# Holocaust and Genocide in the Wake of the Twin Towers

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The crime of Genocide was defined by the Genocide Convention of 1948/9, and there is no need to go again into the argument about the exact meaning of the definition. It is worth remembering that all our definitions are but abstractions from reality, and that reality is much more complicated than all our attempts at definition may be. The Convention was not the result of a carefully weighed academic endeavor – rather, it was the result of Great Power horse-trading, between the West led by the US, and the USSR. It is therefore no wonder that serious problems arise. However, academics have been unable to arrive at an agreed definition, and so the inadequate and faulty UN definition is what we have, and there is not much point in rehearsing the arguments about a better one. Objecting and protesting, we use the faulty instrument that we have.

It is clear that genocides have been prevalent in the culture of the last hundred years. Full-blown genocides, in accordance with the Convention's definition have occurred, in the 20th century, in what is now Namibia (the Herreros, in 1905-6), in what is now Tanzania (Mau-Mau, 1912); the genocide of the Armenians in Ottoman Turkey (1915-1923) followed; then the Assyrians were murdered in Irak, while the attempted genocide of the Kurds continues there to this day. During World War II, the Nazis committed three clear genocides: of the Jews (Holocaust), the Gypsies (Roma – the *parrajmos*), and the Poles. After 1945, there followed the auto-genocide of the Khmer, and the genocide of the Cham, in Kampuchea, and most important of all, the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994, followed by genocidal murders in the Central Africa continuing to this day (2002). There is no sufficient research as yet about parallel events in past centuries, but it is more than likely that we will find that genocide is not peculiar to the 20th century.

Genocidal murders can perhaps be defined as mass murders that did not reach the level of a planned and/or successful attempt to murder most or all members of a targeted group (again, according to the Genocide Convention's definition), eliminate the group as such or remove it from its home to the accompaniment of mass murder. Genocidal murders have many or most of the characteristics of a genocide in the making (Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor). It is further suggested that the danger of genocides and genocidal murders continues to haunt us ( e.g. Sudan, Burundi, Myanmar, Congo, Kurdistan, and elsewhere).

There would seem to be a continuum of human action, endemic in the make-up of the human psyche in its historical development, that leads to mutual killing, often massive in nature. Humans are the only mammals that kill each other in such numbers. As with other mammals, human groups struggle for control and/or monopoly of control over territory, power within territory, and the exclusion of other human groups. I suggest we adopt Rudolph Rummel's definition of 'democide' as an overall term for mass murders. The continuum extends from mass murders for political (or 'class') reasons, through ethnic or national or religious conflicts to genocide, with international terror an additional factor to be taken into account. The extreme form of genocide, so far, appears to have been the genocide of the Jews ('Holocaust', 'Shoah') – conceived (and developed in stages) by the perpetrators to become total, global and purely ideological (in the Marxist sense, i.e. only partly or indirectly related to pragmatic issues). However, while the Holocaust was unprecedented in having these elements, it itself was a precedent, and in Rwanda, for instance, total annihilation of the targeted group – the Tutsi – was aimed at. All these forms of mass destruction, therefore, are not unique, i.e. they can be (and in fact are) repeated in various forms.

Within this complex it would be useful to look at the links and differences between four main contemporary forms: a) genocide and genocidal murders; b) ethnic, national, religio-ethnic struggles; c) murders based on political/class ideologies and practices (politicide); d) fundamentalism resulting in terrorism.

Genocides and mass political murders occur, it is suggested, when one group has overwhelming power and uses that power against a targeted group that has little or no power. Ethnic or national conflicts occur when there is an approximate balance in political and military power, so that one side is unable to impose its solution on the other. When such an imposed solution becomes possible, the danger of such a conflict turning into a genocidal situation appear. Politicide often accompanies genocidal murders, and is of course the result of serious social and political crises in unstable societies. It is worth repeating Rummel's conclusion from his detailed examination of such cases that both genocides and politicides are very rare in and between democracies, and occur mostly in authoriarian, illiberal, dictatorial and totalitarian societies.

International fundamentalist terrorism occurs when a radical minority within a non-radical but downtrodden, disillusioned and desperate majority develops a utopian, messianic solution to be achieved by the total elimination of the real or perceived enemy. It will usually, in part, become an ethnic/national conflict and, mainly, a genocidal threat, when the ideology is universalistic. Politicide appears always to accompany radical fundamentalism. Holocaust-like events then become possible.

Let me first of all address the last point: religious or pseudo-religious fundamentalist radicalism turning into international terrorism. The more universalistic the fundamentalist ideology, the more radical the murder campaign. Thus, I would argue, that Nazism and communism were (are) fundamentalist, pseudo-religious ideologies seeking world domination, just as is the current Islamicist ideology. Conversely, Hindu fundamentalism seeks control of the Indian sub-continent, not the world; Jewish fundamentalism endangers a particular ethno-religious community, namely the Jews, and Israel, not the world; Christian fundamentalism, which in principle also seeks world domination, is split and politically ineffective, also it is centered in a prosperous environment, hence the danger, though it is there, is less apparent.

Analysis of radical fundamentalism is essential, but here only a very brief outline can be attempted. It should be emphasized that in all three cases – National Socialism, imperialistic Stalinist communism, and present-day radical Islamicism – we are dealing with movements that tend to organize into political or quasi-political bodies that aim at controlling the state machinery. Basically, all three of them were/are anti-statist. Nazism tried to abolish the Prussian bureaucratic state and create a folk society ('Volksgemeinschaft') that, through the Party would control the state; in the end, what was aimed at was not a national, but a racist state that would abolish all stable legal procedures, in fact would exercise an anti-normative norm. With all the very major differences between Nazism and Soviet communism, in these matters there is an exact parallel: the Party controlled the State, and no independent law was permitted to exist. In the case of Islamicist fundamentalism, the aim is, quite explicitly, to abolish the existing Arab national states in favor of a world-Islamic state guided by religious law as interpreted by the radicals. No secular, or independent, legal structure will be permissible. In all three cases, the desire for world control was/is clearly and explicitly enunciated. All three movements/ideologies engaged and engage in 'terror' – murdering unarmed civilians in order to destroy the attacked societies. The first two perpetrated genocides and genocidal murders, as well as extensive politicides, whereas the third uses genocidal language in its propaganda which is clearly reminiscent of the language used by the two previous ones. It is worth remembering that one should listen carefully to language – it must be assumed  that people actually believe in what they are saying. The weakening and ultimate defeat of the West is, in their view, guaranteed by the tremendous increase in the Moslem population in Europe (estimated at 12 million at least), and the economic crisis which is the result of the fundamentalist terror against the US. Genocidal language and a desire to conquer the world in order to realize a utopian dream must perforce lead to mass murder – politicide and genocide. One can generalize: all universal utopias aiming at control of the world kill; radical universalist utopias kill radically.

The continuum between these four forms of democide is obvious.  The border-lines between them are fluid, and there are gray areas where they merge, yet there are certain differences between them, and they may require different strategies of fighting them.

The solution to genocide is, obviously, its prevention. Once it breaks out it is usually too late. Ideally, a combination of political and economic measures taken by international bodies, or even unilaterally by a great Power, could conceivably prevent a genocide. In recent times no early warning was really necessary; such warnings have been  and are given in abundance by the media and the political world, and Rwanda again is an obvious example. Today there exist, especially in the US and in Western Europe, groups and organizations using sophisticated methods to indicate where the dangers lie and where an outbreak can be expected.

 Ultimately, again ideally, an international armed intervention force should be established as a tool of the last resort to prevent genocides and genocidal murders (this has been very widely discussed, and a proposal by Sir Brian Urquhart to the UN has been submitted, and in effect rejected). This could be a deterrent when one deals with countries other than the great Powers. When, however, a great Power is itself engaged on such murderous actions (Russia in Chechnya, the US in Vietnam), armed intervention is, in the real world, impossible, and the economic, propagandist- educational, and political means alluded to above must be resorted to. The aim must be, in my view, to create an international atmosphere where a consensus exists to solve conflicts without resort to mass murder. It should be realized that this is a long-term process, which however must be begun so that some results, if not completely sastifactory ones, can be reached within a generation or two.

The solution to ethnic and national conflicts is, obviously, compromise. As long as the conflict persists, because neither side can overpower the other, it is extremely difficult to arrive at a compromise, precisely because of the hope entertained by the sides in the conflict that they may yet dictate the solution to the other. Hence, in principle, a solution is possible, in the main, either because both sides become literally exhausted and prefer a compromise to victory; or, as a result of outside intervention that forces them to negotiate; or, as some very optimistic observers argue, when one manages to convince leading personalities to enter into negotiations. One could argue that in the case of Cyprus, for instance, where a possible negotiated solution may be possible within the foreseeable future, pressure from the outside, exhaustion on the part of the warring parties, and willingness by the leaders to negotiate may actually have combined. Macedonia may possibly be, with a great deal of luck, another case for an optimistic evaluation. This is not the situation in the Middle East, Sri Lanka and Kashmir. In all these three cases, it seems that outside intervention in the form of political and economic pressure is inevitable if the parties are to be brought to the negotiating table.

A solution to international radical fundamentalist terror is possible by a combination of the use of propaganda, socio-economic and political measures, and force. The American concentration on force alone (justified though force certainly is) will, as many observers have noted by now, not solve the problem by itself. Bin Ladens and Al-Qaedas will reappear even if the present one disappears.

Islamicist fundamentalism feeds on a number of factors: deep despair of the possibility to lead half-way decent lives because of a permanent economic and social crisis is one such factor. The reason for the crisis in Moslem countries is not globalization or Western economic imperialism, but the reluctance to accept the conditions which enabled the West to become dominant: social change, democratization, secularization – i.e. separation between religion and politics. The lack of response of these societies to these challenges meant not only economic backwardness, but a tremendous and continuing demographic explosion that in its turn militates against change. A second factor, linked with the first, is the prevalent religious ideology, which never recognized the possibility of a non-religious state: Islam is in principle a God-given way of life that includes politics and social and economic organization in its God-given law. A change in Islamic perceptions of reality has been advocated by moderate Moslems, but rejected by the overwhelming majority. Radical Islam declares that the aim must be to rule the world, not just the Islamic countries, in an absolutist manner, according to Islamic law as given in the 7th century and interpreted in the Middle Ages. All resistance against Islam must be broken by force. Society will then be ruled not according to democratic or even nationalist principles – radical Islamicists are violently opposed to the existing Arab national states, such as Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Irak, etc. – but a religious leadership. Iran, in this way, is an excellent example of what Islamicists are aiming at. A third factor is the feeling of fury at Western superiority and the attending superciliousness of Westerners. The knowledge that Islam was a forward-looking civilization that made the rise of Europe possible is compared to the present sorry state of Moslem countries. Revolutionary change is therefore indicated.

Islamicist fundamentalism is as much of a danger to world civiliation as National Socialism and Communism were some decades ago. Possible counter-measures should include the mobilization of moderate Moslems to spearhead a propaganda campaign against fundamentalism on the model of Radio Free Europe, or the Voice of America in the past, use of TV and radio cassettes (the Khomeini revolution in Iran was accomplished by the use of radio cassettes), and the Internet. However, this will not work without addressing the real woes of the Moslem societies. Something like a Marshall Plan policy towards the Third World may well be indicated, a policy that will provide hope for the masses of people on the one hand, and create new markets by raising the consuming power on the other hand – and thus be in the enlightened self-interest of a globalized economy. The example of the post-war rise of the Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese economies and societies, and the present-day efforts of communist China to follow the same path may be emulated. Any propaganda campaign, again, must be directed, and not in the last instance, toward the US and Europe, too, with the large Islamic populations of Europe, among others, as a target audience.

Think tanks are necessary to develop, accept or reject, such or similar proposals. It is suggested that the more think and the less tank they are, the better. Think tanks can organize to influence governments – not an easy task by any means, but a possible one in democratic societies. A will for change must be there to achieve anything at all, and international organizations are needed that will form bridges between cultures and civilizations. Will power and organization can achieve results; if they do not, humanity will be in dire straits.