachers, parents and they are all dead. And they had but one wish, to be remembered."[35] His message is clear, we cannot forget those lost to these crimes. Remembering these victims cannot be a passive act, society must remember them in their actions against similar regimes. These deaths stand as a testament to the evils that still remain in our world. The magnitude of this evil cannot be ignored out of fear. In order to do any justice for the victims in Turkey, Nazi Europe, Rwanda, Cambodia and East Timor, out governments cannot sit idly by as the situation worsens in Sudan. The death toll continues to rise in Darfur, but international leaders have fallen into their all too familiar routine taking no responsibility for their fellow man.

---

[35] Roth, John K., ed. Genocide and Human Rights: A Philosophical Guide. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005

This responsibility belongs to all man. Academics, political leaders, students, workers; we are all accountable for the lives lost to genocide. So many choose not to acknowledge the evils of the world, thinking they can do nothing to stop it. The journey towards a world with no genocide is a long one, yet it is not beyond our capabilities. Acknowledgement is the first step to stopping this crime of crimes. Recognition of both the crime and the inaction against the crime is something that is demanded by the families of the victims and by the victims themselves. Survivors express the same sentiments that the Lord gave in response to the actions of Cain:

"Listen, your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!" (Genesis 4:10) This exclamation is not directed solely at those who kill, but also to the entire human community. We must not let this cry go unheard.

Organizing a Panel

My original goal for an Honors project was to organize a panel of experts to speak about the genocide in East Timor. I had seen many students who had written the traditional research project and thought that an alternative project would be more interesting. This experience has been quite a challenge, and in the end amounted to far more work than I expected.

I spent the summer of 2005 interning at the Embassy of East Timor. My interest in their genocide and subsequent development dates back to the late 1990's, and has increased through years of more research. I hoped that this project would be the culmination of my interest and maybe even spark the interest of others. Though in the end, my project was not what I originally intended, I learned a lot from this experience. If I could do this again, there are a few things I would change.

The first aspect of my work that I would change is the speakers themselves. I originally wanted the speakers to be important and/or big names. It might not have been realistic to expect Congressman Kennedy to speak about his work for Timor. If I had not waited to hear from him, I may have been able to secure someone else. Though I had hoped that by having a flexible schedule, I would be able to better attract his participation, this choice came back to haunt me in the end.

I wish I had focused more on academics, as those who devote their research to genocide seem to be more willing to speak about it. Those professors I spoke with from schools like Yale, Brown, and Harvard all tried their best to be helpful. They gave me suggestions for research, answered my questions, and gave me the names of others who

may have been helpful in my research. Had I centered my search on the academic world, I think I would have had more luck.

I went into this project thinking that I had some certainty in securing the Minister Counselor at the Embassy. Late in the semester, he backed out. This development derailed my original project completely. Upon hearing this news, I was really disappointed. I thought that a definite commitment to the event had been made and I was hurt that Mr. Pinto did not realize how important this was to me. Over time I realized that the work he was doing was more important than the project.

For students who are planning similar projects in the future I have a few pieces of advice. The first is to make this a 6-credit project. In order to secure the participation of important figures, planning must begin 5-6 months in advance. This time would allow some time to raise some funds to help secure the speakers. Paying the speakers is my second piece of advice. By agreeing to pay the speaker, they have a more significant responsibility to follow through with their participation. I also think it is important to be flexible with who speaks, because this flexibility can make for a better finished product.

I am happy with the outcome of my project. In my research I learned a lot more about the subject of genocide. During my presentation, an audience member asked me why I chose to focus on genocide. This is a question I am often asked, as genocide is not an uplifting subject. Many of the days I spent researching were quite depressing, but I chose to press on. The reason I have been drawn to genocide studies is because I think it is my responsibility. Genocide is a culmination of the worst evils in the world, and not acknowledging the instances of genocide that occur in the world is like ignoring that such things can happen. In studying this subject I think those who devote their lives to

genocide are not only making a conscious effort to try and stop future instances of violence, but also paying their respects to those who have fallen victim to these crimes.

Many change the channel when they see a report about Darfur or flip the page when they see an image of the violence in the paper. We live in a culture that puts entertainment value in violence, but still people are uneasy when they see images of genocide. I think that people don't want to address the evils of the world. We are taught in school that Hitler and the Nazis were terrible and evil people, but maybe it is out of fear that these same classes do not cover genocides in Rwanda, Cambodia, and now in Sudan. We hope that humans have evolved past such ignorant hatred that sparks these types of violence, but current events show that this is anything but true.

In studying genocide and acknowledging the worst evils perpetrated by man, I can better appreciate my own life. In one way, it is only possible to be prepared for life if you understand the capabilities of humanity. By not allowing yourself to remain ignorant about reality, you can better face life's challenges. Secondly, I think that it is pretty clear that the victims of genocide experience the worst of life, but so many of them go on to do great things. By researching such a terrible topic I was able to read the stories of survivors and their great strength and their determination gives me hope for the potential of my life.

Works Consulted

Bannister, Robert C. Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1979.

"Beginning to face up to a terrible past". Economist, 4/9/2005, Vol. 375 Issue 8421.

Bennet, James. **"**Clinton declares U.S., with world, failed Rwandans**".** New York Times; 03/26/98, Vol. 147 Issue 51108.

Braiterman, Zachary. "`Hitler's Accomplice'?! The Tragic Theology of Richard Rubenstein" Modern Judaism (17, 1997).

Bushnell, Prudence. "Death of Rwandan and Burundian Presidents in Plane Crash Outside Kigali," Memorandum to to Secretary of State Warren Christopher (4/6/1994).

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, New York, December 9, 1948, Resolution 260 (III) Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, Part I (A/810), p. 174.

Crossette, Barbara. "Report Says U.S. and Others Allowed Rwanda Genocide." New York Times; 07/08/2000, Vol. 149 Issue 51443.

Dadrian, Vahakn. "The Role of the Special Organization in the Armenian Genocide During the First World War," Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia During the World Wars, ed. P. Panayi, (Oxford Press, 1993).

Dallaire, General Romeo. "Request for Protection for Informant", Facsimile to United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, to Maj. Gen. Maurice Baril, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (1/11/1994).

Davis, Stephen T., "Genocide, Despair, and Religious Hope," Genocide and Human Rights: A Philosophical Guide, ed. John K. Roth (New York, NY, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

Director of African Region State Department. "Discussion Paper Rwanda". Declassified November 18, 1998.

Donoghue, Joan. Draft Legal Analysis, Office of the Legal Adviser, Department of State (5/16/1994).

Ferroggiaro, William, ed. "The US and the Genocide in Rwanda 1994 Evidence of Inaction". National Security Archives. August 20, 2001

Gellately, Robert and Ben Kiernan, ed. The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Inwood, Brad and L.P. Gerson, ed. "The Epicurus Reader," (Hackett Publishing, 1994.)

Jehl, Douglas. "U.S. aides avoid labeling horror". New York Times. 6/10/94, Vol. 143 Issue 49723.

Krasner, Stephen D. Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland) *Foreign Policy*, No. 7. (Summer, 1972).

Lemkin, Raphaël. "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress," (Washington, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944).

Lewy, Guenter. "Revisiting the Armenian Genocide" The Middle East Quarterly, Fall 2005 Volume XII No 4.

MacKinnon, Barbara. Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues. N.p.: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004.

Memorandum from Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security, National Security Council, "Rwanda: Jamming Civilian Radio Broadcasts", May 5, 1994.

National Intelligence Daily, Saturday, April 23, 1994: http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB117/Rw34.pdf

Packard, Gabriel. RWANDA*:* CENSUS FINDS 937,000 DIED IN GENOCIDE. New York Amsterdam News, 4/8/2004, Vol. 95 Issue 15.

Power, Samantha. "Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States Let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen". Atlantic Monthly. September 2001, Vol. 288 Issue 2.

Rauch, Jonathan. **"**NOW IS THE TIME TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT RWANDA". National Journal; 4/21/2001, Vol. 33 Issue 16.

Roth, John K., ed. Genocide and Human Rights: A Philosophical Guide. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.

Rubenstein, Richard L. "After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism" (Indianapolis, 1966.)

Sommers, Christina and Fred Sommers. Vice and Vitrue in Everyday Life: Introductory Readings in Ethics. N.p.: Thomson and Wadsworth, 2004.

STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA

Stein, Lisa and Kevin Whitelaw. "AN EYE BLIND TO MURDER," U.S News and World Report, 4/12/2004, Vol. 136, Issue 12.

US Department of State, cable number 099440, to US Mission to the United Nations, New York, "Talking Points for UNAMIR Withdrawal" (4/15/1994).

Valentino, Benjamin A., Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004.

White House Press Release. “President’s Remarks to the Press Pool” (4/8/1994).

http://www.parascope.com/articles/1296/gamble.htm