CHAPTER 2

REMEMBERING RWANDA

Rwanda Ten Years after the Genocide: Some Reminders of the International Response to the Crisis

Gerald Caplan
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AROUND THE WORLD, commemorations of the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide are about to be launched. The central actors responsible for allowing Hutu extremists to perpetrate the genocide are well known: the government of France, the United Nations Security Council led by the USA with British backing, the UN Secretariat, the government of Belgium, and, by no means least, the Roman Catholic Church. The Organisation of African Unity also refused to condemn the genocidaires and proved to be largely irrelevant throughout the crisis. As a consequence of these acts of commission and omission, 800,000 Tutsi and thousands of moderate Hutu were murdered in a period of 100 days. Reviewing the events of those days, I find myself thinking not once but repeatedly: It's almost impossible to believe that any of this actually happened. The following is a selection of some of those events. They, and the lessons they suggest, are worth bearing in mind as we who refuse to let the memory of the genocide dissipate begin our commemorations of the 10th anniversary.

1. Time and again in the months prior to and during the genocide, the Commander of the UN military mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR) pleaded with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York to expand his very limited mandate. The only time his request was ever approved was in the days immediately after the Rwandan president's plane was shot down, triggering the genocide. UNAMIR was then authorised to exceed its narrow mandate exclusively for the purpose of helping to evacuate foreign nationals, mainly Westerners, from the country. Never was such flexibility granted to protect Rwandans.

2. Heavily armed Western troops began materialising at Kigali airport within hours to evacuate their nationals. Beyond UNAMIR's 2,500 peacekeepers, these included 500 Belgian para-commandos, 450 French and 80 Italian troops

from parachute regiments, another 500 Belgian para-commandos on stand-by in Kenya, 250 US Rangers on stand-by in Burundi, and 800 more French troops on stand-by in the region. None made any attempt to protect Rwandans at risk. Besides Western nationals, French troops evacuated a number of well-known leaders of the extremist Hutu Power movement, including the wife of the murdered president and her family. All non-UNAMIR troops left within days, immediately after their evacuation mission was completed.

3. From the beginning of the genocide to its end, no government or organisation other than NGOs formally described events in Rwanda as a genocide.

4. From beginning to end, all governments and official bodies continued to recognise the genocidaire government as the legitimate government of Rwanda.

5. The months of the genocide happened to coincide with Rwanda's turn to fill one of the non-permanent seats on the Security Council. Throughout those three months, the representative of the government executing the genocide continued to take that seat and participate in all deliberations, including discussions on Rwanda.

6. Almost all official bodies remained neutral as between the genocidaires and the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the mostly Tutsi rebels in the civil war that was being fought at the same time as the genocide. As if they were morally equivalent groups, both the genocidaire government and those fighting to end the genocide were called upon by the UN, the Organisation of African Unity and others to agree to a ceasefire. They did not call on the genocidaires to stop the genocide. Had the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) agreed to a ceasefire, the scale of the genocide behind government lines would have been even greater.

7. Only days after the genocide began, 2,500 Tutsi as well as Hutu opposition politicians crowded into a Kigali school known as ETO, where Belgian UN troops were billeted; at least 400 of them were children. They were seeking protection against menacing militia and government soldiers outside the compound. In the midst of the stand-off, the Belgian soldiers were ordered to depart ETO to assist in evacuating foreign nationals from the country. They did so abruptly, making no arrangements whatever for the protection of those they were safeguarding. As they moved out, the killers moved in. When the afternoon was over, all 2,500 civilians had been murdered.

8. After 10 Belgian UN soldiers were killed by Rwandan government troops the day after the Rwandan president's plane was shot down, Belgium withdrew all its troops from the UN mission. So that Belgium would not alone be blamed for scuttling UNAMIR, its government then strenuously lobbied the UN to disband the mission in its entirety.

9. Two weeks after the crisis had begun, with information about the magnitude of the genocide increasing by the day, the Security Council did come very close to shutting down UNAMIR altogether. Instead, led by the USA and the United Kingdom, it voted to decimate the mission, reducing it from 2,500 to 270.

10. After the deaths of 18 American soldiers in Somalia in October 1993, the United States decided to participate in no more UN military missions. The Clinton administration further decided that no significant UN missions were to be allowed at all, even if American troops would not be involved. Thanks mostly to the delaying tactics of the US, after 100 days of the genocide not a single reinforcement of UN troops or military supplies had reached Rwanda.

11. Bill Clinton later apologised for not doing more to stop the genocide. However, his claim that his administration had not been aware of the real situation was a lie.

12. French officials were senior advisers to both the Rwandan government and military in the years leading to the genocide, with unparalleled influence on both. Virtually until the moment the genocide began, they gave unconditional support as well as considerable arms to the Hutu elite. Throughout the 100 days and long after, French officials and officers remained hostile to the 'Anglo-Saxon' RPF, whose victory ended the genocide. To this day the French have never acknowledged their role nor apologised for it.

13. After six weeks of genocide, France, which offered no troops to the UN mission, suddenly decided to intervene in Rwanda. Within a week of the decision, Operation Turquoise was able to deploy 2,500 men with 100 armoured personnel carriers, ten helicopters, a battery of 120 mm mortars, four Jaguar fighter bombers, and eight Mirage fighters and reconnaissance planes – all for an ostensibly humanitarian operation. The French forces created a safe haven in the southwest of the country, which provided sanctuary not only to fortunate Tutsi but also to many leading Rwandan government and military officials as well as large numbers of soldiers and militia – the very Hutu Power militants who had organised and carried out the genocide. Not a single person was arrested by France for crimes against humanity. All were allowed to escape across the border into then-Zaire, entirely unrepentant and often still armed. Predictably, these genocidaires were soon launching murderous excursions back into Rwanda, beginning a cycle that led to the subsequent bloody conflict that destabilises central Africa still.

14. France long remained hostile to the post-genocide government in Rwanda and sympathetic to the previous French-speaking Hutu regime. Many of the leaders of the new government were from English-speaking Uganda and were considered the 'Anglo-Saxon' enemy by the French government. In November 1994, barely four months after the end of the genocide, Rwanda was deliberately excluded from the annual Franco-African summit hosted by France. Zaire's President Mobutu, who had been ostracised by the French government in recent years, was invited, as was Robert Mugabe, the anglophone president of anglophone Zimbabwe.

15. The Roman Catholic Church in Rwanda was the largest and most influential denomination in the country, with intimate ties to the government at all

levels. It failed to denounce the government's explicit ethnic foundations, failed to denounce its increasing use of violence against Tutsi, failed to denounce or even name the genocide, failed to apologise for the many clergy who aided and abetted the genocidaires, and to this day has never apologised for its overall role. The Pope has refused to apologise on behalf of the church as a whole.

16. Within months of the end of the genocide, relief workers and representatives of the international community in Rwanda were telling Rwandans they must 'Quit dwelling on the past and concentrate on rebuilding for the future' and insisting that 'Yes, the genocide happened, but it's time to get over it and move on.'

17. George W. Bush, during the campaign for the 2000 Republican presidential nomination, was asked by a TV interviewer what he would do as president if, 'God forbid, another Rwanda' should take place. He replied: 'We should not send our troops to stop ethnic cleansing and genocide outside our own strategic interest. I would not send US troops into Rwanda.'

18. The new Rwanda Patriotic Front government inherited a debt of close to $1 billion, some of it incurred by the previous government in genocide preparations – expanding its army and militias and buying arms. After the genocide, the RPF was obligated to repay in full the country's debt to its Western lenders.

19. Following the genocide, the World Bank was left with a $160 million programme of aid to Rwanda that it had extended to the previous government. . Even though the new government was penniless, the bank refused to activate that sum until the new government paid $9 million in interest incurred by its predecessor. A bank official told a UN representative: 'After all, we are a commercial enterprise and have to adhere to our regulations. ' The sum was eventually paid by some donors.

20. In the first nine months after the genocide, the donor community provided $1.4 billion in aid to the Hutu refugee camps in eastern Zaire and Tanzania. Since, as was universally known, genocidaires had taken over the camps, a good part of these funds went to feed and shelter them and to fund their retraining and rearming as they planned cross-border raids back into Rwanda. For Rwanda itself, while donor funds for reconstruction were generously pledged, in the first year after the genocide only $68 million was actually disbursed. To this day, Rwanda has never received reparations remotely commensurate with the damage that the international community had failed to prevent.

21. Once the genocide ended, the UN military mission was finally expanded. As UNAMIR II, it remained in Rwanda for almost two more years as a peacekeeping force, costing the UN $15 million a month. But the main challenge had become less one of peacekeeping and more one of peace-building –

the reconstruction of a totally devastated country. UNAMIR had the equipment, the skills and the will to play a major role in reviving the country's shattered structures. What it lacked was the mandate and modest funding from the Security Council to perform such a role. But UN headquarters never sought such authorisation from the Security Council, nor did the council ever initiate such a move.

22. When a UN mission leaves a country, it follows a formula to determine how much of its equipment should be left behind. UNAMIR owned much desperately needed equipment, from computers to vehicles to furniture. When the mission wrapped up in April 1996, both UN officials in Kigali and members of the Security Council urged UN headquarters to interpret the formula with maximum generosity and flexibility; they believed that 80 per cent of all non-lethal equipment should remain in Rwanda. UN headquarters announced that 93 per cent of all equipment was to be transported out of the country for storage or use elsewhere. After much pressure was applied, the UN bureaucracy decreed finally that 62 per cent of all equipment be removed.

23. So far as is known, not a single person in any government or in the UN has ever been fired or held accountable for failing to intervene in the genocide. In fact, the opposite is true. Some careers flourished in the aftermath. Several of the main actors were actually promoted. We can consider this the globalisation of impunity.

24. Despite the unanimity of every major study undertaken and in the face of the testimonies of survivors and the first-hand accounts of international humanitarian workers in Rwanda at the time, denial of the genocide persists. Deniers include Hutu Power advocates, many of them still active in Western countries, as well as lawyers and investigators working for Hutu clients at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Denying the Rwandan genocide is the moral equivalent of denying the Holocaust.

Why We Must Never Forget the Rwandan Genocide

Gerald Caplan
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THOSE OF US WHO are preoccupied, even obsessed, with commemorating in 2004 the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide are often taken aback when we are asked what all the fuss is about. After all, just today I received from the Holocaust Centre of Toronto an invitation to join in commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary. Not the entire Holocaust, just the terrible Hungarian chapter. Yet memorialising the genocide in Rwanda is never taken for granted in the same way.

Is it not already ancient history? Are there not all kinds of human catastrophes that no one much bothers with? Did it not take place in faraway Africa, in an obscure country few people could find on a map? Was it not just another case of Africans killing Africans? What does it have to do with us, anyway?

These questions deserve answers, not least because some are entirely legitimate. Above all, it is fundamentally true that there would have been no genocide had some Rwandans not decided for their own selfish reasons to exterminate many other Rwandans. But once this truth is acknowledged, a powerful case for remembering Rwanda remains, and needs to be made.

The Responsibility to Remember

First, Rwanda was not just another ugly event in human history. Virtually all students of the subject agree that what happened over 100 days from April to July 1994 constituted one of the purest manifestations of genocide in our time, meeting all the criteria set down in the 1948 Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. Genocide experts debate whether Cambodia or Srebrenica or Burundi were 'authentic' genocides; like the Holocaust and (except for the Turkish government and its apologists) the Armenian genocide of 1915, no one disagrees about Rwanda. And since genocide is universally seen as the crime of crimes, an attack not just on the actual victims but on all humanity, by definition it needs to be remembered and memorialised.

Second, it was not just another case of Africans killing Africans, or, as some clueless reporters enjoyed writing, of Hutu killing Tutsi and Tutsi killing Hutu (or Hutsi and Tutu, for all they knew or cared). The Rwandan genocide was a deliberate conspiratorial operation planned, organised and executed by a small, sophisticated, highly organised group of greedy Hutu extremists who believed their self-interest would be enhanced if every one of Rwanda's one

million Tutsi were annihilated. They came frighteningly close to total success.

Third, the West has played a central role in Rwanda over the past century. Just as no person is an island and there is no such thing as a self-made man, so every nation is the synthesis of internal and external influences. This is particularly true of nations that have been colonies, where imperial forces have played a defining role. To its everlasting misfortune, Rwanda is the quintessential example of this reality. The central dynamic of Rwandan history for the past 80 years, the characteristic that allowed the genocide to be carried out, was the bitter division between Hutu and Tutsi. Yet this division was largely an artefact created by the Roman Catholic Church and the Belgian colonisers.

Instead of trying to unite all the people they found in Rwanda 100 years ago, Catholic missionaries invented an entire phoney pedigree that irreconcilably divided Rwandans into superior Tutsi and inferior Hutu. When the Belgians were given control of the country following the First World War, this contrived hierarchy served their interests well, and they proceeded to institutionalise what amounted to a racist ideology. At independence in the early 1960s, this pyramid was turned on its head, and for the next 40 years Rwanda was run as a racist Hutu dictatorship. None of this would have happened without the church and the Belgians.

The Culprits

Last, but hardly least, the 1994 genocide could have been prevented in whole or in part by some of the same external forces that shaped the country's tragic destiny. But without exception, every outside agency with the capacity to intervene failed to do so. My own list of culprits, in order of responsibility, is as follows:

- The government of France
- The Roman Catholic Church
- The government of the United States
- The government of Belgium
- The government of Britain
- The UN Secretariat.

I name the French and the church first since they both had the influence to deter the genocide plotters from launching the genocide in the first place. Rwanda was the most Christianised country in Africa and the Roman Catholics were far and away the largest Christian denomination. Catholicism was virtually the official state religion. Catholic officials had enormous influence at both the elite and the grassroots level, which they consistently failed to use to protest against the government's overtly racist policies and practices. Indeed, the church gave the government moral authority. Once the genocide began, Catholic leaders in the main refused to condemn the government, never used the word genocide, and many individual priests and nuns actually aided the genocidaires.

Rwanda was a French-speaking country, and France replaced Belgium as the key foreign presence. When the RPF, a rebel group of English-speaking Tutsi refugees from Uganda, invaded Rwanda in 1990, the French military flew in to save the day for the Hutu government. For the following several years, right to the very moment the genocide began, French officials had enormous influence with both the Rwandan government and army. They failed completely to use that leverage to insist that the government curtail its racist policies and propaganda, stop the increasing massacres, end the widespread human rights abuses, and disband the death squads and death lists.

Two months after the genocide began, a French intervention force created a safe haven in the southwest of the country through which they allowed genocidaire leaders and killers, fleeing from the advancing RPF, to escape across the border into Zaire. From Zaire they began an insurgency back into Rwanda with the purpose of 'finishing the job'. Eventually this led to the Rwandans invading Zaire/Congo to suppress the insurgency, which in turn soon led to the vicious wars in the Congo and the subsequent appalling cost in human lives throughout eastern Congo.

Once the genocide was launched after 6 April 1994, the American government, steadfastly backed by the British government, were primarily responsible for the failure of the UN Security Council to reinforce its puny mission to Rwanda. Under no circumstances were these governments prepared to budge. The commander of the UN force – UNAMIR – repeatedly pleaded for reinforcements, and was repeatedly turned down.

Two weeks into the genocide, the Security Council voted to reduce UNAMIR from 2500 to 270 men – an act almost impossible to believe 10 years later. Six weeks into the genocide, as credible reports of hundreds of thousands of deaths became commonplace and the reality of a full-blown genocide became undeniable, the Security Council voted finally to send some 4,500 troops to Rwanda. Several contingents of African troops were put on standby, but deliberate stalling tactics by the USA and Britain meant that by the end of the genocide, when the Tutsi-led rebels were sworn in as the new government on 19 July, not a single reinforcement of soldiers or material ever reached Rwanda. This was one of the darkest moments in the history of the United Nations.

As for Belgium, notwithstanding the racist attitudes and colonial behaviour of its soldiers, their contingent was the backbone of UNAMIR. When ten Belgian soldiers were murdered by Rwandan government troops on the very first morning of the genocide, the Brussels government immediately decided to withdraw the remainder of its forces and to lobby the Security Council to suspend the entire Rwandan mission. Its motive was simple: they did not want to be seen as the sole party undermining UNAMIR. At the Security Council, of course, it found eager allies.

The role of the UN Secretariat is somewhat ambiguous. To a large extent, its

failure to support the pleas of its own UNAMIR force commander reflected its lack of capacity to cope with yet another crisis combined with its understanding that the US and Britain would not alter their intransigent positions. Still, there were many occasions when the secretariat failed to convey to the full Security Council the dire situation in Rwanda, and many opportunities when it failed to speak up publicly in the hope of influencing world opinion.

A Multitude of Betrayals

It is not far-fetched to say that the world has betrayed Rwanda countless times since its first confrontation with Europeans in the mid-1890s. This account has presented several of these betrayals before and during the genocide: by the Catholic Church, by the Belgian colonial power, by the French neo-colonial power, by the international community.

To exacerbate further this shameful record, we need to look at the past decade. First, the concept that the world owed serious reparations to a devastated Rwanda for its failure to prevent the genocide has been a total non-starter.

Second, there has been precious little accountability by the international community for its failure to prevent. The French government and the Roman Catholic Church have to this moment refused to acknowledge the slightest responsibility for their roles or to apologise for any of their gross errors of commission or omission. President Bill Clinton and Secretary-General Kofi Annan have both apologised for their failure to offer protection, but have both falsely blamed insufficient information; in fact what was lacking was not knowledge – the situation was universally understood – but political will and sufficient national interest. No one has ever quit their jobs in protest against their government's or their organisation's failure to intervene to save close to one million innocent civilian lives.

Those We Must Not Forget

Finally, the very existence of the genocide has largely disappeared from the public and media's consciousness. This is the latest betrayal. Marginalised during the genocide, Rwanda's calamity is now largely forgotten except for Rwandans themselves and small clusters of non-Rwandans who have had some connection with the country or specialise in genocide prevention. That is why I founded the Remembering Rwanda movement in July 2001. I had four targets for remembering: the innocent victims; the survivors, many of whom live in deplorable conditions with few resources to tend to their physical or psychological needs; the perpetrators, most of whom remain free and unrepentant scattered around Africa, Europe and parts of North America; and the so-called 'bystanders', the unholy sextet named earlier. Rather than being passive witnesses, as the word 'bystander' implies, all were active in their fail-

ure to intervene to stop the massacres, and all remain unaccountable to this day. It is time the Rwandan genocide is treated with the concern and attention it so grievously earned.

Towards Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Taking Stock

Eugenia Zorbas
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JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION are concepts difficult to define, let alone achieve. What may seem 'just' for a community or a country may be very unjust for the individual victim. There seems to be a tension between reconciliation, implying a kind of moral compromise, and justice in the strict, Western, prosecutorial sense it is usually used.

In the wake of violence on a societal scale, finding the right balance between justice and reconciliation, or between retribution and forgiveness, is an extremely delicate process and this is all the more so in cases of genocide. In the Great Lakes region, where today's oppressors tend to perceive themselves as yesterday's victims, justice and reconciliation become even more subjective and difficult goals.

In Rwanda, the RPF-dominated Government of National Unity is prioritising, as its name implies, the reconciliation of its citizens chiefly through a prosecutorial (trial-based) approach. However, since 1998 there has been a recognition among the highest government echelons that working with a penal and legal system that is completely overstretched – at the beginning of 2003, there were an estimated 115,000 prisoners in Rwandan jails and communal lockups (*cachots*) – will require some innovative thinking and a move away from the 'white man's' standards of justice. This is why the much talked about *gacaca* traditional conflict resolution mechanism was adapted and revived.

Moves Towards Justice – Arrests, Courts, Trials and the Legacy of Genocide

Despite the opening of a press office in Rwanda and the establishing of some important precedents in international criminal law, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda's (ICTR) contribution to justice and reconciliation within the country is very limited.

Domestically, the ICTR's work remains virtually unknown and when it is, the tribunal's reputation may have been irreparably damaged by early scandals regarding endemic corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency.

The tribunal's relationship with the government itself has been a tormented one; the ICTR's mandate covers the period of January to December 1994, during which RPF soldiers allegedly carried out several massacres. The ICTR's insistence that these crimes should be investigated led to moral outrage from

the RPF leadership, accusing the court of putting the RPF on the same level as the genocidaires.

Rwanda's national courts operate in parallel with the ICTR. From having a rumoured 10 lawyers left in the country, no equipment, damaged buildings and no money to pay their staff in 1994, the national courts had by early 2004 tried upwards of 5,500 individuals. Though many of the early trials were severely flawed, the national legal system's performance arguably did more to restore some kind of confidence that (some) perpetrators were being brought to trial – by comparison, the ICTR and its hundreds of staff and multi-million dollar annual budgets had at the beginning of 2004 completed 18 cases and arrested 66 individuals.

Even at this accelerated pace, it was thought that the Rwandan formal judicial system would require more than a century to process the hundred thousand plus detainees. The adaptation of a traditional, grassroots conflict resolution mechanism – the *gacaca* tribunals – represents an affordable and expedient alternative. After a pilot phase, deemed a success by the government, *gacaca* courts are due to open across the country in 2004.

Innovative Thinking – Justice and Reconciliation Combined through the Gacaca Courts

The goal of *gacaca* is to promote reconciliation through providing a platform for victims to express themselves, encouraging acknowledgements and apologies from the perpetrators, facilitating the coming together of both victims and perpetrators every week on the grass. *Gacaca* courts are also empowered to hand down sentences that include community work schemes that can directly benefit the most destitute families of victims. While *gacaca* is a potential source of 'truth' on how the genocide was implemented, its provisions for confessions and guilt pleas represent one of *gacaca* 's most cited shortcomings.

Under these provisions, if someone confesses before being denounced, he or she is liable for a substantial decrease in the length of the sentence. Importantly, confessions are only acceptable if they include the incrimination of one's co-conspirators.

Some argue that this system of confessions creates rife conditions for vendetta-settling. Others estimate that an additional 200,000 people could see themselves imprisoned for genocide-related crimes. Others still say that intimidation of potential witnesses is widespread in the countryside in particular, where perpetrators presumably far outnumber survivors. Lastly, participation in *gacaca* is mandatory, implying that subsistence farmers and petty traders must give up a day of labour per week (on average) with no compensation in cash or kind; this mandatory character has fomented some resentment about *gacaca* .

Despite what may seem like insurmountable problems, *gacaca* represents the

only workable solution for bringing those responsible for atrocities to trial promptly. It is difficult to judge the public perception of the *gacaca* tribunals. Presumably, Rwanda's tens of thousands of prisoners would favour a system that would help speed up their hearings. Also presumably, survivors would want to see perpetrators punished, and in the spirit of 'restorative' justice, may welcome replacing long prison sentences with more useful community work schemes. Having said that, the genocide survivor organisations remain extremely apprehensive of *gacaca* .

The real test will be when the tribunals begin working nationwide this year. If judges are incompetent or biased, if communities conspire to silence a witness, or if *gacaca* is used as a means to settle scores, neither justice nor reconciliation will be served.

Other Measures Promoting Reconciliation: the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC)

Since its inception in 1999, the NURC has organised conferences and workshops on the theme of unity and reconciliation, culminating in two national summits, where Rwandans from all levels of society were represented. The NURC has also held workshops for segments of the population attending 'civic re-education' or 'solidarity' camps (ingandos) – such as provisionally released prisoners and demobilised soldiers (from the national army as well as from former Armed Forces of Rwanda (FAR) and Interahamwe combatants repatriated from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)). Despite the NURC's all-encompassing mandate, it is still perceived as being an instrument of the central authorities and as being too 'vertical' in its activities, not doing enough grassroots work on 'the hills'.

Collective Memory

Monuments and memorials are institutional embodiments of collective memory and as such, part of the reconciliation process. In Rwanda, genocide memorials pepper the country and new ones continue to be created. Often memorials are housed in churches – sites of many group massacres. Another institution created to foster collective memory is the national day of mourning for the victims of the genocide. The month of April more generally is considered to be a month of mourning and parties or celebrations of any kind are discouraged.

It is insightful to reflect on how different groups interpret these memorials and annual mourning periods. Some Rwandans consider the national day of mourning in particular as an obstacle to unity perhaps implicitly taking the view that forgetting the past is the best way to 'move on'. But if those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, then memory may be the best safeguard against a recurrence of violence. Others see the annual periods

of mourning as a 'Tutsi affair', claiming that the commemorations are only for Tutsi victims, the moderate Hutu who perished in 1994 having been forgotten. They touch upon an important issue, to which we now turn.

Victors' Justice? Are the Hutu being Collectively Stigmatised?

There is a real danger that the RPF are, or will come to be, perceived as a party run by, and for, les Ougandais – an inner circle of anglophone Tutsi refugees born in Uganda. In light of this, and despite the official party line that all citizens of Rwanda are Banyarwanda ('not Tutsi, nor Hutu, nor Twa') and therefore equal before the law, many Hutu may feel that the justice being meted out is a form of victor's justice.

The official refusal to recognise alleged (Hutu) victims of RPF atrocities in Rwanda and eastern DRC in particular buttress such feelings. And because the national courts – and presumably this will hold true for the *gacaca* tribunals and the ICTR as well – are focusing 'punishment' on the Hutu, the judiciary's impartiality is also called into question. (Similar accusations of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia being a form of victors' justice ring true to the ears of an important proportion of Serb public opinion.)

This resentment of 'Tutsi impunity' is visible in, for example, the joke that the ICTR, whose French acronym is the TPIR, should be renamed the TPIH – le tribunal pénal international des Hutus. By leaving these allegations unresolved, the RPF leaves itself open to the possibility that political opponents will inflate the size and nature of RPF abuses.

Lastly, the unspoken assumption that all Hutu who opposed the genocide were killed in 1994, and thus that the Hutu who were in the country during those months and alive today are morally, if not legally, responsible also undermines justice and national reconciliation: can such a project succeed on the basis of such distrust?

Poverty

In 2002, Rwanda's GDP grew by 9.7 per cent, ranking it among the top three performers in sub-Saharan Africa for that year. Yet according to government figures, approximately 60 per cent of Rwandans live on less than US$1 per day and the United Nations Development Programme ranked Rwanda 162nd out of 173 countries in its 2002 Human Development Index.

It is difficult to overstate the magnitude of poverty in Rwanda. In a country where 94 per cent of the population live in rural areas, there is also a 'mental' distance between the urban elite in Kigali and the peasants 'on the hills'.

Rural Rwanda has not been actively engaged in justice and reconciliation debates – though this may change with the *gacaca* tribunals. As in South Africa, where victims of apartheid are calling for reparations for the legacy of 'economic apartheid', the most destitute genocide widows and orphans – for

whom the legacy of 1994 is also, in a very immediate sense, socio-economic – have been benefiting from the Fond National pour l'Assistance aux Rescapés du Génocide (the FARG) created in 1998.

Importantly, this assistance goes only to Tutsi, as the genocide was against the Tutsi and so they are the only ones to qualify as survivors (rescapés). This helps reinforce the perception of victors' justice, mentioned earlier, among Hutu families that may have also lost family members or had property confiscated or destroyed.

A direct economic consequence of *gacaca* , if it is successful in alleviating the burden on the penal system, will be that thousands of (Hutu) families will no longer have to struggle to feed potentially productive members of their family that have been in jail for up to ten years, with an unknown proportion of them having been falsely accused to begin with.

If grinding poverty contributed to the ease with which the peasant masses where mobilised for the genocidal project, then ensuring that rural Rwanda is not excluded from the benefits of economic growth will not only serve the obvious purpose of improving the quality of life of millions, it will also help prevent the despair, humiliation and feelings of exclusion that contribute to the cycles of violence in the Great Lakes region and to the dynamics of genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

Debating Rwanda's Histories

A telling indicator for how much Rwanda has moved towards national reconciliation is the fact that since 1994, no history lessons have been taught in Rwandan schools. There has thus been no debate in the public domain about why the 1994 genocide happened. This is important because one cannot say much about the prospects of reconciliation without first reflecting on exactly what it is that gives rise to demands for it. What motivated such large parts of the population to participate? If some were coerced into killing, why were some others such zealous, innovative and cruel killers?

The Government of National Unity's project of creating an all-inclusive Rwandan nationalism around the 'Banyarwanda' label relies on achieving a broad-based consensus among Rwandans that justice has been served. Can this be achieved without a reconciliation with history?

Conclusion

Rwandans have come a long way since 1994. Above and beyond their individual struggles with their very personal experiences of genocide, Rwandans have had to contend with periods of renewed insecurity in the north-west of the country, worrying escalations of violence in Burundi (the Rwandan 'Siamese twin'), a war in neighbouring DRC, severe deterioration of relations with Uganda, the repatriation of some two million refugees since 1994, and a

general loss of interest in the international media and the international community.

Perhaps of more immediate relevance for the 94 per cent of Rwandans who live in rural areas, pockets of droughts and food insecurity have been periodic and the very real daily struggle for survival continues unabated. In this context of grinding poverty, 'justice and reconciliation' perversely become a luxury. Projects to foster unity need to become more relevant to rural Rwandans in order to become more effective. Only then can Rwandans afford to start thinking about justice and reconciliation. The government also needs to recognise that a vibrant and independent civil society and media is not a potential threat but a sustainable, countervailing force should there be attempts to foment a new cycle of violence, for which the Great Lakes region is tragically infamous.

Safe Sanctuary? The Role of the Church in Genocide

Camille Karangwa
Pambazuka News 150, 1 April 2004

1994 WAS THE MOST tragic year in the history of Rwanda as the country experienced a genocide that swept away more than a million Tutsi. This was a carefully conceived, planned and carried out genocide, as proven by its record death toll. The world was shocked.

To this day, people still wonder what the causes of this slaughter were. Some even point at the church of Rwanda, in this instance the Catholic Church, which was then the most representative and the most influential in the country. Indeed, it represents more than 60 per cent of the population and had for a long time boasted the moral high ground, which could have been used to curb this disaster.

The question is then to know whether the church tried to make use of its influence or if, rather, it failed to fulfil its duties, as several analyses seem to confirm. As we commemorate the tenth anniversary of those tragic events, it is important to sort the events out and draw out the responsibilities of the parties. This contribution is based on personal experience as well as various investigations in this field.

As soon as they arrived in Rwanda in the 1900s, the first settlers and white missionaries found a well-structured country ruled by the Mwami. Even though the power was concentrated in the hands of the Tutsi minority, the missionaries did not deign to protest against this situation.

They even found it natural and went as far as asserting that the Tutsi were intellectually superior to the Hutus and were the only ones able to rule the country. They invented the Hamite myth that said the Tutsi were actually white men with a black skin. They developed typologies that were probably influenced by the evolutionist theories that were fashionable in those days.

The schools they opened were almost exclusively reserved for Tutsi children. They also made an obvious effort to convert to their religion numerous children from the aristocracy.

For decades, the Belgian colonial power therefore relied on the Tutsi, stock-breeders more akin to a cast than to an ethnic group, to rule the country and dominate the Hutu farmers, by far the largest group in the country.

But in the late 1950s, when the Tutsi elite started to wave claims of independence and the Mwami contemplated appealing to the United Nations, both Belgium and the church decided to defend the democratic rights of the

Hutu majority, embodied by Grégoire Kayibanda, former secretary of the bishop of Kabgayi and founder of the Party for the Promotion of the Hutu People (ParmeHutu).

The Catholic Church actively involved itself with the first Hutu revolutionaries, often former pupils of its schools, and denounced the social injustice it had once promoted. A letter from Mgr André Perraudin, then bishop of Kabgayi, which was published to mark Lent 1959, agrees in many ways with the broad outlines of the Hutu manifesto launched on 24 March 1959.

In this pastoral letter entitled 'Super Omnia Caritas', the prelate declared that the country's resources as well as its political and judicial powers were largely in the hands of people of one race only. He predicted imminent bloodshed if the situation remained unchanged.

After a referendum – carefully guided by the Belgian colonial power and the church – had installed a republic, thus exiling the last king, the Tutsi were stripped of their power, evicted from their lands and physically threatened. Hundred of thousands of them sought refuge in neighbouring countries, notably Uganda.

Throughout the next three decades, the church was perfectly aware of human rights violations but did not lift a finger. It gave its blessing to the abuses of power of the young republic and got further involved in social activities. This conniving silence was indubitably interpreted by the rulers as a sign of support.

Grégoire Kayibanda, the first president, was close to catholic circles and had clergymen among his counsellors, specifically his grace André Perraudin, who was seen as his spiritual father. The first republic displayed notorious intransigence towards the exiles and exercised undisputed power under cover of majority democracy. Instead of grasping this opportunity to reassure the royalists and the Tutsi in general, the government was driven by feelings of revenge.

Every time an attack was launched by the exiles, the Tutsi paid for it with their blood. This was the case in the years 1961–62. The president himself said that such action by the exiles endangered the lives of their brothers who remained in the country. The Catholic Church, present across the country, did nothing to stop the mass killings and went on working hand in hand with the government until it collapsed.

Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana, then an army staff officer, seized power in 1973. The church, ignoring this illegal seizure of power, gave full support to the new regime. Indeed, when the MRND, the party of the president and future grassroots of the infamous Interahamwe , was founded in 1975, some religious leaders became active members. A system of ethnically based quotas introduced by the government was also applied in some religious schools. The same racial discrimination was applied in the choice of bishops.

At no point did the church raise its voice to denounce the dictatorship of the MRND and its policy of exclusion. Those who dared to criticise it, such as Mrs

Félicula Nyiramutarambirwa and father Silvio Sindambiwe, have paid dearly for their views.

The church also took an active part in party propaganda. Certain homilies often sounded like popular meetings. After the attack of the FPR rebels in 1990, the government did a mock attack on Kigali and arbitrarily arrested thousands of Tutsi. The church again missed the opportunity to distance itself from the government.

Mass killings like those in Bugesera and Bigogwe, which were aimed at Tutsi, did not change anything. When it was time to contribute to the war effort, the church was more than eager. This connivance between the church and the state continued until the genocide and even its eruption in April 1994 did not change the position of the church. The first massacres on the morning of 7 April took place in Kigali at Remera Christus Centre where priests, seminarians on holiday and other visitors were killed.

The behaviour of these men of God in those crucial moments is revolting to say the least; some of them even handed over their own colleagues to the executioners; others refused to shelter in their parishes the refugees flocking there; and others offered to hide them – and then brought in the Interahamwe.

This was the case of the two Benedictine nuns, Consolate Mukangango and Julienne Mukabutera, who used to run the convent in Sovu and collaborated with the killers to the point where they provided them with the petrol that was to set ablaze the building where 500 Tutsi were hiding. They have recently been sentenced by a Brussels court to 15 and 12 years respectively.

The case of minister Elizaphan Ntakirutimana should not be ignored either. At more than 70 years of age, he was the minister of the Adventist Church of the Seventh Day in Mugonero, Kibuye. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda recently sentenced him to 10 years in jail. Instead of answering the cries for help of his Tutsi colleagues, who relied on his influence in the area and begged him to intervene, he sent in the militia men while he himself drove killers to different massacre sites in his own vehicle.

These are only a few examples among thousands. Indeed, other religious people are still held prisoners or are wanted by justice. Churches, once seen as sanctuaries, were turned into slaughterhouses. The churches of Nyarubuye, Cyahinda, Karama, and Kibeho have become remnants of this sad episode. Men of God, who once were seen as role models and enjoyed an indisputable moral authority, did not know how to use it to save the lives of innocents. Their silence and their participation in those fatal moments brought, in the eyes of the killers, a kind of 'acknowledgement and legitimacy' to the ignoble acts.

Priests and ministers have always been considered upright, wise and even saintly. Their attitudes clearly had an enormous influence on their congregations. The highest hierarchy, doubtlessly closer to the government, did not use its influence to bring political officials to their senses. Five weeks after the geno-

cide had started, four Catholic bishops and a few ministers of the Protestant Church published a document, which was, to say the least, half-hearted, in which they called on both parties, the then government and the RPF troops, to stop the massacres. The word genocide was not even suggested.

When the government fled the fights and settled in the centre of the country, the bishops abandoned their dioceses to follow it. They later did the same thing when, after the defeat, they scattered into Zaire, Tanzania, Cameroon ad elsewhere.

The attitude of the church at the end of the genocide was not one of great courage. Some of its members went into revisionism, others tried to cover up the crimes of their colleagues. To this day, the church as an institution has never apologised for this very serious failure.

The church at all levels, from the Vatican to the episcopal council of Rwanda, is content with saying that the crimes of some of their people have nothing to do with the church as a whole, thus seeming to ignore that these people were educated, ordained and appointed by the church.

Furthermore, those who ran towards them did so because they saw them as representatives of the church. This is not to deny the church's social and economic contribution, but here it failed seriously. Whether one admits it or not, it played an active part in the misery that has befallen Rwanda and has lost some of its credibility. Not to acknowledge this would be foolish.

Children of Rwanda: Legacy of the Genocide, the Future of Rwanda

Sara Rakita
Pambazuka News 150, 1 April 2004

RWANDA'S CHILDREN have seen the worst of humanity. Ten years after a group of politicians set in motion a genocide in an attempt to retain power, the devastating consequences for those who were left behind are unmistakable.

Traditional protective structures for children including family networks, the judicial system, and the education system were decimated. As a result, children – many of whom survived unspeakable atrocities – are still the victims of systematic human rights violations day in and day out.

Thousands have been arbitrarily arrested and denied prompt access to justice. Hundreds of thousands more living around the country have been abused, exploited for their labour, exploited for their property, or denied the right to education. Thousands have migrated to city streets in an effort to escape these abuses only to find themselves in even more precarious conditions. In the face of the daunting challenge of rebuilding a society devastated by war, poverty, and AIDS, protecting their rights has been sidelined. But this does not do Rwanda's children justice.

Those who planned and executed the genocide of 1994 violated children's rights on an unprecedented scale. Children were raped, tortured, and slaughtered along with adults in massacre after massacre around the country. Carrying their genocidal logic to its absurd conclusion, they even targeted children for killing – to exterminate the 'big rats', they said, one must also kill the 'little rats'.

Countless thousands of children were murdered in the genocide and war. Many of those who managed to escape death had feared for their own lives; they survived rape or torture, witnessed the killing of family members, hid under corpses, or saw children killing other children. Some of these children – now adolescents – say they do not care whether they live or die.

Perhaps the most devastating legacy of the genocide and war is the sheer number of children left on their own, who live in precarious conditions and are extremely vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. On Rwanda's green hills, up to 400,000 children – 10 per cent of Rwandan children – struggle to survive without one or both parents.

Children who were orphaned in the genocide or in war, children orphaned by AIDS, and children whose parents are in prison on charges of genocide, alike, are in desperate need of protection. Many Rwandans have exhibited enormous generosity in caring for orphans or other needy children.

Yet, because so many Rwandans are living in extreme poverty themselves, to some, vulnerable children are worth only their labour and their property. Foster families have taken needy children in, but some have also exploited them as domestic servants, denied them education, and unscrupulously taken over their family's land.

These children, often suffering the effects of trauma, have nowhere to turn and they know no other fate. Traditional societal networks – severely eroded by poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and, not least, the consequences of the genocide and war – have failed them.

Thousands of children have migrated to city streets to fend for themselves. There, they live in abysmal conditions, suffer poor health and hygiene, and face a near constant risk of harassment by law enforcement officials and arbitrary arrest.

As recently as February 2004, municipal authorities continued to brutally round children up by force in an effort to 'clean the streets' before heads of state came to attend the historic New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) summit. It seems the presence of unkempt street children is inconsistent with the image of the city with the newest Intercontinental Hotel. Girls living on the streets are frequently raped, sometimes even by law enforcement officials, yet few of those responsible have been prosecuted.

Although they garner less sympathy, children who took part in the genocide are also victims. Some 5,000 people were arrested on charges that they committed crimes of genocide before they reached the age of 18. Their rights were first violated when adults recruited, manipulated, or incited them to participate in atrocities, and have been violated again by the Rwandan justice system.

One boy who confessed and was convicted of genocide said he had been given a choice of killing his sister's children or being killed himself. He was 16 years old at the time. Large numbers of these children were in fact arrested unjustly.

Another boy, arrested at age 13 after the genocide, confessed to having killed in order to escape torture, although he now maintains that his confession was false. He had just witnessed other detainees being tortured at the hands of Rwandan government soldiers. His father, among others, had died as a result of torture the night before. He and a thousand others who were younger than 14 in 1994, and thus too young to be held criminally responsible under Rwandan law, were freed after being transferred from detention facilities to re-education camps in 2000 and 2001. The government had been promising to release them since 1995.

As many as 4,000 children who were between 14 and 18 years old during the genocide continued to languish in overcrowded prisons until last year, and some may still be detained. Their adolescence is gone. Despite repeated, hollow promises that their cases would be given priority within the over-burdened justice system, they have been subjected to the worst of a bad situation.

Juvenile defendants have been tried at an even slower rate than adults. Few have enjoyed the right to adequate legal counsel and other due process protections guaranteed under Rwandan and international law. A few hundred, for whom prosecutors had not conducted investigations or made case files during their years of imprisonment, were provisionally released in 2001 after their neighbours cleared them of wrongdoing in public meetings.

Ironically, now that the government has finally made some progress in dealing with the massive failures of the justice system – including organising *gacaca* courts to deal with the bulk of genocide cases and releasing most of those who had been below the age of criminal responsibility and those who confessed – it has become even harder to draw attention to the plight of young adults who remain in detention for crimes they allegedly committed as children, especially those who proclaim their innocence. 'We feel that justice has left us,' one of them said.

The international community has provided billions of dollars to assist in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Rwanda and continues to donate tens of millions of dollars each year. Yet inadequate resources have been devoted to address the desperate needs of child protection. And there have been insufficient efforts to ensure that money earmarked for the protection of children is actually used for that purpose.

The majority of Rwandan children have been victims of armed conflict. Thousands have been arbitrarily arrested and denied prompt access to justice. Hundreds of thousands more living around the country have been abused, exploited for their labour, exploited for their property, or denied the right to education. Thousands have migrated to city streets in an effort to escape these abuses only to find themselves even worse off.

Rwanda can and must do more to protect their rights. The government has embraced international standards on children's rights and has passed a strong law on child protection. But words are not enough. Ten years of promises to protect their rights has meant little in practice for vulnerable children. We must not remain complacent while so many children continue to suffer. The future of Rwanda depends on it.

Why? How? Searching for Answers in the Diaspora

Vincent Gasana
Pambazuka News 150, 1 April 2004

APRIL MARKS THE TENTH year since the genocide that left a million dead in Rwanda. There will be many acts of remembrance, public and private. Many will be intensely personal. There will be those who wish that we would all forget, that the whole thing would just go away. Many of these will be in prisons in Rwanda, Tanzania or hiding out in capitals around the world. The feelings and reactions about the date will be as varied as the individuals who dared not look away.

Much more complex is the reaction of Africans in the diaspora. For them as for many others around the world, it was difficult to know what to make of the scarcely believable horror that forced itself on their lives through television sets. The shock of what was taking place before the world's eyes froze most people's analytical faculties. In some sense, the whole world participated in the genocide in Rwanda. Thanks to the miracle of television, we all went along as spectators. Unwilling, reluctant spectators, horrified and yet gripped by the terrifying depths to which human souls could sink. As people watched helplessly, representative governments, chiefly Great Britain, the United States and of course France, worked overtime to ensure that what was happening in Rwanda was not called genocide, because then they would have been obliged to intervene. For them this technicality was all-important.

And so a more convenient, comforting description gained currency in newsrooms. The world was informed that what was taking place in Rwanda was 'tribal killings'. It was an Old Faithful that never fails to satisfy the questions what and why whenever a conflict in Africa degenerates to such an appalling extent that it forces itself on the attention of a wider world that would rather focus its attentions elsewhere. For most people watching, this line provided some comfort in that it at least provided a context into which they could put the abominable crimes they were being forced to witness.

The line provided a way in which they could distance themselves from what was being done. Such savagery could have nothing to do with them. It could only be done by that 'other', the 'other' that did not have their sensibilities.

The irony is almost chilling; this is how the organisers of the genocide spoke of their eventual victims. The Batutsi were 'snakes' (Rwandans' horror of snakes should be understood in a biblical sense: an insidious and perfidious killer) that not only could but should be mercilessly destroyed. They were not

to be thought of like other people, they were different, they were the other. Upwards of 300,000 children were killed in the genocide, although 'kill' is too kind and innocuous a word for how their young lives were ended before they had hardly begun. The leaders of the genocide simply put the rhetorical question to the Bahutu population, 'When you hunt for a snake, do you spare its young?' Such reasoning was designed to make even infanticide acceptable.

For Africans in the diaspora, there could be no such easy comforts. The people committing such unspeakable crimes were no aliens that could be disowned, they were just like them. Diaspora Africans could not distance themselves from the perpetrators of the genocide by seeing them as the other – the other that were not like them, the other that were capable of such inhumanity that they themselves found so abhorrent. They had to endure that terrible unease that must come with witnessing a human being just like you descend into such depths of inhumanity that could not be imagined.

The dictionary description of the word 'empathy' is the power to enter into the feeling and spirit of others. The trouble with empathy is that while it leads one to identify and wish to protect and comfort the victim, it cannot protect itself from the horror of the knowledge that the perpetrator is a human being just like oneself. How could the minds and hearts that could just as easily be theirs, not only perpetrate, or even contemplate such an abomination? How could the eyes that could easily be theirs bear to look upon such evil?

As it should have done, the Rwandan genocide challenged the assumptions for the basis of our own humanity. If a general observation can be made about how Africans in the diaspora responded to this most profound and personal of challenges, it is that above and beyond the abhorrence that gripped every decent human being, they felt it incumbent upon them to help in some way. And many did. In Britain, a number of organisations both large and small collected money and material for Rwanda, long before the call to respond to the crisis begun to be heard commonly in the mainstream.

A number of individuals organised fund-raising events. This was particularly true of those in the media. A number of well-known professionals exploited their celebrity status and managed to bring together a number of pop stars and other entertainers for fundraising events. The speed with which this was done was surprisingly impressive and for the few Rwandans then living in the United Kingdom (UK) profoundly touching.

The diaspora community in the UK is relatively small, powerless and lacks any real organised unity. It was for instance notable that while they were organising events for Rwanda, holding meetings, talks and seminars about Rwanda, neither the individuals nor the organisations involved had any awareness that there existed a Rwandan community in their midst.

While they talked of the need to show support and solidarity with their Rwandan brethren, they had no idea that they could share these feelings and

deliver these messages face to face in the same city. Conversely, the tiny Rwandan community in the UK stoically continued to plough a lonely furrow, doing all it could to support people back home. The community never realised that less than three-quarters of an hour's drive away, people who thought of them as brothers and sisters were almost desperate for an opportunity to help. With this state of affairs it was therefore most impressive that so many were galvanised into action so quickly and so effectively.

There was, however, another side to this general picture. In Britain, after the initial shock of the first images from Rwanda, one of the determining factors in black people's response to the harrowing events in Rwanda was the extent of their identification with Africans in Africa and Africa itself. This identification or lack of it is in turn influenced by their respective backgrounds. The majority of people of African descent in the West are descendants of Africans that were forcibly removed from Africa during the slave trade.

From the moment of capture, these Africans were no longer treated as human beings. Once in the Americas or the Caribbean, those that survived the slave ships were soon deprived of everything that any human being takes for granted. They were stripped of their identity, even their names were take away and replaced with those of the slave owners. 'Forget you are African, remember you are black' was drummed into their beings, often with whips. To be African was to be a person with a heritage, a family, a name. It was to belong. To be black was to be a subspecies, a beast of burden. For good measure, the idea of Africa was depicted as a dark primitive place from which the slaves should be grateful to have been delivered.

Over centuries, this notion has been burned into the psyche of many people of African descent. It has lain dormant ready to be triggered by any occurrence or happening that might lead to self-awareness or self-analysis. It is an enduring intellectual and psychological war in which many diaspora African scholars and activists have been engaged for centuries. For many black people whose view of Africa and Africans have been shaped by this outlook, the Rwandan genocide, like other conflicts in Africa, are no more than the expected atavistic struggles in a modern age. This was a view held by a large minority within the African diaspora.

It is a view that has been termed 'the internalisation of racism' by informed opinion within the African diaspora. Such thinking, or perhaps more accurately, such feelings were by no means restricted to diaspora Africans whose ancestors had gone through the slave trade. While they are burdened by what has been called a 'slave mentality', many Africans still on the continent or who have relatively recently become part of the African diaspora, can be said to be burdened with a similar mentality, which we may term a 'colonial mentality'.

And this too came to the fore during the genocide. A veteran journalist of Cameroonian origin, whom it might be unfair to name, was interviewed by

one of the major television news networks and his responses were revealing. He was offended by events in Rwanda and Burundi, he said, because they were responsible for perpetuating Africa's image in the West as savage and uncivilised. He irritably opined that these countries should refrain from making the rest of the continent look bad.

A million people had been killed in ways that would defy the most depraved imagination and yet for this senior African journalist, the deepest injury was to the image of Africa, the deepest worry, withdrawal of approval from the West. His was by no means a minority view. The former Secretary General to the United Nations Boutros Ghali was clearly of the same mind, when he visited Rwanda and complained of the smell from the dead. It is a view shared by Africans of a certain generation for whom the West's view of itself as the arbiter of civilisation has become a deeply ingrained belief. For them Africa is indeed the 'Dark Continent'.

Small Pan-African groups on the fringe in London had anticipated these feelings and had begun to rail against them long before they had been expressed in response to the genocide. For them the genocide was just another battleground against the colonial and slave mentalities. They automatically spoke of the Rwandan conflict as a colonial legacy, anxious to pre-empt and counter feelings of African insecurity and inferiority. They were more right than they imagined. Ethnic divide in Rwanda is a recent political construction, which grew from the seeds sown by German and later Belgian authorities. True as this may be, however, one is still faced with the fact that it was Rwandans who first accepted alien views of themselves, abandoned their own civilisations and massacred over a million of their compatriots.

When the first European arrivals from Germany arrived in Rwanda and espoused such fantasist ideas that the Batutsi were a different, finer race from the Bahutu, many from the two main ethnic groups did not challenge this view. Instead a number of earlier Batutsi and Bahutu intellectuals took up these ideas. It was these ideas that were repeated in the first massacres against the Batutsi in the 1950s and 1960s, during which hundreds of thousands died. It is these same ideas that were heard again in 1994.

There can be no rational explanation for the Rwandan genocide or any other genocide for that matter. None the less, when human beings are visited by such overwhelming disasters, they try to seek comfort in asking why and how. From within the African diaspora, there was and continues to be a collective chorus of why and how. They need, want and demand an explanation.

However there is no explanation for genocide. Why did the Nazis murder six million Jewish souls? Could even the Nazis say why? The best that can be done for Africans in the diaspora, who ask why, is to explain the circumstances and conditions surrounding the genocide. As for why they were committed, it is for every human being to answer that. Information may help and much

needs to be done to provide it. A black American acquaintance asked me where I came from and when I said Rwanda, he asked me whether it was in South America. Most people know more about Rwanda now of course, but not much more.

Many diaspora Africans have done and are doing much to increase understanding: programme makers, journalists and writers like Jack Mapanji from Malawi – who offered a poem in response to what he witnessed – and many others. Rwandan communities in the diaspora can offer information but none of us can answer the question why.

Why Does Genocide 'Happen'?

Rotimi Sankore
Pambazuka News 150, 1 April 2004

THE GENOCIDE IN Rwanda in April 1994 must not distract from the fact that genocide is a global phenomenon that knows no racial or geographical boundaries. In its modern form, genocide was perfected by the fascist Nazi regime led by Adolph Hitler in Germany from 1933 to 1945. The Khmer Rouge also demonstrated in the killing fields of Cambodia from 1975 to 1979 that genocide could be carried out as efficiently in a different social and political context.

In more recent times the world watched live on satellite television in the 1990s while genocide was perpetuated in the heart of Europe as Serbia, Croatia and Kosovo became household names for the grimmest reasons known to history. Going back even further, the transatlantic slave trade has been described as genocidal, though the mass murder of millions of Africans over 400 years was more a by-product of plunder, exploitation and repression rather than the specific goal of slave dealers and the states that backed the slave trade.

But why does genocide happen? Why do human beings, the so-called most civilised and intelligent of the species that inhabit the planet, turn to mass murder?

In answering this question, the most important point to make is that genocide does not just happen. It is prepared for, consciously executed and is based on reasonably identifiable social, political and economic conditions. What differs is the extent to which these conditions apply or exist, and the degree of preparation by the perpetrators.

The second most important point to make is that genocide is not 'triggered' by a single event that pushes the perpetrators over the brink. On the contrary, the so-called 'trigger events' are excuses for setting in motion the logical end to a process prepared for well in advance.

Only when the world acknowledges the existence of these processes can we collectively identify the signs or beginnings of what is likely to end in genocide and douse the fire before it becomes an all-consuming flame.

In the case of Rwanda, it is a popularly held myth that the shooting down of the plane carrying the then Head of State Juvénal Habyarimana and the Burundian President Cyprien Ntayamira on 6h April 1994 triggered the genocide that followed over the next 12 weeks and left well over 700,000 dead (nearly 10 per cent of the country's population of over eight million). Nothing can be further from the truth.

Before the shooting down of the airplane by yet unidentified persons, the social and political conditions had been prepared by various factors. One key factor was the dictatorship established following the seizure of power by General Juvénal Habyarimana in 1973.

Habyarimana ruled in the name of the 'majority' and imposed a dictatorship on the entire country. In addition, the official discrimination against the Tutsi minority was so much that within two decades, half a million had fled the country.

The government estimated Tutsis at 9 per cent of the population and restricted them to 9 per cent of jobs and educational opportunities. (Many of the exiles later joined the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front, RPF). In order to consolidate the government's hold on power, Tutsis were painted as the enemy within (and without), and anyone that did not treat them as such was a sympathiser of the enemy, deemed to be 'no better than them' and likely to face the same fate.

This is a classic manoeuvre used by a variety of regimes throughout history to divide society, promote a climate of fear and insecurity, encourage racism, xenophobia or ethnic hatred and mobilise their supporters to systematically suppress and eradicate the so-called enemy. The Nazis in Germany used this strategy to near perfection over the period of their rule.

Official discrimination on its own is not enough to involve a significant percentage of the population in mass murder. Hate speech (using crude or sophisticated propaganda) must be deployed on a mass scale, and organised armed bodies of men infused into society to provide the 'back bone' and direction for mass murder. Where the prerequisite social conditions do not exist, or hate speech does not have the desired effect of involving significant numbers of everyday citizens in mass murder, it still facilitates their acquiescence to genocide carried out by smaller organised units of killers.

But even hate speech must have a clearly identifiable target to lead to genocide. This means that the 'targets' must be isolated and identified as systematically as possible. This is achieved by obvious means such as clearly marked or distinct clothing, less obvious means such as identity cards, or crude social stereotyping using race, ethnicity, language or physical appearance.

In the case of Rwanda, this had already been pre-facilitated by the Belgian colonialists through the issuing of identity cards based on ethnicity and the classic colonial strategy of creating an artificial elite through which colonial powers rule in countries where colonialists are vastly outnumbered.

During colonial rule, the artificial classification and imposition of a minority elite created the basis for a long-lasting resentment which was seized upon after independence by Hutu extremists to build a power base. The similar creation of artificial borders, the cynical divisions of ethnic nationalities, the imposition of artificial elites and so forth by colonial powers have provided the basis for many conflicts in Africa.

Simply put, genocide has become the method though which organised groups within society, whether based on ideology, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or language, consciously pursue a strategy of achieving or consolidating power, through manipulating economic, social or political conditions

and insecurities, to unite significant sections of society behind them and against a real or artificially created enemy whose extermination or repression is promoted as vital to the 'survival of the species.'

The main tools are: hate speech, the use of mass propaganda to spread lies, insecurity and create myths promoting a climate of simultaneous fear and dehumanisation of the intended targets; and the organisation of armed bodies of men in preparation for, or to actually direct, instigate or carry out violence and mass murder. All of these factors and those mentioned earlier are clearly identifiable and if left unchallenged build up to make genocide almost inevitable.

But how can genocide be tackled?

General education and enlightenment, an understanding of social, political and economic issues and of individual and mass psychology will all help to make people less susceptible to manipulation of their fears and insecurities.

However, while sharp economic, social and political inequalities remain a characteristic of human society there will always be a possibility that people will be open to manipulation by those that see such cynical manipulation as their path to power and the trappings that go with it. Interventions by United Nations forces or others may stop specific cases of genocide from playing out, but this cannot be a permanent solution.

In Africa, the legacy of colonialism, serious economic problems, deepening inequalities and ongoing conflicts mean that there is a possibility that an increasing number of incumbent governments or powerful groups could promote religious, racial, ethnic or social differences and conflict as a way of acquiring or consolidating their hold on power rather than addressing the root causes of desperation. History shows that once set in motion conflicts are difficult to stop. How civil society and pro-democratic forces tackle the issues is crucial to the future of Africa.

Overall, there is no doubt that the central challenge facing humanity today on all continents is to resolve the inequalities and injustices on which genocide can be built.

Mirroring Rwanda's Challenges: the Refugee Story

Sarah Erlichman
Pambazuka News 150, 1 April 2004

THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE sparked massive population shifts in the country and across the Great Lakes region. Millions of uprooted people scattered and regrouped. In the wake of devastating death and displacement, the landscape of human settlement was completely altered.

The return of diverse groups of Rwandan refugees over the course of ten years since the genocide has shaped the country's current political, physical, social, and economic environments. Rwandan refugees' experiences in exile and on return differ according to their histories, their ethnicity and class. They are rural and urban, well educated and illiterate. Many were raised in Rwanda, others in neighbouring African countries, in Europe, and beyond.

Some, having been born in exile, have come to Rwanda for the first time after 1994. Yet all have returned in the hope of rebuilding lives and livelihoods in the country they have always called home. The refugees have returned with a vast wealth of knowledge, experience, assets and skills to the most densely populated country in Africa, where the struggling economy is dominated by agriculture.

The socio-economic integration of returnees remains a massive challenge to Rwanda. Productive agricultural land, and even basic shelter, healthcare, and education, remain inaccessible to many. Sharing community resources is perhaps the greatest challenge to peaceful resettlement and reintegration of returned Rwandan refugees.

A Brief History of Rwandan Refugees

Beginning in 1959, as Belgian colonists began to withdraw from power, the politicisation of ethnicity lead to the transfer of power to the majority ethnic Hutu in Rwanda. Targeted attacks on ethnic Tutsi began. Estimates indicate that during the period between 1959 and 1967, 20,000 Tutsi died, and another 300,000 fled Rwanda as refugees with a small number of elite Hutus and Twa into neighbouring countries.

In 1964, estimates of Rwandan refugees in asylum countries were 40,000 in Burundi, 60,000 in Zaire (now DRC), 35,000 in Uganda, and 15,000 in Tanzania. Political crises and refugee flows from neighbouring countries have contributed to the complexities of Rwanda's refugees. In Burundi in 1972, anti-Hutu violence and killings by the Tutsi government forced thousands of Burundian Hutu refugees to flee into Rwanda. These refugees contributed to

further anti-Tutsi attacks in Rwanda in 1973 and thousands more Tutsi fled Rwanda. Refugees who fled Rwanda between 1959 and1973 are generally referred to as 'old-caseload refugees'.

Land and property left behind by refugees from Rwanda was subsequently occupied by others who remained or entered the country. This became a political issue. By the 1980s, the Habyarimana regime claimed that repatriation of Rwandan refugees was impossible due to land scarcity. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Rwandan refugee communities created secret political and military alliances in exile. The RPF was formed from such groups.

New directions of displacement began with the RPF invasion of Rwanda from Uganda in October 1990. Internally displaced people (IDPs) within Rwanda, mainly Hutu fleeing RPF attacks, regrouped into camps of hundreds of thousands surviving in miserable conditions throughout the ensuing war.

As the genocide began in April 1994, RPF soldiers began to advance from the northern border area. Behind the troops over 600,000 'old caseload refugees' followed, some of them entering Rwanda after more than 30 years of exile in Uganda. Ahead of the advancing RPF fled the mainly Hutu 'new caseload refugees'.

In April, an estimated 500,000 fled to Tanzania. In 24 hours alone, 250,000 crossed the Rusumo bridge between Rwanda and Tanzania over 28–29 April. By May, about 200,000 mainly ethnic Hutus from Butare, Kibungo, and Kigali-Rural had fled to northern Burundi. As the RPF took control of Kigali in July, the French military launched Operation Turquoise, creating a safe zone beyond RPF control in southwest Rwanda to protect fleeing Hutu, including leaders of the military and government responsible for the genocide as well as ordinary civilians.

Three hundred thousand fled to Bukavu, Zaire in July and August, as the French Operation Turquoise pulled out. Another 300,000 were grouped into IDP camps in the region. In northwest Rwanda, the home of the elite of the Habyarimana regime, one million refugees fled to Goma, Zaire during four days in mid-July.

The refugee crisis in eastern Zaire attracted the assistance of the international community on a scale leagues beyond what had been provided in Rwanda during the genocide, or even after. Among the refugee population, Hutu Power extremists controlled the camps and the aid. They continued to mobilise and arm themselves against the new RPF regime. Political violence was pervasive in the camps.

Despite the relief aid that sustained the refugees, a deadly cholera epidemic killed 50,000 refugees in Goma. During late July and August, 200,000 refugees returned from Goma to Rwanda. By the end of 1994, two million Rwandans had fled the RPF advance, being forced to run by Hutu extremist leaders, or fearing retribution for the genocide. Over 500,000 of these were in Tanzania,

250,000 in Burundi, and more than 1.2 million in Zaire. Among the refugees were Burundians who had fled to Rwanda in 1972. By the end of 1995, 225,778 Rwandan refugees (80,000 new caseload) had returned to Rwanda. Another 1,707,032 Rwandans remained in 50 refugee camps.

Return and Reintegration of Refugee Returnees

Between 1994 and 1996, approximately 800,000 (mainly old-case refugees) had followed the call of the new Government of National Unity to return home to Rwanda. Still, massive forced population shifts continued throughout the region during the second half of the 1990s.

The Rwandan camps in Zaire continued to threaten the RPF regime and Tutsi of Rwandan origin living in the Kivus of Zaire. In October and November 1996, Rwandan- and Ugandan-supported Alliance de Forces Democratique de Liberation attacked all of the camps in eastern Zaire and pursued ex-FAR and Interhamwe deeper into Zaire's interior.

An estimated 600,000 refugees repatriated to Rwanda over six days, forming a line 260km long. By early 1997, the number had risen to 720,000. Other refugees fled in the direction of the militias towards the interior of Zaire, Angola, and Zambia. Concurrently, conflict has forced 15,000 Congolese and 5,000 Burundians to seek refugee in Rwanda. In December, 500,000 Rwandans were forcibly repatriated by Tanzanian authorities.

Internal displacement remained a serious concern within Rwanda, especially as ex-FAR and Interhamwe launched attacks on northwest Rwanda from their bases in Zaire in mid-1997. In 1998, following the fall of Mobutu and the rise of Laurent Kabila, the second Congo war forced tens of thousands of Congolese refugees into western Rwanda. These were eventually accommodated in refugee camps which remain today.

As the old-caseload refugees returned, the only available properties were those that had been abandoned by the new-caseload refugees. As the new-caseload refugees began to return, the pressure for new housing became considerable.

The solution that had been foreseen in the 1993 Arusha Accords to accommodate refugee return and prevent conflicts over land was a villagisation scheme where services would be centralised and modern agricultural technology accessible. According to the Arusha Accords, refugees returning after more than ten years were not to seek to reclaim previous properties that had been occupied by others, but were to be resettled on unoccupied land with government assistance.

In the aftermath of the genocide, new caseload refugees were entitled to reclaim the land and property they had recently abandoned. The villagisation or *imidugudu* scheme was adopted as a means to create shelter for old and new caseload refugees, and others in need of shelter, such as displaced genocide survivors, and young people seeking new homes.

The *imidugudu* scheme was criticised by the international community for forcing resettlement to villages in poor sites, for inadequate provision of services, and insufficient compensation to the previous occupants of resettlement land.

Still, the government's scheme received sufficient support from the international community for massive construction of shelter and social infrastructure such as schools and health centres. UNHCR alone supported the construction of nearly 100,000 houses for 500,000 people between 1995 and1999.

Despite the political and financial support which fuelled *imidugudu* development, the reality is that meeting the land and housing needs of returned refugees has been an enormous challenge and is not yet resolved. As the flow of returns has slowed in recent years, so has donor support to resettlement. In 1999, the Brookings Initiative estimated that 370,000 households were living in inadequate shelter. Donor support and the initiatives of private individuals to construct their own homes reduced this figure to 192,000 in November 2001.

Another estimate by the US Committee for Refugees, found 150,000 IDPs were living without permanent shelter or basic social services in 2001. More recently, the Norwegian Refugee Council estimated there were nearly 200,000 IDPs in need of shelter and social services in July 2003.

UNHCR studies have found that a large number of returnees have never received any land. Moreover, many returnees are among the poorest in their communities, without access to healthcare, education for their children, or basic shelter needs. Among returnees are many individuals and families in need of special psychosocial support: children orphaned or separated from their parents; spouses separated from their partners by death or war; survivors of physical and sexual violence.

The needs of such returnees are in large part provided for by local government structures, which tend to keep registers of returnees and 'vulnerable' families. Returnees themselves resist being regarded as a separate category in their communities. The support they request, such as healthcare 'mutuelle' associations, school supply packages, shelter construction supplies, and agricultural tools are linked to community development and poverty alleviation plans. Still, as more returnees return with few resources, pressure on their Rwandan communities increases.

The majority of both old caseload and new caseload refugees planning to return to Rwanda have already done so. Between 60,000 and 80,000 Rwandan refugees are estimated to be still living in Uganda, DRC, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and elsewhere.

The majority are expected to repatriate through state-sponsored, UN-assisted programmes over the next two years. As the stable political situation in Rwanda continues, those who choose not to return will be considered to have integrated into the countries where they are and will no longer be considered refugees requiring international protection. In addition to civilian refugees,

demobilised soldiers are also returning to Rwanda and undergoing re-education, resettlement, and reintegration. It is expected that 81,462 combatants of ex-FAR, Interahamwe, and other militia groups, will have demobilised and returned to Rwanda from DRC by the end of the period 2001–05. In November 2003, the Rwandan government welcomed the return of ex-military leader of the Forces Démocratiques de la Libération du Rwanda followed by approximately 100 ex-rebel soldiers.

The Future of Rwanda's Refugees

Rwandan refugees are as diverse as Rwanda's population and play an integral role in reconciliation and development efforts in the post-genocide context. Many who gained higher education and skills in exile returned to strengthen the urban middle and upper classes. Rural returnees contribute to the agricultural sector, which remains the backbone of the Rwandan economy. Returned refugees face the economic realities that make livelihoods a struggle for most Rwandans.

Distinctions remain between communities of returnees accustomed to the culture of their country of exile, and in the nature of their exile – some suffered in dismal refugee camps, others survived comfortably in cities. Not least of the distinctions between returned refugees are their ethnicity and the reasons for their flight. Political consciousness developed during exile fuel Rwandan politics. Refugees are a crucial element of Rwandan reconciliation and socioeconomic development. The challenges ahead for Rwandan refugees mirror those for the country as a whole.

Neutralising the Voices of Hate: Broadcasting and Genocide

Richard Carver
Pambazuka News 150, 1 April 2004

RADIO TÉLÉVISION LIBRE des Mille Collines (RTLM) was almost the first thing that outside observers noticed about the Rwanda genocide:

> Hutus could be seen listening attentively to every broadcast…. They held their cheap radios in one hand and machetes in the other, ready to start killing once the order had been given.

Or this:

> Much of the responsibility for the genocide in Rwanda can be blamed on the media. Many people have heard of Radio des Mille Collines, which began broadcasting a steady stream of racist, anti-Tutsi invective in September 1993.

Hence it was hardly surprising (if rather belated) when, in 2003, three Rwandan journalists, two of them from RTLM, were found guilty by the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda of participating in the genocide through their broadcasts.

The verdict of the Arusha tribunal seemed to close that chapter and it would be easy to accept that those found guilty deserved their fate and leave it at that. But what, in reality, was the role of RTLM in the genocide? And what lessons can usefully be learned from it?

The prominence of RTLM in Western media accounts of the genocide can be easily explained. Journalists and editors always love media stories for essentially narcissistic reasons. They are taken with the idea that they have an enormous influence on public behaviour – for good or bad. Here was an example of the immense power of the media.

Yet many of the accounts of RTLM's role do not stand up to a moment's scrutiny. Take the example already quoted: did Hutu really stand clutching radios in one hand and machetes in the other, waiting to be 'incited'? Which Hutu do we mean (presumably not those who fell victim to the genocidaires)? And if they were so disposed towards genocide, why did they need to wait for the radio to tell them to carry it out?

This version of events rested upon a particular interpretation of why the genocide took place. It assumes that primitive and primordial 'tribal' hatreds only had to be unlocked for Hutu to begin slaughtering Tutsi. Yet every serious account of the genocide stresses its highly planned and organised nature. That RTLM and its owners were part of the plot to commit genocide cannot be

disputed. However, the assumption that RTLM was a necessary precondition for genocide is unproven and unprovable.

The influence of media content on public behaviour has been a subject for endless and inconclusive academic study over decades. We cannot say with any certainty whether, for example, violent television programmes will predispose children to behave violently. Yet many serious commentators have concluded with certainty that the RTLM broadcasts incited genocide. There were indeed contemporary accounts in the Western media of genocidaires 'confessing' that they had committed their crimes because the radio had told them to. Such testimony was plainly self-serving yet was usually taken at face value.

The point here is not to exonerate RTLM from responsibility. However, without examining precisely the nature of RTLM's crimes we cannot hope to draw any useful lessons.

Even ten years on, the weakness of most accounts of RTLM's role remains a lack of concrete analysis of either the content of the RTLM broadcasts or their impact on their audience. The latter is more excusable than the former: it remains almost impossible to conduct any scientific study of how RTLM affected people's behaviour.

Yet it is possible to analyse RTLM's output. To some extent this work has been done, although the findings are still often ignored. (In 1996, Linda Kirschke wrote a detailed account of RTLM's broadcasts based upon tapes and transcripts. I base my observations on RTLM's output on her research.) The generally accepted understanding of RTLM remains that cited above: that it broadcast 'a steady stream of racist, anti-Tutsi invective'. In fact, the story is more complicated.

RTLM's role in the genocide can only be understood in terms of a strict distinction between what was broadcast before and after 6 April 1994. After that date it would be an understatement to accuse RTLM of incitement. The radio station did not try to persuade people towards genocide; it organised them to carry it out. RTLM broadcast the names and vehicle registration numbers of the targeted victims. This was purely a way of communicating intelligence to the militias carrying out the killing, giving them the information they needed to stop the victims at roadblocks.

RTLM's role during this phase was only secondarily one of propaganda. Under the 1948 Genocide Convention, any external power with the means to do so had not only the right to jam RTLM broadcasts, but the obligation to do so.

RTLM's output before 6 April 1994 poses questions that are more complex. The ethnic propaganda that RTLM broadcast was much more subtle than most accounts would suggest. RTLM was a slick and youthful station playing popular music. It was apparently the favoured listening of the rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front – the very targets of its 'anti-Tutsi invective'. The meaning of RTLM's often elliptical ethnic references would have been well

understood by a Rwandan audience. But it was conveyed with a sophistication and wit that contrasted with earlier broadcasts from radio Rwanda, which, unlike, RTLM, was under direct and formal government control.

Retrospectively it is clear that RTLM's broadcasts between its launch in September 1993 and 6 April 1994 provided evidence of its owners' complicity in planning the genocide. They may also have helped to create a popular mood more favourable to genocide.

So far, this article has focused on what was exceptional and unique about the Rwandan situation, as most discussions of RTLM tend to. Yet it is also important to note how RTLM emerged in a way that was completely typical of failed democratic transitions in Africa.

In 1989 President Juvénal Habyarimana was edged into a reluctant transition to a multi-party system. Yet this was accompanied by no thorough reform of public institutions in Rwanda, including the broadcasting system. The publicly funded broadcaster, Radio Rwanda, remained under strict government control. There was no transparent and accountable system to licence private broadcasters. Indeed, the only private station eventually to be licensed was RTLM, owned by a group of extremist Hutu allied to a faction within the government.

This scenario – lack of democratic control over broadcasting in a period of political transition – has been played out in countless countries in Africa and elsewhere. While the consequences have seldom been as disastrous as in Rwanda, the practical lessons should by now be well understood. There needs to be an institutional reform of broadcasting that involves mechanisms for genuine public control over public broadcasting, an open and accountable system for issuing private broadcasting licences and space for the emergence of community media.

Rwanda was neither the first nor last time that the media have participated in massive human rights violations or crimes against humanity. The role of Nazi anti-semitic media in the European genocide in the 1940s was addressed in the Nuremberg trials (which provided some precedents for the Arusha tribunal on Rwanda). In the years immediately before the Rwanda genocide, sections of the media in former Yugoslavia had been actively fomenting ethnic crimes. Since 1994, media have tried to incite violence in Burundi, Congo/Zaire and Zimbabwe, among others.

The last of these examples is instructive. The Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) has drawn explicit parallels between RTLM and the role of the state media in inciting violence against the Zimbabwean opposition. Although the scale of the violence is much less, the institutional framework is very reminiscent of Rwanda. The propaganda and misinformation of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation is so potent precisely because there is no alternative. As in Rwanda, the public broadcaster is under tight government control and there is no space for independent private radio.

The Zimbabwe example is also relevant because MMPZ has tried to explain what is the significance and impact of the hate messages in the government media. They have concluded – unlike the simplistic initial analyses of the Rwanda genocide – that the extreme language and baroque, fictitious conspiracies in the official media are not aimed at convincing the general public that the opposition are a tool of Zimbabwe's imperialist enemies. Rather they are intended to fire up the relatively small numbers of members of ruling party militias and security forces actually engaged in carrying out human rights violations. Most ordinary Zimbabweans know from their own experience that the ZBC talks lies; a small band of ruling party loyalists uses these propaganda messages to reinforce them in the correctness of their own brutal measures.

Such a thesis is very difficult to prove without conducting a type of sociological research that would be impossible in present-day Zimbabwe (or Rwanda). But it may also provide a useful understanding of how RTLM functioned in preparing the genocide. On this hypothesis, RTLM was not primarily concerned with convincing ordinary people to participate in genocide; it reinforced the conviction of those who were already part of the conspiracy to commit genocide.

Aside from the conclusion that a proper political transition should include democratisation of the media, the practical conclusions to be drawn from the RTLM experience are equally tentative. The criminal prosecution and conviction of the RTLM journalists was immensely important. It establishes the principle of the accountability of journalists for the consequences of what they broadcast. It does not, however, show what steps should be taken to prevent such material from being broadcast in the first place.

Freedom of expression advocates have always been rightly wary of any suggestion of prohibiting 'hate speech', however obnoxious it might be. They argue that violent and intolerant views should be combated by allowing tolerant and pacific opinions to compete. In practical terms that is saying that a plural media environment is the best way of neutralising RTLM and its kin.

Any call to prohibit 'hate speech' must be treated with the utmost care. To whom is such a call addressed? In the case of Rwanda it might have been directed to the very government that was promoting and encouraging 'hate speech'. Anti-hate speech laws notoriously have the opposite effect from that intended. The African state with the most extensive battery of laws prohibiting 'incitement to racial hatred' was none other than apartheid South Africa. The laws were used, of course, against opponents of the apartheid system.

Or perhaps the call was directed to the 'international community'. I have already suggested that RTLM's broadcasts after 6 April should have been jammed. At that stage the radio station was being used to organise the genocide. The fact that these orders were being issued over public airwaves gave them no privilege. This was not, by then, a freedom of expression issue.

But we should be very careful not to predate such a call to cover RTLM before 6 April. Giving powerful governments a general mandate to shut down broadcasting stations is an extremely dangerous precedent. An outcry over the role of Serb broadcasting in the former Yugoslavia effectively legitimised NATO's bombing of the official Belgrade broadcasting station in 1999. This was done to further NATO war aims in Kosovo. It was a war crime. We should beware of what we wish for in case the wish is granted.

Neither 'hate speech' laws nor international military action are the answer. The practical lessons from the RTLM experience are more prosaic. Pluralistic and accountable broadcasting is an indispensable part of building democracy and the voices of hate can only be neutralised if they are confronted with a variety of alternative points of view.

The Genocide Problem: 'Never Again' All Over Again

Part I

Gerald Caplan
Pambazuka News 177, 7 October 2004

TEN YEARS AGO, the international community stood by as the horror of the Rwandan genocide unfolded. This summer, Western political will could have stopped the mass killings in Sudan. Why do we not act?

On a quiet Sunday in the early summer of 1999, I was recruited into the tiny but growing army of enigmatic characters who devote their lives to studying genocide. It was a phone call that did it. Stephen Lewis, my lifelong comrade-in-arms and now UN Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, was offering a chance for us to work together again, but on a subject of unprecedented gravity: unravelling the truth about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Rwanda became my obsession from that moment to this. Stephen was a member of a special seven-member International Panel of Eminent Personalities (IPEP), which had been appointed by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to investigate the genocide. Despite their genuine eminence – two were former African presidents, one a potential future president, another the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India – the panel members just did not know what to do with the information they had been accumulating. After travelling to half a dozen nations interviewing people with links to the genocide, they did not know what they wanted to say. They decided they needed a writer post-haste. Appropriately enough, they sought an African writer, but for various reasons none of their choices was available. Stephen mentioned me. Though I knew little of Rwanda, I had a doctorate in African history; I had lived in several African countries; I had co-chaired two public policy commissions in Canada; I was a writer; and I had been involved in the struggle against white rule in Southern Africa. I suppose a combination of sheer desperation plus these credentials led to a near total stranger being brought on to take over the panel's task.

As it happens, Stephen and I had already discussed the panel at length. He was thrilled and honoured to have been appointed to it and I was wildly envious. I had gone to live in Africa for the first time as a doctoral student way back in 1964 and had kept renewing my connections over the years. So when the call came, I was willing and able, yet seriously anxious. Carol, my wife, very wise about many things (not least the secrets of my soul), proved so once again. We could cope as a family, she was confident, even if it meant I had be absent a fair bit. But she was not as sanguine about me. Could I deal with the subject emotionally? Could my already dark, lugubrious, pessimistic,

Hobbesian view of the world handle such intimacy with one of the most hellish events of our time? After a lifetime dedicated to various crusades for social justice, I had become the stereotypical glass-is-half-empty guy, always able to find an ominous cloud in a deep blue sky. My gag: being a pessimist may not be fun but at least I'm rarely disappointed. Now, this new assignment raised real fears of me being traumatised into utter depression and immobilising hopelessness. These were serious questions, but both Carol and I knew immediately they could only be answered after the event. There was no way I could resist this offer. This was history in the making. This was Africa, my life's preoccupation. This was another Holocaust, a subject that had tormented me forever. This was about the very nature of our species. I began getting my shots the next day and reported to the panel's headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the home of the OAU, nine days later.

I signed up on the assumption that the panel members would tell me what they wanted to say, and that I had be their pen. This was hardly my usual or favourite role but, under the circumstances, I was prepared to play it. I needed their guidance about how forthright they were prepared to be. Although no expert on Rwanda, I did know how controversial and sensitive the issues were. Since this was an OAU mission, presumably dedicated to offering an African perspective on the genocide, was the panel ready to say that there would have been no genocide at all if some Africans had not chosen to exterminate other Africans? How far were they prepared to go in describing the OAU's own failure to intervene effectively? Beyond Africa, were they willing to tell the truth and accuse the French government of virtual complicity in the genocide? Would they agree to condemn Rwanda's churches, above all the Roman Catholic Church, for their shameful betrayal of their flock before, during, and since the genocide? Were they prepared to say that American politicians (both Democrats and Republicans), fearful of losing votes if US soldiers were killed for such a remote cause, had knowingly allowed hundreds of thousands of Rwandans to die terrible deaths? Were they going to tell the truth about the serious human rights abuses that had been committed by the largely Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front – the 'good guys' in the genocide and now the government of the country?

To my astonishment, when the panel flew in to meet me in Addis Ababa, they offered no guidance at all. To this day I am still not sure I understand it. Maybe they were paralysed by the enormity of the topic and their responsibility. All I know is that after my very first meeting with the members, I was left to produce the report on my own, sending them drafts for approval. I was distraught. How was I to deal with all the vexing issues I had fruitlessly raised?

Waiting for the flight back to Toronto, where I would do all my reading and writing, I went for a long and dusty walk with Dr Berharnou Abebe, the panel's research officer, a remarkable Ethiopian intellectual with whom I had

immediately bonded. Berharnou grasped the situation completely. Like other non-Rwandan Africans I was to meet, he felt personally ashamed of the genocide and approached his role on the tiny panel professional staff with the utmost gravity. We walked and walked, going over the problem again and again, getting grimier and more hoarse with each polluted block. Finally, he stopped, looked at me, and said: 'It is simple, Gerry. You must write not for the seven, but for the 700,000. It is their story that you must tell.'

Ignoring the murky politics of both the OAU and some of the seven panellists, I accepted Berharnou's advice with a vengeance. I would give them a draft based on wherever the evidence led me.

For almost a year, I immersed myself in the topic totally. I thought of nothing else. Weekends and evenings disappeared. Somehow, I absorbed a wealth of knowledge as if by osmosis. In the end, however, the work was done and approved – even though some panel members were rather less enthusiastic than others in accepting some of my harsh, unforgiving, and thoroughly documented assessments of the French and US governments, the Catholic Church, the UN Secretariat, the OAU itself, the post-genocide government in Rwanda, and just about everyone else involved in this terrible tragedy except Canadian General Romeo Dallaire. Dallaire, almost alone, emerged with his honour intact. Howard Adelman, a Rwandan expert at York University in Toronto, once wrote that Rwanda's was 'the most easily preventable genocide imaginable,' and the panel unhesitatingly accepted my suggestion that we call the 300-page report 'Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide.' What can never be forgiven is that none of those with the capacity to prevent it cared enough to try.

The report was released in mid-2000. I do not mind saying the OAU had never seen anything like it – independent, outspoken, undiplomatic, and easily read, it was the very antithesis of the turgid bureaucratic documents the OAU normally spewed out. It was also largely ignored. Not because it pulled no punches, I am afraid, but out of plain lack of interest. Africa's heads of state, who had authorised the report two years earlier, never bothered to discuss it at all. I was deeply disappointed by the unceremonious burial of the report, suffering from the inevitable anticlimax after such an intense experience, and finding it hard to come to grips with what I had learned. Not only was the assignment over, so, it appeared, was my time with Rwanda. Wrong again.

About a year later, it dawned on me that outside Rwanda itself, the genocide was already being forgotten. I became extremely agitated. The survivors were living as traumatised, maimed paupers. Most of the perpetrators were getting away with murder, often mass murder. The sins of commission of the French government and the Catholic Church, and the sins of omission of the American and British governments, were being completely ignored: the 'globalisation of impunity' I had called it in the report. Carol, once again seeing things far more clearly than I could, suggested that the tenth anniversary of

the genocide in 2004, two-and-a-half years away, could be a natural occasion to renew interest in the tragedy. The result was 'Remembering Rwanda,' an international voluntary movement organised with no funding, largely on my Mac, with the assistance of Louise Mushikiwabo in Washington and Carole Ann Reed in Toronto, with adherents around the globe, all dedicated to ensuring that the memory of the genocide and its victims would not be buried, and that those responsible for it would not escape accountability.

I had already befriended some diaspora Rwandans who signed up immediately. They included a group of remarkable widows, particularly Esther Mujawayo in Germany and Chantal Kayetisi in New Hampshire, who had lost their husbands, among dozens of other relatives, to the genocide while they and their children miraculously survived, and who are dedicated to making sure the genocide would not be swept under history's table. Leo Kabalisa, one of life's natural gentlemen, was another; Leo, who now teaches French in a Toronto high school, counts by name 15 members of his immediate family and 82 of his extended family who were murdered during the 100 days.

Other Rwandans, though, were inevitably suspicious. In Johannesburg one night, I met with a group of Rwandan expatriates attached to the Rwandan Diaspora Global Network. I knew them through e-mail correspondence and, finding I had to be in Johannesburg on other UN business, I had asked to meet them. We had a good couple of hours, got along well, and agreed to work together. But it was obvious they could not quite figure out why I was doing this. What did I want? What could I get out of this? Rwandans, who have been betrayed by the outside world as much as any people on earth, are entitled to their suspicions of all outsiders.

In trying to explain my interest, I found myself, to my own surprise, telling them that I was Jewish. My family had fled Poland before the Hitler era, I said, and, probably as a result, I had great empathy with their own genocide. It was all true. Although I'm a convinced atheist, deeply at odds with those who represent themselves as the voice of Canadian Jewry, and a passionate foe of Israel's occupation of Palestine, I have always felt my Jewishness deeply. I have been fascinated with the Nazis and the Holocaust since my teen years. For decades now I have read, almost as a matter of principle, at least one book related to the Holocaust every year. Although many Jews disagree, for me the self-evident lesson of the Holocaust is a universal, not a particular, one: it is not merely that anti-Semitism must be opposed with all of our might, but that all injustice, racism, and discrimination is unacceptable and has to be combated. The Rwandans loved this answer. Many Tutsi regard themselves, with considerable pride, as the Jews of Africa. Most know about, and identify with, the Holocaust. Some have been to Auschwitz, others to Yad Vashem. Many are far more supportive of Israeli policies than I am. Yet my core Jewishness and our shared genocides is a bond between us.

Sometimes I learn from experience. During a visit to Kigali in 2002, I had the opportunity to address nearly 1,000 Rwandans at a major assembly dedicated to reconciliation. I described the Remembering Rwanda movement and asked, before they could: Why was a white outsider, a *muzungu*, in the widely used Swahili term, leading this initiative? The moment I said that as a Jew I instinctively felt a close bond with Rwanda, the mood in the huge parliamentary chamber palpably changed. Suddenly, trust emerged; we understood each other. The solidarity of victims prevailed. Certainly some suspicion still existed; I could hardly blame them. But after the speech I was confronted by a handsome, dynamic woman I did not recognise, who abruptly embraced me. Yolande Mukagasana, a genocide survivor, had made it clear in a brief e-mail that she did not know why I was involved in this issue, did not trust me, and could continue the fight for the memory of the genocide's victims without me, thanks anyway. Now, she said, she knew we would be in the struggle together. Yolande, a poet and storyteller and a passionate keeper of the survivors' flame, invited me to dinner later at her small house in Kigali, now home to 13 adopted children who were kibitzing in a room nearby. As I tried politely to continue eating, she pointed to the photos on the wall of her husband and three young children and explained in graphic detail how, ten years earlier, they had all been hunted down and murdered not far from where we sat.

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The Genocide Problem: 'Never Again' All Over Again

Part II

Gerald Caplan
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The Genocide Specialists

FROM THE FIRST, I had thought my report should put the Rwandan genocide into some historical context, and I began reading in the field of genocide generally. Before long, I had come face to face with the burgeoning world of genocide studies. This subculture, I soon discovered, is quite separate from that of high-profile Holocaust studies. While some specialists in 'other' genocides are also students of the Holocaust, for a long time only a handful of Holocaust specialists were prepared to accept experts in comparative genocides as their kin. According to New York City College Professor Henry Huttenbach, a Jewish refugee from Hitler's Germany, most Holocaust specialists still demand that the genocide of the Jews be treated as qualitatively different from – really a greater catastrophe than – the genocide of others. And 'any whiff of comparison was automatically condemned as a form of denial, revisionism, trivialisation, etc.' This is an enormously emotional and divisive issue, but the evidence surely corroborates Huttenbach's assertion. In his intellectually thrilling and morally courageous study, *The Holocaust in American Life*, University of Chicago historian Peter Novick introduces the concept of 'the Olympics of victimisation,' a fierce competition for primacy among the world's victims that the Jews are determined to win. Largely, they have succeeded. Even a good number, though not all, of my newly discovered genocide studies family share the view that the Holocaust – always with a capital 'H' – is at the farthest point of the genocide continuum.

In 1999, when I began working on Rwanda, the world of non-Holocaust genocide studies was just beginning to flourish. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn's *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies* in 1990 was way ahead of the curve. It was Rwanda and Srebrenica that really set things off. The International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) had been organised in 1994. In 1999, Huttenbach founded the *Journal of Genocide Studies*, the first of its kind not exclusively dedicated to the Holocaust. The same year, a two-volume *Encyclopedia of Genocide* appeared. In 2002, a thick and engrossing collection of essays appeared called *Pioneers of Genocide Studies* – imagine: pioneers already! – and Samantha Power won the Pulitzer Prize for

her exceptional study *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. Imagine: humanity had inflicted on itself an entire era of genocide, and we were living through it.

The field was taking off. In June, 2003, I was among 200 people attending the IAGS conference in Galway, Ireland. There were 44 intriguing panels to choose from, so many I could not even attend all the Rwanda sessions let alone those on Burundi, Srebrenica, Armenia, the Third World and the Holocaust, the Herero of southwestern Africa, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Korea, Bangladesh, Assyria, the indigenous peoples of the Americas and Australia, Cambodia, genocide prevention, genocide denial, comparative genocide, genocide art, genocide and children, survivors, truth commissions, the problem of reconciliation, the problem of reparations, the International Criminal Court, the International Criminal Tribunals of Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and even more.

Size is relative, of course. This small, tight world of genocide experts is something of a movable feast really: I keep meeting them at other conferences, in London, northern England, Stockholm, Lund, Washington, Toronto, and Rwanda itself. Their hero is Raphael Lemkin, the Polish Jewish lawyer who coined the word 'genocide' and was the driving force behind the 1948 UN Genocide Convention. They know by rote the convention's key clauses and even its wildly optimistic title: 'The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.' And they know the politics. After long, acrimonious negotiations that included early intimations of Cold War hostilities, the General Assembly agreed soon after the Second World War that genocide would be defined as 'acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group'.

From these few words spill a host of complications. How do you prove intent? Exactly how many victims are necessary to constitute a 'part'? What about 'politicide,' the word invented to describe attempts to eliminate political opponents, the stock-in-trade of both governments proudly promising to introduce 'socialism' – Stalin's USSR, Mao's China, Pol Pot's Cambodia – and those defending the 'free world' against 'socialism' – US-backed military dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, Chile, Indonesia, the apartheid government in South Africa. What is the difference between mass murder, pogroms, or large-scale massacres and genocide, and why does it matter? And – the central conundrum – how can we know whether a conflict will escalate into a genocide until it actually does?

Then there are the bedevilling practical issues. What are the consequences of a determination that genocide is being carried out? Countries that ratify the convention 'undertake to prevent and to punish' genocide perpetrators, and are entitled to call on the UN 'to take such action under the Charter of the UN as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide.' That's all. There's no call for direct military intervention. So, de-spite

the apparent angst by the Clinton administration in 1994 that if it recognised Rwanda as a genocide it would be obliged to dispatch US troops, many authorities agree that a strongly worded resolution at the Security Council would fulfil the obligations of the convention – even if the genocide continued.

These issues have been debated at interminable length by the cognoscenti, who mostly agree about the flaws of the 1948 convention and disagree about attempts to amend it. As a result, like it or not, it will remain unamended, unsatisfactory as it clearly is, while the new International Criminal Court and the rest of us make do as best we can. And we will continue to disagree on what is and what is not a genocide. Some well-regarded scholars argue there have been as many as 50 such calamities since the world vowed 'Never Again' after Hitler's defeat in 1945. Others say that only four really meet the criteria set out in the UN Convention: the extermination of the Hereros, the Armenians, the Jews, and the Tutsi. It is more than a merely pedantic academic debate. But it will never be resolved. Genocide specialists seem to hold, simultaneously, two quite separate big ideas: that under certain circumstances all humans are capable of perpetrating unspeakable crimes against humanity; and that the only sound motive for being a 'genocide freak' – as one of them wryly calls the group – is to figure out how to prevent its recurrence. Intuitively, the two may seem to be in conflict. After all, the record indisputably shows that humans have used violent means to resolve disputes ever since our species first evolved. How can we prevent genocide – or violence between humans of any kind – since humans are clearly hardwired to resort to force under any number of circumstances? To activists, however, the resolution of this dialectic is obvious: we must learn to predict the onslaught of genocide and have the capacity to nip it in the bud.

It came as no surprise to me that so many well-known, highly reputable genocide scholars subscribe to the old insight memorably articulated by Walt Kelly's sweet comic book character, Pogo Possum: 'We have met the enemy and he is us.' You can not study this subject without wondering about yourself. And we all do. Most of the two dozen men and women who are the 'pioneers of genocide studies' explicitly believe that they themselves are potentially capable of the most atrocious behaviour imaginable. In the words of scholar and author Eric Markusen, 'the vast majority of perpetrators, accomplices and bystanders to genocidal violence are not sadists or psychopaths, but are psychologically normal according to standard means of assessing mental health and illness.' Yehuda Bauer, an Israeli and one of the Holocaust scholars, told me that genocidal attitudes now exist among both Palestinians and Israelis. This is not a man to use such language loosely. As for Rwanda, hundreds of thousands of Hutu were actively involved in the genocide. Most of them were ordinary Rwandans. What possible reason is there to believe they were fundamentally different from me? Or you?

But genocide scholars believe – hope? pray? – that our capacity for evil can be constrained. Perhaps the driving passion of genocide scholarship is to learn from the past to prevent recurrences in the future. As the presentations at the Galway conference amply demonstrated, these are scholar/activists who make no pretence to scholarly detachment. It is not that they eschew solid academic research; on the contrary, most take it very seriously and some are very good at it. But many openly pursue their academic work for activist ends. Virtually all of them are committed either to the prevention of future genocides or to having the world offer appropriate recognition to their own special genocide. A good number are committed to both. Indeed, there is now a Genocide Watch and a full-blown International Campaign to End Genocide supported by 24 active member organisations.

Why should this be? After all, you will not find all of the innumerable students of war marching with the peace movement, and no one expects them to. They are scholars for the sake of scholarship – or, perhaps, for publication. But I can confidently say that all experts in the Armenian genocide have as their overriding purpose getting the world to recognise the 1915 genocide inflicted by the Turks. What drives them mad is the continuing success of Ankara in pressuring the governments of Germany, Britain, the US, and – in an unnerving triumph of realpolitik over the solidarity of victims – Israel, to refuse to officially recognise the genocide of the Armenians.

The personal is political in genocide studies. Most authorities on the Armenian genocide are Armenians, descendants of the genocide's victims or survivors. Here, of course, is the key to their militancy and activism. Similarly, most of the pioneers of Holocaust and genocide studies, and the founders of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, and the *Journal of Genocide Studies*, have been Jewish – survivors, relatives of survivors, or child refugees. Another perceptible group, small but influential, focus on genocide scholarship from a Christian perspective; that is, genocide as the ultimate violation of the laws of God. This, needless to say, is not the bellicose Christianity that so many Americans now seem to embrace.

So Galway was not just another academic conference, a talk shop where the arcane and obscure so often reign. This was a coming together of people who had consciously steeped themselves in the most terrible calamities humans have wrought on each other. Many had been touched directly by a genocide. All had a cause, most of them worthy ones. Just about every imaginable horror show of the past century was flagged in those few days.

Yet every single person at that conference was aware that 'Never Again' had proved to be one of the greatest broken promises in history; as any genocide maven will aggressively tell you, 'Again and Again' is the more accurate phrase. The very reason the genocide prevention movement is thriving is because the phenomenon itself is thriving. Look at the last decade alone. Bosnia and

Rwanda. Serbs and Kosovars. Chechnya and East Timor. Nuclear threats, inherently genocidal, between Pakistan and India. Sierra Leone, with its child militias and child amputees. Potential genocide in the Ivory Coast. Burundi on a knife's edge. Rwanda enigmatic and unpredictable. The ongoing calamity in the eastern DRC. And the latest test case: the disaster in Darfur in western Sudan.

If crimes against humanity continue – and they do, as I write – it is not because specialists in genocide are not trying to prevent them. The question is how to do so. Most of these 'preventionists' argue for an early warning system that would allow experts to predict when a genocide is likely, so that the world can be informed and take appropriate action. For the last couple of years, some advocated for a 'genocide prevention focal point' to be set up permanently at the UN, and as his contribution to the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced something very much like that. The premise is straightforward: through empirical and scientific observation of conflicts, we can isolate the variables and causal mechanisms at work and predict future genocides before they occur. With this information, we can then intervene and prevent the tragedy.

Once again, complications arise. There is no more reason for genocide scholars to agree on everything than for genocide victims to do so. Not everyone agrees on which conflicts in the past have been 'real' genocides. Not everyone agrees on the variables and stages that lead to genocide. In practice, it is usually more credible and accurate to speak of large-scale massacres and atrocities than of genocide. The Nazi genocide against the Jews did not begin until 1941. Until it was actually launched in Rwanda, no one could be sure there would be a genocide; but there had been anti-Tutsi pogroms galore. Already there is a heated dispute as to whether Darfur constitutes a genocide or 'ethnic cleansing.' Surely there is no need to resolve this semantic dispute before intervening?

Two intertwined dilemmas remain. Without meaning to sound pretentious, I had say that preventionists must address the question of human nature. In spite of endless 'Never Again' rhetoric and unprecedented efforts to prevent genocide in the past decade or so, and in the face of the rapid growth of what has been dubbed the 'genocide prevention industry,' before our very eyes the phenomenon of genocide has continued and even intensified. In this sense, the work of the preventionists is a Sisyphean labour of hope and faith over reason and evidence.

Even more problematic is the premise that if we are able to forecast an imminent genocide, policymakers will then naturally jump in and end the crisis before it escalates. I do not see it: I regard it as the genocide specialists' equivalent of 'the truth shall make you free' – one of life's great fallacies. Foreknowledge of genocide might just as easily have the opposite effect. Given the track record to date, it is at least as plausible to argue that early warnings of potential genocide are most likely to help politicians distance themselves from any obligation to intervene in the conflict. In the words of

Samuel Totten, a highly respected genocide scholar, developing potential early warning signals 'is easy – and this is a vast understatement – compared to mobilising the political will of the international community to act when such signals appear on the horizon'. Two factors are at work here. Human nature, for politicians, is to avoid entanglements they cannot control and which have little political payoff. Beyond that, the interests of the preventionists' world and the powers-that-be seem largely antithetical. Almost all of us oppose the major interventions initiated by the US and Britain, while they in turn are largely indifferent to the interventions we plead for.

As I write, Darfur stands as the test. Despite a flurry of activity, at the moment the world is failing badly, the penalty, as always, being paid by those under siege. Darfur is routinely called 'the new Rwanda,' but I am more taken with the differences. The massive attacks by Arab Muslim militias on African Muslim peasants and farmers, supported by the terrorist government in Khartoum, began in early 2003. Since then, the usual suspects among humanitarian and human rights agencies, joined by the International Campaign to End Genocide, have been demanding that action be taken. Early in 2004, with the death, rape, and refugee counts mounting, the calls for action intensified. Mainstream media coverage became widespread around April with the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. An unprecedented informal coalition emerged, including the Bush administration. Maybe it is a genocide, almost certainly it is severe ethnic cleansing, and it is without question a world-class atrocity. Everybody now agrees the situation is intolerable. This makes the situation almost more terrible than Rwanda's a decade ago. Despite everything we know, despite all the demands made on the terrorist Sudanese government by the most powerful forces on earth, nothing has changed. Verbal threats are backed by mealy-mouthed resolutions promising serious consideration of future action if the militias are not suppressed immediately. Meanwhile, the arrival of the rainy season in May blocked supplies to the hundreds of thousands of displaced African refugees, and the raids continued. How many more will be added to the 50,000 dead and the hundreds of thousands of pathetic refugees, while the world attacks with a torrent of words?

The real comparison with 1994, then, is simply inaction in the face of gross provocation. At the end of the day, no Geneva Convention on genocide, whatever its language, and no early warnings, however unmistakable, can substitute for political will among the powers-that-can. The extent of recent coverage of the Darfur tragedy suggests that media and public interest can indeed influence governments to appear to care. But garnering such interest, as Darfur plainly shows, is a long, drawn-out process, and the move from concern to action can take forever. Pessimists will not be disappointed.

For the record, none of those who betrayed Rwanda has ever faced the consequences. Not a single government has lost an election for allowing hundreds

of thousands of Africans to be murdered. Not a single French politician has been held accountable for allowing the genocidaires to escape from Rwanda to Zaire/Congo, thereby setting in motion the catastrophic wars that have since plagued the African Great Lakes region. No one has been called on to resign for their actions or advice. Bill Clinton's 957-page memoir, *My Life*, calls Rwanda 'one of my greatest regrets,' and spends exactly two pages in total on the subject. This is truly the globalisation of impunity.

Nor did those guilty of sins against Rwanda deign to atone by commemorating the tenth anniversary of the genocide in Kigali in April. Kofi Annan went to Geneva instead. The US sent a mid-level diplomat who offered a derisory handout of a $1 million (US) for orphans, widows, and aids victims. Canada's delegation consisted of a former junior cabinet minister and the ambassador to Rome who advises on things African. Among all Western nations, only the Belgians sent their prime minister to apologise and repent. The Rwandans were disappointed but philosophical; their expectations were low.

None of this can give the preventionists a single reason for optimism. It is true that the Remembering Rwanda movement achieved some success. Commemorations of the tenth anniversary occurred around the world and Rwanda got more media coverage in those ten days than during the past ten years. But even if this attention proves to be sustainable, even if the victims and the survivors and the perpetrators and the 'bystanders' are all remembered, what then? We will not have changed. Darfur reminds us that, once more, 'Never Again' seems beyond human nature. Too many of us like to cause harm and too few of us care enough to prevent it.

Yet we go on. Why? Maybe because if we refuse to give up, we will stumble across an answer. Maybe because it matters that the victims gain some posthumous dignity. That the survivors will know someone cares. That the perpetrators are reminded that they can run but they can't hide. That those guilty of crimes of commission or omission – the French, the Americans, the Catholics, the Brits – will remember that there is no statute of limitations on accountability, and that we will keep naming and shaming them as long as is necessary. For myself, maybe it is because Carol will be reassured that I emerged from my encounter with genocide gloomier than ever but not ready to surrender. Not yet immobilised. And no less willing than before to throw myself – with the usual modest expectations, of course – into the eternal struggle that the pursuit of social justice and equality has always demanded.

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